Conscience in the '70s

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Introduction

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PREFACE

The papers in this book were all given to the Third National Summer School on Religion conducted by the Centre for Continuing Education at Ursula College, Australian National University, in January 1972.

The two papers by Dr. D'Arcy as here published are essentially notes from which he lectured freely. The other papers are for the most part what was read or pre-circulated to the participants in the School; they have been edited to the extent necessary to present a spoken lecture in written form.

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CONSCIENCE IN THE '70s - INTRODUCTION

John Nurser, Director of the Summer School

The Summer School organizing committee asked those who gave papers to help answer three questions: (1) to what extent does the word 'conscience' still mean anything? (2) what does a meaningful usage of the word 'conscience' have to do with religion? and (3) what practical programmes of action would be sanctioned by a use, especially a Christian use, of the word now? To this end we called upon the talents of Australian university teachers from an astonishing range of disciplines, and upon a community-oriented psychiatrist, and upon a member of the Commonwealth Cabinet.

Conscience is one of those words that each generation has used in its own way; the poor old jade had been whipped up the straight so many times on the Virtue In (or Against) Politics circuit that she almost qualified as Routinised Charisma. Then Freud came along, and seemed to have perceived that she was not virtuous at all, but merely Superego in disguise, a very bossy and joyless maiden indeed. So that the first question we wanted an answer to was, and remained, a very real one. Can a word with such well-worn edges be used in anything but sloppy and rhetorical causes?

Yet, however smudged the word may be, it is no worse than any number of words that are the necessary small change of our conversation about what seem to be the big choices we make. 'Love', 'liberty', 'justice', 'fairness', 'efficiency', 'obscenity' tend to be imprecisely used. Similarly there is a widespread reluctance to give up using the word 'conscience' even among men who are perfectly well aware of the profound effects of infantile toilet training and of introjected peer-group values. A high-school student who proposes to become a draft-resister finds it difficult to
discover another language to express his determination, and to justify it. In our society the word 'conscience' has come to stand for personal integrity and, as this integrity is constantly being undermined or contradicted, it is therefore commonly met with.

Religious experience, and particularly Christian religious experience, has been intimately connected with such personal integrity. The promises of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which Christianity so largely saw as having been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, were of a new 'heart of flesh' that entailed a sharing in God's perception of right behaviour, and would necessarily imply individual accountability for wrong behaviour. The words of Peter and John before the Jewish rulers (Acts 4:19-20) - 'Is it right in God's eyes for us to obey you rather than God? Judge for yourselves. We cannot possibly give up speaking of things we have seen and heard.' - have their echoes, not only in Luther's 'Ich kann nicht anders' and Galileo's 'Eppur se muove' but also in the words of Solzhenitsyn and others in the Soviet Union in our generation.

It might seem that a rather stiff-necked martyrdom was to be the context then of conscience in the 70s. This is not so. Few things are so barren as non-conformity. The English experience - or was it the Welsh, really? - of the 'Nonconformist Conscience' in politics was a dispiriting exercise in sabbatarian aggression. The proud loner may be a literary hero, but not a religious one. He is likely to keep himself from being dishonoured, but he has no agenda for the world. On the other hand, the impact of, for example, Christianity on the human experience of conscience should include assurance and community. Where there is a strong sense of redemption and of the presence of God, there is no room for the 'pangs' of conscience in scrupulous self-examination. Where this redemption is essentially corporate, there is no halting the claims of conscience this side of mankind. Conscience is about our ought. The School became
concerned about aboriginal land rights. It held various views as to what course of action to take. But the recent words of David Jenkins express the central place that conscience has taken in religious programmes today: 'the threats to the present system which are so sharply presented in our cities must be seen by Christians as real threats both to power as it is at present exercised and to conscience as it is at present informed. The present privileged are being attacked and they (we) ought to be attacked.'

When the committee planned the 1972 Summer School under the title 'Conscience in the '70s', it was sure it had located a theme of wide interest. This proved to be the case. The summer school set a note of awareness of moral choice. The 1970s are the decade for the churches of 'Action for World Development', or inaction. But what the committee could not have foreseen was its remarkable atmosphere of adventure. Men and women came to the school with different and conflicting religious or secularist beliefs. Having heard the phenomena of conscience dissected and disagreed violently about what might be said, the members of the Summer School experienced a foretaste of the thing itself.
(1) This is not particularly meant as historical reportage, although indeed one must make a brief excursion into the history of the idea of Conscience. Rather it is intended to make a number of conceptual points, some of them admittedly historical, which bear on the topic "Conscience in the 70's".

I cannot but be aware how different such an emphasis needs to be from that required when my own book on conscience was published only 10 years ago. Since then we have been confronted with a number of issues in which individuals were immediately faced with tension between what they themselves were inclined to suggest as their duty and directives of people in authority. This has often been represented, sometimes inaccurately, sometimes melodramatically, as "the conflict of Conscience and Authority". I believe that this has often embodied a conceptual confusion and shall try to clear up a little of that confusion in this paper.

(2) I shall therefore be concerned mainly with conceptual points. Obviously it is with normative questions that we must eventually grapple: especially such normative questions as:

(a) What are the "rights of conscience" vis-a-vis human authority? Some criteria are needed to help decide when it is and when it is not proper to disobey authority in the name of conscience. One criterion often suggested is, Sincerity. Plainly that is a necessary condition; but obviously not sufficient —
5.

there seems no need to doubt, for example, that the Indian Cultists of Thuggee were perfectly sincere in believing it their religious duty to strangle victims in homage to their goddess; but this certainly grounds no right for them to do so.

(b) For the Christian conscience there has always been the problem of conforming to "the world". Christ warned his followers very plainly that they would often be confronted with the choice: fidelity to his gospel, or conformity to "the world". This is often all the more difficult when the Christian finds his conscience at odds with the attitudes of good decent worldly people, or people more clever or more influential than himself.

(3) However, before one can ever talk of such normative points there are certain conceptual questions which have to be clarified if confusion is not to follow. Part of this clarification involves looking for the models which we often semi-consciously entertain when thinking on this topic.

How very odd it seems in the discussions which followed the present Pope's Encyclical Humanae Vitae to hear people say that, on this Papal Document, they felt that one should follow one's own conscience. Odd: because surely there is no matter where any human being may be permitted not follow his own conscience. Now my guess is that when people spoke in that way they were semi-consciously entertaining a model of something frequently spoken of in the context of Parliamentary discussion: "On this issue each member will be free to follow his conscience (rather than the Party policy)". The suggested parallel seemed to be as if the Pope
usually lays down a Party line, but on the present matter one need not follow the party line, but one's conscience. The same oddity appears to be present: Is there ever an issue, when any politician or any human being is free to act against his conscience?

(4) The normative questions involved in this issue are hideously complex because they are inter-woven with other problems:

(a) There is the contemporary debate about the relationship of Law to Morality. Thus two people who are agreed that some action or practice is immoral may yet disagree as to whether the law should make it illegal. Furthermore frequently the disagreement is really about morals: people can appear to be arguing simply about whether some practice should be ruled illegal, when they themselves are really quite divided about its morality: for instance, the Christian assumption that chastity is a virtue essential to the Gospel is often in fact being rejected. Furthermore it seems to me that one should distinguish questions about the relationship of conscience to morality and the relationship of conscience to politics, and that the two questions are often blurred into each other.

(b) There are also at stake the current discussions about the nature of Morality. How often Philosophers remark on the dogma which many Australian children bring from school: that Facts are "objective" and discovered by Science, whereas Values are subjective, and made by the individual. Herbert McCabe has connected this with the hang-over of dualistic ideas, with the notion that the body is public but the mind is completely inaccessible to outsiders; hence, "only I can know when I am sincere".
So now, a little history of the idea "Conscience." My conceptual points may be better cast in the formal rather than the material mode; that is let us not ask ourselves "what is Conscience?" so much as, "What is the meaning and the force of expression in which the term conscience is used?" Part of my thesis will be to suggest that disagreements about the authority of conscience are not a matter of catholic versus protestant, so much as of a natural versus a mystical understanding of it.

The Greek word which is translated as "conscience" is syneidesis. It was used in the sense of feelings of remorse and guilt for evil things one had done. The Latin word was Conscientia; and, when used in a moral context, it referred to one's judgment and one's feelings about one's past performance: in the sense that we do today speak of "examining our conscience" or "being approached by our conscience".

St. Paul used the term in this sense too. However he introduced a second sense of it: in the sense of deciding what I should do now, as distinct from judgment on what I have done in the past. It came up in the context of Christians who felt some scruple about eating meat which had been used in the worship of idols. Roughly speaking St. Paul's position was, There is nothing wrong with it; but if some people feel that it is wrong, do no violence to their conscience. Ever since that the term conscience has been used in both these senses in the West.

The Nature and Authority of Conscience.

I am going to suggest that there are two different strains in the history of the notion of conscience; the naturalistic, and the non-naturalistic. Perhaps the best example of the latter occurs in Newman's writings: "This view of conscience, I know, is very different from that ordinarily taken of it, both by the science and
literature, and by the public opinion, of this day. It is founded on the doctrine that conscience is the voice of God, whereas it is fashionable on all hands now to consider it in one way or another a creation of man. Of course, there are great and broad exceptions to this statement. It is not true of many or most religious bodies of men; especially Wesleyans, the various Presbyterian sects in Scotland, and other denominations among us, speak of conscience, they mean what we mean, the voice of God in the nature and heart of man, as distinct from the voice of Revelation. They speak of a principle planted within us, before we have had any training, although training and experience are necessary for its strength, growth, and due formation. They consider it a constituent element of the mind, as our perception of other ideas may be, as our powers of reasoning, as our sense of order and the beautiful, and our other intellectual endowments. They consider it, as Catholics consider it, to be the internal witness of both the existence and the law of God." (Difficulties of Anglicans, II, p.247-8).

The other strain in Christian thinking about the nature of conscience is well represented by St. Thomas Aquinas. After some hesitation in his early writing he firmly adhered to the thesis that conscience is not some particular faculty enjoyed by Christians and withheld from others; that it is not some mysterious intuitive power by which all human beings see moral truths or their duty; it is simply an act of judging what to do on a particular occasion, or what is right or wrong about some practice under consideration.

To my mind this is a conceptual issue which should be cleared up before one goes on to tackle normative questions of the relationship between Conscience and Authority. I want to urge the need to de-mystify the notion of conscience, to take the magic out of it. I want to urge that, in the literal sense, conscience is not the voice of God; that in the literal sense there is no "still small
voice within the soul". I do not deny for a moment the value of such rhetorical expressions, provided that they are recognised simply as metaphors; but too often people treat them as literal statements of fact. One certainly does not want to go to the opposite extreme, like Richard III: "Conscience is but a word which cowards use, devised at first to keep the strong in awe". Surely we are much nearer the truth in Gilbert Ryle's statement, "Conscience is reason speaking in her sabbatical tone of voice": it is rational thinking addressed to specific moral problems, and the actual judgment one makes about what one ought to do.

So often people speak as if conscience were something that one is just stuck with. You might be forgiven for thinking that it was a little like an allergy: your allergy is to couch grass, my allergy is to wattle; similarly (some people seem to say) your conscience is allergic to abortion, mine to racism.

People use the expression "consult your conscience": as if consulting one's conscience were a little bit like taking one's own pulse.

Against all such suggestions I should want to insist that conscience is simply You thinking, judging on a particular moral question; hence Ryle's "reason speaking in her sabbatical tone of voice". "What my conscience says" means nothing more or less than "what I think to be right or wrong on some moral question in which I am, in some way, involved".

Furthermore, for a Christian, one element in arriving at that is the teaching of the Church. What is not the case is that I listen to two voices: one the voice of conscience, the other the voice of the Church: and that I must adjudicate between them as if I were some third person. My conscience is simply what I think after taking
all relevant things into account; and for a Christian an enormously important one of these is the experience and the teaching of the Church. Coming to a moral question, a Christian does not start from scratch; he does not simply look at some proposed course of action and say "I cannot see anything wrong with it." Rather, he is a little like a scientist who brings to any problem an enormous mass of established truth and criteria and method; he does not plunge into a particular scientific problem and start out to solve it from scratch.

I say "the teaching of the Church" and this means, more than anything, the teaching of the Gospel. Accordingly, to any moral question, a Christian brings certain expectations. He expects that he must be prepared to live by different standards from those of "the world": in business methods, margin of profit, professional fees; ways of seeking promotion; with regard to almsgiving, for love of the poor is part of the Christian Gospel; he sees marriage as far more than a merely legal contract with nothing more than the obligations and conditions that a contract may have before man-made law; the ubiquitous tendency to trivialise sex is something he sees to be quite at odds with the attitude to it taught by Christ. "The world will hate you" - for the Christian right and wrong means "first and foremost in or out of tune with the spirit of the Gospel".

I think perhaps that the point needs to be emphasised. We often read people who talk as if the second Vatican Council canonised all the attitudes of the modern world. We often read people who talk as if Pope Paul turned his back on Pope John XXIII, whom they portray as a jolly old chap who just wanted everyone to have a good time. But I do not forget hearing Pope John rebuke "those who for fear of not appearing modern fail to tell the whole truth."
Something of the same spirit may be read in people who seem to confine their discussions of Christian morality to abusing "legalism". The 616 precepts of the old law were not simply discarded by our Lord; anyone who has read the Sermon on the Mount remembers how he made many of what we would call the moral precepts of the old law more interior and, indeed, more demanding: "You have heard it said of old, thou shalt not kill: but I say to you ... You have said of old thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you ......." The Christian in forming his conscience, i.e. in deciding how he should judge a particular action or practice, knows that a condition of being a disciple of Christ is, "Take up your cross daily". He knows that being a disciple of Christ involves submitting to a yoke, shouldering a burden. Sometimes he finds comfort in the revelation that that yoke is easy and that burden light; but not always.

Next: one must give a different rationale of conscience vis-a-vis the Church on faith and morals, and of conscience vis-a-vis any other authority: simply because Christ gave his Church authority on faith and morals, and he gave it to no one else. People have often claimed that God gave authority in other ways: e.g. the divine right of kings; the text "All authority comes from God" has often been used as a pretext for upholding the status quo. But a constant Christian conviction has been that Christ made a revelation and promised certain people only within his Church, not within the State, to give them the Holy Spirit who would lead them into all truth. Only once or twice in all of the Gospels does Christ lift the veil on what he prayed about: and one of those rare glimpses is, "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith fail not; and once you recover yourself, confirm your brethren."

Historical Stages

In Catholic thinking, at any rate, I think that we can distinguish four stages in the development
of the authority accorded to conscience.

First, before the middle of the thirteenth Century there was practically no recognition of the possibility that one should obey a conscience which was mistaken but sincere; the attitude was a little like that of the modern British legal concept of strict liability. Secondly, Thomas Aquinas held that it is always wrong to act against one's conscience, even if it is mistaken; even if one conscientiously believed that it would be wrong to abstain from fornication, or to believe in Christ, then it would be wrong to do so. However, he failed to draw the conclusion—which to my mind is implicit in his own principles—that it is good to follow conscience. Thirdly, St. Alphonsus Liguori did draw that conclusion, and all the Catholic manuals after him on moral theology contained such remarks as, "An erroneous conscience shows a man what is God's will for him, just as does a correct one." However, although the full-blooded duty to follow conscience thus came to be recognised, it was not seen that there was also a right to do so. Even during the Council itself there were several bishops still arguing, "Error has no rights". Fourthly, the Second Vatican Council, after a debate which went on and off for two years, taught as official Catholic doctrine that every human being has a strict right to follow his conscience and that it is unjust to deny a person freedom to do so.

Given such historical development it can hardly be surprising that there is no well developed Catholic theology of the relationship of conscience and its rights to authority and its rights. Some of the confusion may perhaps be clarified by working out the suggestion made above that conscience is not to be thought of as in some way distinct from the person who is thinking out what he ought to do.

I should want to suggest that there are no absolute rights of conscience. The religious sect of
Thugs in India conscientiously believed that it was right for them to strangle a person in sacrifice to their gods; yet it seems to me perfectly proper for the British government to have put the practice down. Indeed, it will not do simply to say one has an absolute duty to follow conscience; Aquinas said, a little confusingly, that one's duty with an erroneous conscience is to correct the error; certainly there are cases when it seems to me that we want to say rather, "He should not think that," than "He must act as he thinks right." Himmler seems to have sincerely thought it right to murder Jewish people; the Melbourne philosopher Kevin Presa has argued that that was worse than taking part in the pogroms while half believing that one was wrong. Stangl, the Nazi concentration camp commandant, who supervised the killing of 400,000 Jewish people, said just before he died that his conscience was perfectly clear; I cannot see for a moment that that in the remotest sense made it right for him to act in that horrifying way. And in less dreadful cases: thoughtless selfishness that leads to the decay of love in marriage, or prompts a person to hand on scandal and gossip where it hurts most, may apparently be accompanied by a conviction that one is acting for someone else's good; but I cannot believe that it is without blame. An employer who sees no obligation to his workers beyond that which the law imposes on him, and excuses dangerous working conditions or starvation pay on the pretext that his first duty is to his shareholders cannot, it seems to me, be excused on the score that he is simply following his conscience.

Final Suggestion:

One last remark about Christ's promise to give his Church the Holy Spirit to lead it into all truth. No one can say in advance by what means the Holy Spirit will guide the Church. A few years ago there was a silly caricature, of how Christ's promise is interpreted, which said: "no one has a hot line to the Holy Spirit". The fact
seems to be that nobody knows the psychology involved in the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church's Pastors: not that this is all that surprising when we think how little is known even of the psychology of natural inspiration of poet or novelist or musician. I should suggest that the psychology of Church authority arises from reflecting how it works: not legislating in advance how it must work. Such a theology comes to be formulated, perhaps, a little after the manner in which constitutional lawyers codify the British Constitution, one step behind each stage of its development: so different from the Australian or U.S. Constitutions, which are written down in advance. Perhaps a better model of how such a theology is formulated is to be found in the Logic of Science. What is not the case is that the philosopher first sets out a logic, and the scientist then goes and follows it; scientists make their advances, and philosophers come after them and formalise the steps which the scientist has informally jumped over. I think this may be a little more like what happens in a theology of Church authority; theologians cannot lay down in advance the rules which will be followed by the Holy Spirit, rather, they formalise what has happened by reflecting upon it.
THE CONSCIENCE IN SITUATION ETHICS

G. W. Trompf

When I first told a philosopher friend of mine that I was going to give a lecture on situation ethics, he, being somewhat dubious about situation ethics as an ethical position, laughed a little and came back at me by saying, "Garry, you don't have to give a lecture on situation ethics; with your beard and long hair you are situation ethics."

Then, when I considered that in 1952 Pope Pius XII denounced 'situational' or 'existential ethics' in an allocution, as did the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office four years later, and that, in 1966, the World Congress of 'evangelical' Christians at Berlin condemned situation ethics amongst other things, I felt there just wasn't much hope for me in giving this paper.

However the position is not quite so simple in that I am myself going to be somewhat critical towards the situation ethics position as it has been stated up to now, even though it is with so-called situation ethics that most of my sympathies lie, as someone who frequently talks and thinks about ethics.

If I am to characterise situation ethics I cannot forbear quoting an important passage from an essay by its most renowned exponent, Joseph Fletcher, Professor of Social Ethics at the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He attempted to formulate the essence of his position in two propositions:

i. 'We are commanded to love people, not principles, so that the needs of human beings come before adherence to any rule - although adherence to rules may be less opposed to human welfare than some are willing to appreciate.'
16. 'We are to love people and use things, "things" including abstractions such as moral principles as well as material objects, so that the clue to immorality lies in loving things and using people - that is, subordinating persons to principles, thus reducing them from subjects to objects.'

These are statements of conscience, and to adopt the ethical principles enunciated here could make continuing demands upon the individual's conscience in every human 'situation'.

Now the great bulk of Fletcher's writings see the citing of special situations or predicaments which, for the protagonists involved, require a moral decision. Suppose that we are dealing with moral choices concerned with killing - to kill or not to kill a Hitler before more lives are lost - or with sex - to encourage or not to encourage an extra-marital sexual experience if a given person is so oppressed by the idea of sex that he or she would be incapable of fulfilling themselves in this aspect of life - or with social questions - such as the issues of medical ethics; Fletcher in each case seeks to interpret how the principle of love should be brought to each situation. Love for him is hardly passion, nor sentimentality, nor mere friendliness. It is rather a response to human needs and situations in agape, or with neighbour concern, or unconquerable goodwill, or radical benevolence.

For Fletcher, conscience is a crucial operative factor in producing this response; but it is not an unerring, innate gift of every man, nor the 'voice of God'. It is, and here he significantly uses Aquinas' words, 'reason making moral judgements'.

Let us note a number of assumptions in this position. First, there are what one might call assumptions 'for working purposes'. Fletcher assumes, as ethicists invariably do, that each
instance of conscientious thinking on the part of any person is drawn out of a situation which is characterisable by that person, but that that thinking does not have to be obviously simultaneous with the relevant circumstances. It is possible to have a conscience about a past event, or about a situation you anticipate arising in the future.

A second working assumption implicit in Fletcher's approach is that there is invariably what one might call a unilateral relationship between conscience and a given situation. Fletcher gives a multitude of examples, many curious, (and William Barclay would want to add exceptional) cases, yet certainly we would not find in his work this kind of example: someone is in the very middle of a tense situation, about to make a most momentous moral decision in his life, whether to allow his white son to marry a black-skinned but wealthy woman, or whether to approve of a second marriage for his elderly but lonely mother to an apparently despicable money-grabbing man. Suddenly, in the middle of all this he finds his conscience pricked because he has not yet put in his money for the Christmas Bowl Appeal; and so he makes off, putting first things first, leaving tensions behind him, and catches the next mail.

Of course, with Fletcher it is not just a matter of putting aside such diversions or putting aside haphazard or neurotic behaviour for working purposes, and thus giving examples where conscience is unilaterally focused on a given, characterisable issue, (such as a racially mixed marriage). It also seems to be a matter of his assuming that conscience ought to be unilaterally related to a given situation. How can I explain this without getting tied up in knots?

We are all now in a situation: a conference of this sort clearly does demand for its betterment a response to each other's needs and good will towards one another's viewpoints; this is pre-
sumably the response of goodwill which Fletcher would hope from us in this situation; it is towards this that our conscientious behaviour should be directed. One would thus presume him to be irritated if there were some of us who were continually hung up and oppressed by such doubting questions as - 'really, why did I come to this conference? wouldn't it have been better if I had spent this period of the year helping out at the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul?'

But to give such an example raises a question that Fletcher doesn't really think through fully enough, and that is, what is the 'situation at any given time?' It is conceivable that the kind of person who does not like too much talking about issues, who is rather suspicious of intellectuals, and wants to get down to the 'nitty-gritty' of life, could be seriously conscience stricken in the conference situation. He might up and leave within the hour because, for him, this conference situation is not really the situation at all; that is the one he has characterised in such a way that it draws out the most demanding calls of conscience at this particular time.

Before going further, I would like to mention two other interesting assumptions which are part and parcel of Fletcher's position.

First, he has stated his case from within the Christian tradition. The guiding principle is Christian-agape. That is significant, and yet his line is quite readily susceptible to the secularization of Christian ethics into the position which claims 'love is the only thing; all you need is love'. So one finds among the examples he cites a kind of secularized agape or goodwill. A doctor with concern breaks his Hippocratic oath to inform one of his young patients that the man she is about to marry has contracted syphilis. Fletcher believes rules have here been rightly shelved for benevolence, and it does not necessarily take a
Christian doctor to achieve that.

Now there is an apparent tension in Fletcher here; on the one hand he is searching to delineate the supremely Christian ethical stance, the one that reaches beyond the inhibiting forms of rules, legalisms, prescriptions, and canon law to the liberating but distinctly rational application of unconquerable goodwill. On the other hand, he justifies the love-ethic by as many examples as he can manage of persons, (soldiers, doctors, prostitutes, characters out of Arthur Miller's plays), who put human needs before rules. That tension may not be unresolvable, but it needs clearer thinking than Fletcher has given it, if he has given it any at all.

Related to this, is the second of the assumptions worth noting in Fletcher's position; he assumes situation ethics to be an exclusivist ethic. According to his exposition it does not seem to be possible to do actually what I would like to do, namely, to be a situation ethicist and yet be open minded and accepting towards other kinds of ethical views as well. To him, slight deviations from his position so frequently smell like sell-outs to legalism and there is nothing he is more belligerent about than legalism, especially that of the Catholic hierarchy's prescriptions on moral questions and the Evangelical's 'Law of Scripture'.

Is not such belligerence, we may fairly ask, with some mid-Victorian indignation, unbecoming for a situational ethicist?

But now let me get more to my own conclusions. Let it be clear that old beliefs about laws of morality and about unassailable ethical principles are under a certain threat from recent expressions of relativism, or from the widespread insistence on the uniqueness of every individual consciousness. Without going into questions on the relative seriousness of this threat, nor even pretending to assess the extent of its impact sociologically, I need only stress how intensely aware we
all seem to be becoming of an enormous variety of situations as they are conveyed to us through mass-media and literature over and above our own experience. Realization of this situational complexity, which is a complexity that is evident at all levels of human life, political and institutional and the psychologies of individuals, poses a real threat to older views about the validity of revealed moral truths (the Ten Commandments, for instance), and the validity of natural laws of morality, so-called, (whether they are derived from reasoning about the content of and relationship between moral ideas as in the works of Plato or John Locke, or whether they are derived from what is considered by the observation of nature, to be the 'natural' as against 'unnatural' tendency in human affairs, as with the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, the social Darwinist). Realization of this situational complexity also poses a threat to any valid consensus of conscience, and to the idea that the common experience of mankind has provided the valid guidelines of conscience, since, to use John Stuart Mill's terms, there are 'things which have been tried and condemned from the beginning of the world until now'. (He was, significantly, writing in the nineteenth century.)

I am not saying, by the way, that the recognition of situational complexity prevents people from following laws which they claim to have divine, natural or consensus validity. It is just that this recognition is making many people far less sure of older validations, and more importantly, it reinforces the claim that, even if the experience of one's conscience is a real experience, there is no reason for supposing that so-called moral decisions, moral laws and principles have anything more than a functional validity. That is, having conscience, rules, and principles 'work'; it helps societal relations to operate more easily, but that does not mean to say that such rules and acts of conscience are 'right', 'really true' have a kind of absolute validity and so on.
21.

Situational complexity can be examined from two viewpoints for our purposes. First, one can look at the complexities to which the word and deed of conscience is directed. Secondly, one can view the complexity involved in the individual's conscience itself.

To take the first viewpoint, it is important to remember that moral norms have changed in the tradition of civilization in which we are located, and will continue to change. Leonardo da Vinci had to creep through the dark streets of Florence to a secret place where dead human bodies were being dissected, but today doctors and others can perform and watch such dissections in broad daylight and with the full consent of Church and State. Black men could once be considered as inferior beings who made good slaves; today that would be a very questionable attitude indeed.

It is also important to remember that moral norms differ between countries within the so-called western tradition. Over recent years, for example, there is a tendency for parliamentarians in the West who want legislation on sexual relationships to look to the apparently ultra-liberal legislation of France. Also these norms will differ the more alien from ours the culture of a given country - for instance, the intensely isolationist people of the Trobriand Islands, or the patterns of conventional hospitality among the Japanese or the Eskimos, some of which patterns may seem quite immoral to us. The obvious question arises, is conscientious thinking and behaviour to be adjusted in accordance with changing norms or such apparently unexpected norms as we have just mentioned? In answer, the plea of many a relativist, and the plea of situation ethicists, is for a loving tolerance towards those who have come to accept different norms, and a wariness against imposing a foreign set of presuppositions upon a situation which will produce violent reaction or human coldness.
Now, in parenthesis, there is an interesting distinction to be drawn here between what a person in conscience may allow for himself and what he may allow or tolerate in other people's actions. We may well ask if, because of another person's differing moral views, we are concessive towards his behaviour, are we in any way bending our own conscience? Have we compromised it to the situation? Of course the situationist would want to say that if a moral decision remains unaffected by the special circumstances and factors of the case, (here I would certainly agree with them), ethics has become fossilized into and confused with legal prescription.

Thinking of the first viewpoint still, situational complexity does not just have to do with changing norms, but with the intricacies of every individual 'situation' in which people find themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously - and of course, as we have hinted previously, situations can be characterized and identified by people in a multitude of different ways. Social and psychological pressures may lead people to take courses of actions which we could not see ourselves taking, nor want most people to take. Even physical pressures may do that. A man I am acquainted with who was constantly irritable and bad tempered and who got a lot of little gentle, moralizing hints from his friend that he ought to be a little bit more human and gracious towards others and appreciative about life, confessed in the end that he suffered from dreadful constipation. Certain psychological problems may have been involved there too, but it can hardly be denied that my friend's attitude towards his irritability altered after he was enlightened about a crucial aspect of the 'situation'.

Take the case of the man who has an affair with a woman other than his wife. According to the letter of the law of church and state that would be adultery. Yet what about the man who did so because his wife refused or tried her best to
refuse him sexual satisfaction? I vividly remember a tremendous commotion inside the farmhouse of the farm on which I used to pick loganberries as a young lad, and it became so bad that the pickers on the farm called in the police to stop it. On the arrival of the policeman at the front verandah, the door was swung open and out came the hefty, earthy old farmer; 'Get the hell out of here, I'm having intercourse with my wife'. Well it became clear that he was having difficulties with his wife, but one could hardly make any moral judgment about his case without a good measure of sympathy, were we to discover that he found satisfaction elsewhere, although our sympathy might not extend to the lover.

Most of us suppose for working purposes that human situations are the products of causes and multiple factors. The situation ethics stance suggests that moral behaviour must be looked at first in that light, and not reacted to by such built-in automatic responses as 'ah, that is theft', 'ah, that is covetousness'.

Before moving on to some vexatious questions that may arise from some of us here, let me just pinpoint the issues involved with the second view of situational complexity, that concerned with the complexity involved in the individual's conscience itself. A human being's conscientious responses do not often evince the kind of stability we often assume them to possess. Think of the effects on the individual's conscience in any given situation in which it is apparently 'exercised' of - tiredness, distraction, over-preoccupation with other matters, nervousness, menstrual tension, repression, and the like. A man is much more likely to be condemnatory of an action performed by someone he has never really liked anyway, than by someone he loves. He might have no qualms about creating a disturbance in a city street at 1 am or stealing flowers from flowerboxes, if he is feeling quite zany and with friends who are still zanier.
Whereas alone and less elated, his conscience might get the better of him — actually in that case his conscience might even act as a rationalization of his less adventurous behaviour. All this shades into social pressures and psychologies again, but this time I am hoping to raise for every one the question of the stability and consistency of his own conscience. Our own state of mind is part of any situation we experience or are confronted with; it demands self-knowledge and personal discipline to assess what implications our own state of mind and conscience actually have for any 'moral situation'.

Given, then, the force of such situational complexity, and given its relevance to morality and conscience, what kinds of directives for conscientious thinking and behaviour arise when this awareness of situational complexity is taken with due seriousness? In general, and in review somewhat, it would be fair to say that situational ethics raises questions about altering perspectives in one's moral attitudes. Its espousers oppose themselves fundamentally to laws and narrowing principles, to the idea of imposing moral precepts upon people who would not benefit from them, or on situations which would not be humanized by them. The question then arises as to whether or not situational ethics offers an ethical blank cheque, that is, whether it represents a way of committing oneself to far-reaching ethical individualism at one end of the scale (a position which could be reduced to absurdity), or whether it permits the application of flexible, humanizing principles on the other. This in turn raises the problem of the extent to which situational ethics has departed from older views about divinely revealed moral truths, natural laws of morality, codes and so on.

Professor Fletcher takes himself to be in the middle of these extremes, and he distinguishes himself from what he calls extemporism and also from legalism. The contrast is between spur of the moment decision-making and the training of the
conscience to respond as flexibly as possible to the immediate situation, on the one hand, and prescriptive ethics, the concerted effort to establish fixed rules of behaviour and to firmly control conscience patterns on the other. According to this line of approach, the key directive is provided by the love-ethic, or what Fletcher does not mind calling the principle, even law of love.

Thus on the one hand, unconquerable good will may counter, even condemn, but also seek to transform or license, that is, greed, injustice, arrogance, hate, exploitation, power domination, and other libertarian-antinomian, departures from love. On the other hand, it may counter, condemn, yet seek to redeem rigidities— that is, binding prescriptions for behaviour, ideologies, the subordination of persons to principles, and so forth.

Now Fletcher's position is open to misunderstanding and because of this it is open to criticism. As I contended before, one aspect of a certain tension in Fletcher's work is that he seems to be searching for an ideal, or the best, or the most humanizing basis for moral behaviour and for the workings of conscience. His preferences are grounded in the New Testament ethics, or shall we say his interpretation of them. Now, as a call to how we ought to think and behave ethically and conscientiously, I consider Fletcher's position to be bravely stated and very compelling. He would like all men to maximize the autonomy of their consciences, to engender the individual's greater rationality and sensitivity in the moral life, and yet to encourage men to be controlled and motivated by a dominant concern to love. I accept this. Yet I do so with some qualifications. To enumerate some of these: first, on many moral questions, and central ones at that, men like to be told what to do. They rely heavily on so called 'expert' opinion or pronouncement, and as William Barclay with no little foresight recently contended, they so often want laws and do not want to be ethically liberated.
psychologists are to be given their due recognition - and I think of scholars such as Peter Berger and Piaget - then the need for rules and laws in the moral sphere is part of the human situation, or better still, part of a multitude of human situations. Social pressures make us conform to rules and laws; we are brought up from the cradle to respect them.

That does not mean that Fletcher's hopes for love are unjustified however. It simply means that the cards of human nature are stacked against him, and that realities demand that men make rules for themselves and among themselves.

This introduces my second and third qualifications, the second being that I really doubt whether it is possible for anybody to be entirely liberated from rules or laws, whether these have been largely derived from others or largely produced by introspection. Here I am not so interested to say about situation ethics what others have often said, that men like Fletcher still end up, logically speaking, with a law, namely the law of love, and perhaps some other subsidiary ones. I think rather that it is most unlikely that there could be any such thinking as moral or conscientious thinking if the human mind were not continually concerned with types of situations or events it associates with the moral sphere. If I may put it this way, the human mind has to make intelligibility of the world; in its struggle to do so it classifies data, and it classifies what we may call moral data, the raw material of rules. No man can be so fully liberated from such classifying processes as to escape rules and laws, and of course at no time is he more conscious of this than when he discovers two or more situations which apparently require from him the same conscientious response.

Now the last qualification; I have to admit that love does not represent the immediate answer to all problematic moral situations. It may represent the goal towards which one should work in all cases, but unconquerable good will or radical benevolence
would not work as effectively as we would hope in such realms as international or even domestic politics, or big business. Often the way to solve problems in these spheres is to minimize self interest, and one is more likely to succeed in this with binding treaties, good legislation and business codes.

I could refer to other qualifications that might come to mind. Is it not possible to find somebody who is a little too radically benevolent, for example, a man who positively irritates by his unconquerable good will? Fletcher is certainly cold blooded about love. He calls for it to be rational, flexible and yet disciplined, but are there no times when even in our rational concern we are no more than satisfying our ego, and are there no times when tears and emotion are preferable to objective, calculating benevolence? One could add to the list of criticisms a warning about how 'love without law' could engender rationalizations for what otherwise might be considered unethical behaviour, such as in the case of 'philanthropic sex'. And one should be on the lookout for unhistorical tendencies in Fletcher's use of examples, the extrapolation of 'predicaments' from circumstances which in reality do not demand the same moral choice that Fletcher supposes they do. A mother faced with decision as to whether she should kill her crying baby to save the whole group from an Indian massacre, to use one of his examples, would not really be faced with that decision until it was quite clear that stalking Indians were about to attack the party.

But bearing in mind that the most important qualifications I have made concerning one key expression of situation ethics relate to law, I can now express in general form, what my own position is, even if getting to the point of expressing it leaves a few cut corners. To sketch a ground-plan for ethics and for conscientious thinking and behaviour I would plead for three 'realizations': that the uniqueness and complexity of human
situations must be recognized; that the primary motivation of ethics ought to be agape or unconquerable good will, but that in the light of both what is typical in human behaviour and what are the common expectations of humans in society, laws and rules are necessary and inevitable, and that those rules are best which account for complexity and maximise the possibilities of agape.

To put it another way, we might say with the Dominican Herbert McCabe that ethics is a way of loving, a way of obeying the law, and a way of communicating.12

But I have to admit that I have generalized out my position as a Christian, and I must ask myself in conclusion why I feel justified in putting such priority on such a position. I am not presenting a 'secular' ethic; I have to admit that I do not hold these views about conscience simply for functional reasons, simply because I believe human relations to 'work' better that way.

Certainly it is in the nature of things that when somebody states an ethical position, it is possible for any Tom, Dick or Harry to appropriate its essence. That is precisely what has happened in so-called Christian countries; the ethics and the principles of conscience have been so frequently internalized without asking serious questions about the validity of such ethics and principles.

A doubting relativist can with some justification come along and admit a Christian ethic (such as mine) may well work, but that it rests on false presuppositions, or that I have really no grounds for saying that it is preferable to or more correct than any other ethic. A Christian cannot get out of this argument by saying that his ethic 'works better'; how would I answer?

I have only space to give a brief sketch of at least one way I might tackle the problem. I have to admit that the logic of relativism requires me
to acknowledge that right or wrong, considered only from the functional point of view, is always in danger of not being right or wrong at all. From that point of view, it is always possible that the Hindus are right to abstain from eating cows, or that war is a necessary evil, to take two examples. Certainly you would have nothing like any ultimate validity for saying that Hitler was a wicked man or Judas a betrayer. It seems that when a Christian speaks about God, especially in this connection about 'revealed ethical truths' or 'divine judgement', he is trying to say that ethics does not just have a functional point, but an ultimate point as well. When Ivan Ivanovitch in The Brothers Karamazov, commented 'If God is dead, everything is permitted', that was Dostoevsky's way of declaring that only God, the God who makes known his will, the God who is the judge lying beyond, over and above mere functionalism, makes sense of morality and endows it with ultimate 'pointfulness'.

It is at this stage, however, that I would want to become more concrete and historical - to distinguish my position from mere theism or from other non-Christian religious views - by asserting that within the limits of biblical history one finds development in ethical thinking which sums up or capitulates the kind of ethical position I have been feeling for, and which does justice to what situational complexity, human needs and human realities are forever throwing upon us as moral beings. Jesus stands at the end of a rich tradition. Almost every page of the Old Testament was written in response to situations, whether as historical circumstances or as problems of faith, but with Jesus there is to be found an uncanny radicalization of the traditional response. With him it is as though the needs of the group and society are no more nor less important than the needs of every individual to whom parables were directed to whom attention and healing were given. The Old Testament faith is grounded in Torah, the Law of Yahweh, yet the struggle for priorities, whether to put justice before ritual sacrifice,
(to recall a familiar prophetical message), whether to put more priority on personal ethic than religious prescriptions, (to think of the impact of Old Testament wisdom literature), the struggle for priorities frequently manifests itself in the Israelite-Jewish tradition. Yet it is Jesus who gives the compelling clarification to the issue of priorities by isolating the essential ethic, love, not as summing up the law and the prophets, as his near contemporary rabbi Hillel would have said, but as the principle on which all the law and the prophets depend. Law was a reality for Jesus. Where he saw its legalistic rigidities, however, he abandoned it for love and justice. Yet where he saw its use and its humanizing effectiveness, he recommended it to be honoured. The situation was important. That is a tension and a stance we would do well to preserve, but without using it as a loophole to legalism, and without forgetting that the final goal is love.  

In short, I wish to defend the situation ethic approach to conscience, and yet to insist that neither a recognition of the reality and necessity of rule-making in public or private conscience, nor a search for the validation of a Christian ethic beyond functionalism, need compromise that essential position.

NOTES


2. See esp. his Situation Ethics, cf. Medical Ethics.


7. See Ibid. Chap. 1, esp. pp. 20-1, etc. Situation Ethics, op. cit.


9. See the papers by Mr. Blaikie and Dr. Beswick in this collection.


14. Paul's position may be considered as an 'analogue' of Jesus; the fullness of the Kingdom of God is imminent, and although the old law had been a schoolmaster to Christ and had revealed the nature of sin, ethics and law are entirely reviewed, in the light of the Kingdom's advent. The ethical behaviour suggested by Paul was 'natural' behaviour for man in the light of the advent, and was ultimately summed up in agape however prescriptive it looks. (cf. 1 Cor. XIII).
Sociologists rarely write about conscience; perhaps it is too common an idea for them to discuss; perhaps they do not have consciences and therefore consider the notion irrelevant; perhaps they have invented a new name for it.

I have been asked to talk about conscience from a sociological point of view. My colleagues have made this task rather difficult because of their reluctance to include this concept in their theories and research. However, despite these difficulties, I shall endeavour to present a point of view on conscience which I consider to be a sociological one, although not one to which all sociologists would necessarily subscribe. Of necessity, my treatment of the topic will be essentially theoretical and mainly impressionistic.

I propose to do the following: begin by discussing what appears to be the typical everyday or commonsense use of the concept, what is usually meant by 'acts of conscience', what type of people are most often regarded as having a conscience, and how conscience is 'used' by these people. I shall then discuss, largely as a counter to these commonsense views, how conscience can be viewed as a sociological phenomenon. In doing this, it will be necessary to introduce a number of related sociological concepts and to make use of a particular theoretical perspective. This perspective is derived from the various works of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. I do not propose to review their ideas in any detail and therefore suggest that these works be consulted, particularly Berger's Invitation to Sociology and Berger and Luckmann's The Social Construction of Reality.
What is the commonsense approach to conscience?

It appears that much of our contemporary usage of the concept still carries with it the same basic meaning of earlier centuries. Essentially, conscience is assumed to be a somewhat autonomous faculty which is able to make pronouncements on what is right and wrong and thereby enable the individual to cope with the problems of ethical conduct. Conscience is defined by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as:

"The faculty or principle which pronounces upon the moral quality of one's actions and motives approving the right and condemning the wrong."

This faculty is assumed to have special knowledge which it will use to temper an individual's inevitable tendency to act on impulse and in terms of self-interest. Conscience is thus assumed to be a somewhat infallible guide and authority which the individual should obey in order to be a moral person. To do otherwise is likely to produce drastic consequences, be it guilt or divine judgment.

Walt Disney has portrayed this view of conscience in his characters Pinocchio and Jiminey Cricket. In order to begin to become a person, Pinocchio had to have a conscience. If he felt he needed guidance all that was required was:

"Give a little whistle,
And always let your conscience be your guide"

Jiminey Cricket would know what to do. Of course, Pinocchio learned to his great peril that his conscience should not be ignored.

What are acts of conscience?

In light of this common-sense view of conscience, it would appear that when an individual acts in terms of what his conscience dictates, he does so on the basis of the special knowledge with which this faculty provides him; his actions are not the
result of 'external' pressures of coercion but are in terms of his own infallible guide. There are areas of choice in which it is considered appropriate for an individual to act in terms of conscience; areas in which the individual is assumed to have the right to decide to do or not to do, to be different or to conform.

Clearly, there are a number of problems associated with viewing conscience, or acts of conscience, in this way. First, there is the problem of the assumptions that are made about the nature and origins of conscience. Where does this autonomous and infallible guide reside? Can it be called up in emergencies like Jiminy Cricket? Where does it come from? How can right and wrong be established when conscience says different things to different people, or different things to the same person at different times? Second, who defines those areas in which acts of conscience are allowable? Who decides what are adequate grounds for conscientious objection? Who decides whether or not a war is a just war? In some situations an act may be defined by some as an act of conscience and by others as a manifestation of mental illness, a crime, communist subversion, or for that matter, religious subversion, depending on whether you are in a capitalist or communist society!

There is another sense in which the notions of 'conscience' and 'acts of conscience' are used, i.e. to refer to duty or obligation. In this sense, it is not simply a matter of knowing what is right and wrong, or refraining from doing what is wrong. Rather, it is the doing of a certain action, e.g. supporting a worthy cause or helping someone in trouble. A person is seen to do these things as a matter of conscience, out of a sense of duty to one's fellow men.

Despite the problems associated with common-sense views of conscience (assuming my assessment of them is valid), there is an important point which needs to be kept in mind. In order to gain an adequate
understanding of social life in any situation it is necessary to know what commonsense 'knowledge' people have; what kind of social reality people have constructed; what kind of view of the world they have. If people include in their construction of social reality the notions of conscience, and have ideas on how it operates, we can expect these ideas will be found in their commonsense understanding of how social life 'works'. Also, the definitions people have for situations influences the way they behave in those situations. If conscience is believed to be an autonomous and infallible guide designed to control undesirable impulses, then 'right' and 'wrong' behaviour will be identified accordingly, as will the causes. A study of how people view conscience and how this influences their understanding of social life, would be well worth undertaking.

Who has a conscience?

In the commonsense view, everyone has a conscience. But there are at least two classes of people to whom the notion of conscience is most commonly applied. The first is the group just mentioned, i.e. people with a sense of duty, or, as some might suggest, people who hold good middle-class values!

There is, however, a more important class of individuals who are regarded as having a conscience. These are members of minority groups; groups who are allowed to act contrary to what the dominant group normally allows. Members of minority groups insist that they have the right to act in particular ways because such actions are dictated by their conscience. These acts of conscience are tolerated by dominant groups because they believe that the conscience of the minority group members should not be offended. Acts of conscience may be considered valid by dominant groups even if they do not think them to be necessarily right.
In these two examples, conscience is used in different ways. In the former, the sense of duty, conscience is used as a source of motivation; the 'good' man acts or feels this way; this is what responsible people do. Not to have a conscience in these matters is to neglect one's duty as a good citizen. In the latter, minority groups, conscience is used as a rationalization for their actions; it is an integral part of their constant fight to defend what they consider to be their rights - to be able to do what they think is right.

A theoretical perspective

Some of the early writers in sociology and psychology presented theoretical schemes in which this dualism between the individual and his conscience was an essential idea. In discussing the notion of 'self', George Herbert Mead (1934) suggested that two dimensions are involved: the 'I' and the 'me'. The 'I' he saw as the active, creative, assertive and spontaneous aspect of the 'self'. The 'me' he saw as that part of the 'self' which cautions and controls the 'I'; it reflects the expectations and judgments of others; it is what we are as a result of the attitudes and values of others which we have internalized; it is the social aspect of the 'self' as against the more individualistic 'I'.

Mead argued that the 'I' and the 'me' engage, as it were, in an internal dialogue. He appears to have suggested that ideally, there should be some kind of balance between the creative and daring 'I' and the cautious and conforming 'me'. An overdeveloped 'me' may stifle creativity and produce over conformity; an unrestrained 'I' may lead to lack of self-control and the inability to relate adequately to others.

It is clear that the commonsense notions about conscience are closely linked with Mead's 'me'. However, Mead laid great stress on the social origins of the self, a fact frequently neglected
in the commonsense view of conscience.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Berger (1967) have incorporated Mead's and other classical sociological ideas into a broad theoretical framework. They suggest that individual consciousness has two components, the socialized and the non-socialized. The part of consciousness which is produced by socialization becomes the individual's identity; he becomes what he is addressed by others. In addition, he plays a number of roles in which his behaviour is guided by the expectations which 'society' has assigned to these roles. He also behaves in accordance with social norms which prescribe what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in particular situations. In short, the individual is 'produced' by the 'society' into which he is born and he behaves, not only in accordance with what the 'society' expects of a person who has been assigned that particular identity and who plays those particular roles, but also in terms of general and specific social norms.

An individual can, however, play a part in changing these expectations. He may also behave contrary to them but only at the risk of negative reactions from his significant others and the guilt and shame which this might produce. The extent to which he is prepared to deviate will depend largely on how important conformity is considered by the actors in the situation.

The notion of conscience does not appear in this theoretical scheme. Rather, what an individual regards as a right or wrong action is what his 'society' regards as being appropriate or inappropriate behaviour, i.e. what the norms specify. Insofar as the individual has internalized these norms he can be said to have a conscience.

Acts of conscience

At a more general level we can speak of such groups or aggregates as sharing a world view, an
encompassing system of meaning containing typifications, interpretive schemes and recipes for conduct on different levels of generality. (Luckmann, 1967:55). To speak of acts of conscience entails the recognition of the fact that individuals behave, not only in accordance with specific group expectations, but also in terms of their world view.

All world views are precarious and require regular maintenance. The most fundamental form of maintenance is conversation; dialogue between those who share the same world view. Signs and rituals also play an important part in the maintenance of a world view as is evidenced in the anti-war movement, the Jesus revolution and women's liberation - hand signs and burning articles in public.

In order to be able to continue a commitment to an identity and world view, social support is required. There have to be people around who share this world view and who are able continually to reassure the individual that his is the 'right' view of the world and that he is who he thinks he is.

As individuals move from group to group so will their identity and world view change. Initially these are acquired through primary socialization, the socialization of early childhood. Later, secondary socialization in such contexts as peer groups, at school, and during tertiary education and occupational training may produce changes in identity and world view. It may also produce considerable conflict for an individual as a result of the variety of identities and world views which may be mediated to him. During their lives some individuals may experience resocialization, the taking on of a completely new identity and world view. Such changes occur in social contexts and as a result of social processes.

Where do world views come from?

Berger and Luckmann argue that world building is a fundamental human activity. Men do, and need to,
project some order and meaning onto the world around them and give meaning to life experiences. In particular, they need to make sense of crisis situations - loss of a loved one, illness, accidents, and, ultimately, their own death.

Hence man can be viewed as a constructor of systems of meaning - of world views. In practice, of course, very few individuals do much 'world building'; most of us are initially socialized into a particular view of the world. At times, however, particularly during rapid social change and social upheaval, world views may become inadequate; they fail to make sense of these new experiences. In such situations we are likely to witness the rise of new social movements; groups with 'new' world views which are designed to help their members cope with life under these 'new' conditions. There are many contemporary examples of this in the U.S.

My basic argument is that acts of conscience must be viewed as social phenomenon in at least two ways. In a broad sense, they are manifestations of the identity and world view which an individual holds as a result of identification with some group. But acts of conscience are also socially defined, i.e. some group decides what will constitute such an act; the dominant group decides when the members of a minority group should be allowed to act contrary to the dominant expectations. To have such definitions changed becomes a major task of many minority groups.

There are, however, two other possible sources of motivation for an act of conscience. First, an individual may claim legitimacy for an act as an act of conscience, not on the basis of his current identity or world view, but on the basis of some residual aspect of an earlier identity or world view. For example, he may revert, on occasions, to acting in terms of his primary socialization. This position, however, is a precarious one as its lack of contemporary social support will make it difficult to sustain.
Second, some individuals who claim to act in terms of conscience may turn out to be the founders of new social movements. Their actions and their ideas arise out of their attempt to grapple with the problem of making sense of some 'new' social situation or circumstances. Their ideas may echo some earlier prophetic tradition; they may be borrowed from some other group, either contemporary in some other location, or from an earlier era. Whatever the source of their ideas, such 'deviants' or prophets will need to develop a following in order to continue to hold these ideas. These prophets will not 'cry in the wilderness' as long as there are sufficient people about for whom these ideas provide an answer to their search for meaning. Without social support, such a 'new' view of the world cannot be maintained for long. The many studies of the rise and development of religious or other social movements clearly document these claims.

Acts of conscience, then, are frequently the actions of members of minority groups, and, particularly, members of social movements. The right to hold a minority view of the world, and to act on the basis of it, is a fundamental issue of our age. It has traditionally been possible for a member of a minority religious group to be exempt from military service on 'religious grounds', but almost impossible for a member of a political movement to be exempt on 'political grounds' or a humanist on 'humanitarian' grounds.

Why should this be so? Why is a religious world view more acceptable as a basis for conscientious objection than is a political world view? To some extent, at least, this depends on the fact that the religious and political realms are separate in a particular society. The dominant group can tolerate more religious deviance than political deviance because religious deviance is very often a withdrawal from the world, while a politically deviant group offers an alternative, and perhaps challenging, world view. However, a characteristic
of the contemporary scene is the much more challenging stance of some religious minorities who see political involvement as an important part of their activities.

The basic issue for the dominant group is how much 'deviance' can be tolerated. What kind and how many acts of conscience can be tolerated before the dominant group begins to have difficulty in maintaining its world view? Societies differ in the extent to which deviant world views can be accommodated. Monolithic societies have a very low threshold, whether or not there is a strong religious content to their world view. Pluralistic societies, with some notable exceptions, appear to be more tolerant, at least of other religious world views. However, for their own self preservation, only some acts can be defined as acts of conscience; the actions of minority groups must be contained within the limits which the dominant group defines. Within a society, different limits will be placed on various minorities. Those whose primary aim is to attack the views of the dominant group will clearly have very strict limits, e.g. the anti-war movement in the U.S.

Conclusion

Conscience, if we want to use the concept, must be viewed as a social phenomenon. To apply sociological concepts to the discussion of conscience is to direct attention away from the individual towards the various groups to which he belongs, or, perhaps, aspires to belong. Perhaps this is stating the obvious. However, my aim has been to present a particular point of view to provide, on the one hand, at least an alternative to the more individualistic view of conscience, and, on the other hand, a stimulus to later discussion.

To be a human being is to be a social creature, i.e. to engage in relatively stable social relationships with other human beings. The sharing of typifications, symbols, meanings, values, norms,
in short, a world view, is a necessary ingredient of ongoing social relationships. In any large-scale society the existence of more than one world view is inevitable, producing conflicts over ideals and priorities. The presence of dominant and minority views leads to problems over the rights of minorities to hold, and act, in accordance with their view of the world. From the point of view of the dominant group, the question is: how much and what kinds of deviance can be tolerated? From the point of view of the minority, the question is: how can we continue to hold our view of the world without accommodating to the dominant view? An appeal to conscience is one possible strategy.

NOTES


2. There appears to be a close parallel between Mead's 'me' and Freud's 'superego'. Freud, however, saw the self as being made up of three dimensions, the 'id' or essential self, the 'superego' or social conscience, and the 'ego' or mediator between the 'id' and the 'superego' - between drives and desires and the demands of society.

3. The concept 'society' is used here to refer to a group or aggregate of individuals who more or less share the same view of the world. An individual takes on this view of the world through the same processes which gave him his identity.
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When psychologists attempt to give an account of the development of conscience they usually assume that conscience is formed by the same learning processes as other personality characteristics. There is no generally agreed upon definition of conscience and frequently there is no reference to an entity within the person which might be labelled as conscience. Psychologists seem to be more concerned with the development of what might be called 'moral behaviour' and the internal processes by which children develop the capacity to act consistently with what one recent reviewer called 'responsible altruistic rational and autonomous attitudes'. To this end a good deal of attention has been given to the processes by which social expectations may be internalized, to the conditioning of anxiety responses and to the development of a cognitive structure which underlies the child's ability to make moral judgments. In this way a distinction is often made between the content or overt characteristics of a moral response and the structure of mind which made such a response possible.

It would be a distortion of the nature of contemporary psychology to say that there are different schools of thought on this subject but there are somewhat different emphases in the work of different writers, especially if we go back some thirty or fifty years. Such differences of emphasis as still appear in psychological literature appear to derive very largely from different methodological approaches to the topic; nevertheless one can discern what might be called four theoretical formulations. These are (1) psychoanalytic, (2) trait theory, (3) cognitive developmental stages, and (4) social behaviour theory. We will give some
attention to each of these in turn but it should be kept in mind that there is no direct competition in the explanation of events and some aspects of these different approaches have been superseded. I shall outline each approach in their historical sequence and then describe them in more detail. Psychoanalytic theory was developed initially by Freud in the early years of the psychoanalytic movement around the turn of the century and gave an account of the development of conscience in association with his exposition of the Oedipus Complex. The early work in trait theory attempted to give an account of individual differences which would point to different attributes, abilities or traits as underlying consistencies in moral behaviour. In this respect the work of Hartshorne and May in the 1920's was outstanding. This approach was abandoned quite early, partly because of the negative findings of Hartshorne and May, and partly because of its being superseded by a more radical revision of our common understanding of children's moral capacities which was devolved by Jean Piaget and which formed the basis for a large number of projects over the next thirty years. In parallel with this series of studies, and often quite unrelated to it, people with a behaviourist emphasis were studying social behaviour without very much attention to what we might call conscience but they attempted to give some systematic account of attitudes and anxieties which might be held to give an explanation of the same events. This approach has been fruitful in recent years and is typical of the writings of modern personality theorists such as Walter Mischel.

In describing these four approaches in more detail I will assume very little knowledge of psychology, although we can expect that most people will have read sufficiently widely to recognize most of the common terms. Indeed in the first case, that of Freud's theory, we have many terms which were originally restricted to a technical meaning but which have become well based in our common language in the last two generations.
Psychoanalytic theory

Freud found it convenient to think of the psyche (mind or personality) as being in three parts; id, ego and superego. The id is the reservoir of unconscious desires, or instincts. Freud's understanding of instinct is what might be termed 'primary drive' in a later terminology. Initially Freud thought of two groups of instincts called 'eros' or sexual instincts and the 'ego instincts'. Later he subsumed the ego instincts under the idea of pleasure seeking as part of the eros group of instincts and in his last work he proposed that there were two basic groups of instincts: eros, that which seeks the unity of all things; and the death instinct concerned with decay, destruction, disintegration and death. Freud supposed that we are all completely unconscious of all of the material in that part of ourselves he called the id. We know these instincts only in a socialised form but when a child is born, according to psychoanalytic theory he is all id and functioning according to what Freud called 'the primary process', which is the process by which immediate satisfaction of instinctual desires is sought without any rational thought for consequences or regard for realistic demands of the environment. As soon as the child begins to interact with the environment he experiences frustration of the self-centred pleasure seeking desires and he begins to learn to delay satisfaction and to establish means-ends relationships whereby he has some mastery over his environment. This is the beginning of the development of the 'ego'. However, for Freud the ego never develops to become a strong character. In the life-long drama of the psyche the ego is continually pushed along by the giant id, whilst being opposed from the opposite direction by a bully of equal strength, the repressive civilised society. In this condition he would live in continual fear of being overwhelmed if it were not for his taking into himself a representation of part of the environment which saves him from surrender to the id and consequently allows him to avoid punishment from external social entities. That which is incorpor-
ated is the superego, or conscience and remains almost entirely unconscious.

The stage of psychological development at which Freud located the origin of conscience, or superego, corresponds roughly to the pre-school years of about three to five years of age. Just as Oedipus killed his father and married his mother, so Freud believed the young child desires to displace the parent of the same sex, whom he sees as a competitor and threat. He becomes so much afraid of punishment for these desires that he can only overcome his fear by a process of identification, so the little boy begins to copy his father, he begins to act as if he were his father, he takes over his father's moral attitudes, he begins to perceive punishment for wrongdoing as coming from within himself, not simply from outside. He has in fact introjected the value system of his society which was represented in his father, or perhaps another authority figure. Because of the severe threats involved, the whole of this process is repressed and remains unconscious. Neither the later child nor the adult is capable of recalling, except under very special circumstances of psychoanalytic treatment, or symbolically as in dreams, this traumatic experience of the Oedipus complex and its resolution. The child does not know that the voice which says 'no' within him is the voice of his father. This voice can only say 'no', it can never say 'yes' and it has no rational basis, it is associated with a threat of punishment which the person experiences as anxiety. This anxiety is a signal that the demands of the id are about to overwhelm the ego and thus some modification of behaviour is required.

Perhaps we should note at this point that, although Freud gives an account of the development of conscience or superego in girls which is parallel to that given for boys, it appears to be less well expounded for women. We can suppose that it is one of the consequences of Freudian theory being developed in the particular historical circumstances of Central Europe in the late nineteenth
century that, because women were not the same authority figures within the family as were men, the little girls did not develop the same strength of conscience as little boys. Which is a conclusion that is almost certainly false; indeed there is some evidence that the opposite may be true.

The attitude of contemporary psychologists to Freudian theory is usually one of regarding it as a rich source of hypotheses for more rigorous research. Thus Freud has been followed in the attention which has been given to the processes of identification of child with parent of the same sex, in studies which have sought to relate a child's development to the presence of significant others, in the part played by anxiety and the processes whereby it may be learned, and in the consequences for adult behaviour of unconscious influences of early development. Most people have seen the Freudian superego as being a particularly negative and repressive force which does not correspond well to the conscience professed by many people with liberal attitudes in the present day and even psychoanalysts make a distinction between childish or primitive conscience and one which operates through a more rationally organized set of values in the adult personality.

Trait theory

Another quite different form of developmental psychology grew up about the same time as psychoanalysis but instead of having its origins in the medical profession it began in the field of education. This was the study of consistent individual differences or traits and it was closely related to the mental testing movement, beginning with the work of Binet in France.

At first sight it might be thought that intellectual development would not be closely related to the development of moral responsibility. We all know of examples of people being highly developed in one whilst retarded in the other. We shall see when
we come to look at the work of Piaget that the cognitive aspects are nevertheless of great importance in understanding what children at different ages are capable of doing, but the relevance of trait theory which derives from educational psychology was primarily a methodological contribution. The idea was that if we are dealing with a developmental phenomenon in which there are individual differences, then differences which can be measured amongst children of a given age might well reflect different degrees of maturity in the development of a trait. It also assumed that the possibility of measuring such a trait indicated qualities of a person which were consistent across a variety of situations. When we come to think of moral development it seemed reasonable to expect that children who showed maturity of moral judgment in one situation would be likely to show maturity of moral judgment in another situation. For example, those who were reluctant to tell lies, might well be trusted not to cheat when playing a game or doing an exam. In an attempt to understand the development of such a trait of honesty, Hartshorne and May carried out a large-scale project in the 1920's in which over a period of five years they tested a very large number of children in many different situations which 'tested their honesty'. Their main conclusion was that it was not possible to study moral development in terms of a general trait of honesty because very much of the behaviour in question was situationally specific: i.e. children who would cheat in an examination might well not be the same children who would cheat in a game with their peers, who might not be the same children who would tell lies to cover up a mistake they had made in their work, and so on. So the notion of a general level of moral development appeared to be a false one and it seemed to be necessary to look to the demands of particular situations and to the particular responses children had learned to these varying demands.

Hartshorne and May's findings were so persuasive that very few people attempted this line of enquiry for the next thirty years; only very recently has
this kind of work been looked at again. Hartshorne and May's original data has been reanalysed with more advanced statistical techniques than were available at that time, e.g. by Burton, and it has been found that there was indeed much more evidence of a general trait of honesty in Hartshorne and May data than was apparent to the original workers. I will be commenting on more recent work again when I come to the work of Mischel and others on resistance to temptation.

Before leaving the trait theory approach we should perhaps note that somewhat similar studies of social attitudes provide another basis for understanding moral development. However in this field, especially in the work of Gordon Allport, who is otherwise an important figure in the relationship between ethics and psychology, the developmental emphasis was overturned in favour of paying most attention to the properties of the mature adult personality in a complex social environment. In his Study of Values, and of religious sentiments, Allport tended to emphasize a discontinuity between childish behaviour, thought and feeling and the functioning of the autonomous adult, whom he saw as no longer being tied to the situationally specific reactions and self-seeking satisfactions of the earlier years of development, but able to function consistently in terms of sets of values which the adult perceives as part of himself, and for which he requires no other reward than the consistency of his own personality. In this sense the mature, rational conscience could only develop in the later years of adolescence as the young person became aware of his cultural heritage and entered into more responsible and more varied social relationships.

Cognitive developmental stages (Piaget)

Although for the most part Piaget directs attention to the thought processes of the individual child, we should not assume that he saw the child in social isolation. As we look at the stages of development which Piaget outlined we should keep
in mind that these stages of cognitive development correspond to different stages of social experience. Indeed as William Kay points out in his book on moral development, Piaget was indebted to Durkheim, who said 'all that we needed was to substitute for the conception of a supernatural being the empirical idea of a directly observable being which is society'. Durkheim's use of the concepts of discipline, attachment and autonomy are often implicit in the work of Piaget.

Piaget's general conclusion was that as a child matures the basis of his moral judgment changes. The basis changes in several respects, among which are the attitude of a child to rules, his variety of social relations, his appeal to qualitatively different moralities and a growth from heteronomous to autonomous conduct. These changes amount to a series of transitions through qualitatively different stages of moral development. Piaget does not see simply a quantitative growth in moral responsibility or maturity but a passage through stages which are in a fixed sequence and which constitute quite different bases for moral conduct.

Let us consider these stages of moral development in outline and then review the kind of changes which take place in the transition in which Piaget believed each earlier stage was a necessary precondition to the development of a later stage. He came to these conclusions after interviewing a large number of young children of various ages from pre-school to adolescent years. His interviews included sequences of questions which constituted little tests or paradigms of moral situations. Besides asking what should be done, he always asked why, so as to discover the structure of the child's thinking about the problem. In this respect Piaget's work on moral development is an exact parallel of his work on the development of intelligence.

The earliest stage of development in the Piagetian scheme, the sensori-motor stage, is essentially an amoral phase in which the child functions
only according to a mechanical set of reactions to specific stimuli. This is followed by four stages of moral development which can be described as the egocentric, authoritarian and reciprocal stages leading to mature development in what Piaget called the stage of equity.

1. Egocentric Stage. In this stage the child sees the environment as an extension of himself. His understanding of the environment is limited to seeing it in terms of its responses to his demands. The child is unable to distinguish between objective and subjective requirements; he is quite unable to co-operate, as in play with other children. During this stage one frequently observes parallel play in which individual children, as it were, play their own games side by side. In his interactions with others the child at this egocentric stage may be prudent but give no higher regard for others.

2. Authoritarian Stage. As the child develops a more realistic relationship to his parents he enters a stage of authoritative moral conduct. It is characterized by almost total submission to authority. The only social relationships which have meaning are those based on dependence and submission to an authority figure who is not an abstraction but a real present person, normally a parent. At this stage obedience to rules is paramount. In his obedience the child in the authoritarian stage is not able to make concession to motive or intention in the application of moral rules. The rules must always be strictly observed without regard for consequences. Duty is seen as heteronomously imposed, and rightly so. This is the form of morality which is characteristic of large authoritarian institutions such as the military. "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die".

3. Reciprocal Stage. Towards middle childhood, say in the primary school years, the child begins to develop a somewhat different attitude to rules.
Rules may now be accepted because they express reciprocity amongst social equals. Particularly in the case of peer group relations an ethic of mutual respect develops. It is still an essentially legal requirement, but one which has become autonomous rather than heteronomous through the acceptance of individual responsibility for fair treatment of one's fellows. In giving this fair treatment an evaluation is made of the situation and of the consequences of the application of rules so that absolute obedience to rules which was characteristic of the authoritarian stage can no longer be expected. However, there is a certain absolutism in the reciprocal stage in the notion of equality, it is as though group solidarity requires equality of treatment for all, without regard for the more abstract principles involved, or consideration of special merit or need. At this stage, normally, a fair share means an equal share.

4. Stage of Equity. In later childhood another change occurs in the nature of moral judgment. Previously when social solidarity was allied with growing intellectual power, authority gave way to reciprocity; now Piaget postulates in later childhood the emergence of altruism, or social love, which is not a legal relationship based on considerations of justice but a human and moral relationship based on concern and compassion. Greater weight is given to situational factors. Less attention is given to social consensus on rules and the child moves especially towards the consideration of the needs of the person involved. So, for example, in a game controlled by rigid rules advantageous concessions are made to the young, the disabled, or the sick. It is not the case that when compassion enters there is no longer a place for reason; reason and logic retain their place by virtue of reciprocity remaining a factor. Piaget says, "the child begins by simply practising reciprocity, in itself not so easy a thing as one might think, then once he has grown accustomed to this form of equilibrium in his actions his
behaviour is altered from within, its form reacting as it were upon its contents. What is regarded as just is no longer merely reciprocal action but primarily behaviour that admits of indefinitely sustained reciprocity." To this is added a second consideration, that of ideal rules as being central to morality. This is somewhat akin to the development of abstract reasoning which occurs in the later years of childhood and adolescence.

Let us review the changes which take place in the development of moral judgment as discovered in Piaget's work with children. First with regard to rules; Piaget pointed to a consciousness of obligation which distinguishes a rule in the true sense from the regularity. When they first appear the child thinks of rules as eternal and unchanging, then rules are seen as being imposed by adults and later again as being created by consenting social equals; thus the reasons for accepting a rule change as the child develops.

The stages of moral development appear to be dependent upon the stages of development in relationships with others. In early childhood children base their judgments on unilateral respect for authority figures and this compulsion of obedience is essentially non-moral because of its lack of regard for consequences. In middle childhood playing with his peers he assumes that the basis for his relationship with them is one of mutual respect, placing on him an obligation of co-operation, so that he accepts a multilateral demand in the place of a unilateral authority. In late childhood the concept of equity replaces rigid equality by the development of altruistic feelings and a more highly developed capacity to reason about the circumstances of social behaviour. Piaget said "equity is nothing but a development of equalitarianism in the direction of relativity" and thus he points to the consideration of moral principles rather than moral regulations.
The qualitatively different moralities which characterise these different stages of social development are, first a morality of restraint in which 'the child was made for the law and not the law for the child', secondly, a morality of cooperation with reciprocal thinking in what Piaget described as the operational level thinking in which reversibility of thought is possible. The golden rule may be seen as typical of this morality and as a prelude to the higher level of morality in which equity replaces equality and is informed by considerations of consequences with altruistic criteria of evaluation.

At the same time as the child makes transition through these different moralities he moves from a position of heteronomy to one of autonomy. Initially the rule is outside the moral agent and consists of the demands of adults, there is an absence of moral solidarity with others which is later replaced by peer group attachments and the wider society when some autonomy develops in the child's judgment.

It should be clear enough that the different moralities, the autonomy or heteronomy of the child's frame of reference, the maturity of his social relationships and the nature of his consciousness of obligation, while defining together qualitatively different stages of moral development, nevertheless describe differences in the behaviour of an adult person from time to time. That is, all people behave at higher and lower levels, growth in the strength of diverse qualities might be linked to a fixed sequence in stages of development but one can still discern relative strengths of these qualities in the behaviour of individuals who have passed through all stages. While some may habitually function at a lower level than their highest achievement the notion of stages implies only that, in order to behave at all at a higher level one must first pass through a lower stage. Similarly, it does not require very great reflection upon the 20th century world to recognise that institutions and
popular moralities frequently express a diversity of relatively low levels of moral development.

It is not possible here to describe in detail the work of other psychologists who have confirmed, modified and revised Piaget's theory in various respects. Others have developed theories of various stages but they do not give a markedly different picture from that of Piaget's work. This is apparent, for example, in the work of Havighurst and his associates. Peck and Havighurst have proposed five character types which are representative of successive stages in psycho-social development. These five types are (1) amoral, (2) expedient, (3) conforming, (4) irrational conscientious and (5) rational altruistic. He sees a transition from child-like reasons to mature reasons for behaving morally and notes some consistency in individual differences across the different stages of development so that the child who is best controlled at age 10 is likely to be best controlled at age 16. A conclusion which would require some modification of the Hartshorne and May findings but which is confirmed by other more recent works. However, the picture is not radically different from that given by Piaget.

The point at which the greatest modification of Piagetian accounts is given is in the moral judgments of adolescents. Piaget's concentration on children up to the age of 12 restricted the data base for elaboration of more mature moral development. When adolescents are studied it becomes quite clear that many young people never reach the higher levels of moral development and that value orientations tend to be strongly associated with social class differences and other aspects of social background.

Social Behaviour Theory

We turn now to a very different approach to the subject, it is that of experimental psychology and especially of the work of people who have a behaviourist orientation. We will be able to take only
a few limited examples. Some of these psychologists have taken up Freudian ideas and have attempted to validate them by experimental methods, others have looked to a combination of survey methods or anthropological methods with experimental studies. An example of this is the cross-cultural work of Whiting and Child, or the experimental work of Seers, Bandura and their associates. It is characteristic of these experimental and behaviourist studies that they tend to break down the notion of moral development into a number of different habits and traits so that one investigation might be concerned with the ways in which children develop the capacity to delay gratification, others might be concerned with situational influences on resistance to temptation, another might be a series of studies on the variables associated with the ways in which young people perceive themselves as subject to internal rather than external control. Some of these experiments are fascinating but the implications of the wide range of findings by experimental findings are difficult to put together in a coherent statement at this stage.

Let us take an example of one experiment by Mischel. The experiment was part of a series in studies of the mechanisms underlying self-imposed delay of gratification and the question at issue was whether the presence of the delayed reward would be likely to enhance or debilitate the child's ability to delay gratification. In a paradigm of this kind of choice the child is offered, for example, a choice of a little candy bar now or a big candy bar later. From one point of view one might expect that cognitively immature young children may more readily forget the delayed outcomes for which they are waiting, and hence cease to wait, unless they are reminded of the relevant contingencies and rewards involved in the delay of gratification paradigm. Thus, any cues which make the delayed gratification more salient should facilitate waiting behaviour. We can add to this the part psychoanalytic theory which postulates that under conditions of delayed gratification the child constructs an hallucinatory image of the
physically absent need-satisfying object and this mental image provides some satisfaction. It seemed reasonable to expect that for voluntary delayed behaviour, delay would be easier and waiting longer if the child were given some aid in recalling the absent reward.

A child who had been allowed to play in an experimental room for some time was taught a procedure for giving a signal to the experimenter whenever the child wanted the experimenter to return to the room when he was absent. This was practised until the child clearly understood he could immediately terminate his waiting period in the room simply by signalling to the experimenter. He was shown two food objects, one of which he clearly preferred as determined by pretesting. To attain the preferred object he had to wait for it until the experimenter returned 'by himself'. The child was, however, entirely free throughout the waiting period to signal at any moment for the experimenter to return. If he signalled he could have the less preferred object at once but had to forego the more desirable one. Children were then tested in various combinations of presence and absence of the more or less preferred rewards.

The findings were the direct opposite of those expected from the initial theorising. The time that the children would wait was sharply reduced by the presence of the rewards in the room. The children would wait more than ten minutes on the average when there were no rewards present, about five minutes when either the 'delayed' or the 'immediate' reward was present in the room, and only about one minute when both rewards were present. The conclusion was that children are helped to delay gratification if they are helped not to think about the rewards of delay. Which is a quite sensible result and, one could say even an obvious finding, yet before the experiment was done the opposite also seemed reasonable. Other experiments showed that delayed gratification may be helped by cognitive and overt distraction to reduce the aversiveness of waiting.
Perhaps we should note at this point that there could be some argument as to whether experiments like this one are at all relevant to an understanding of the development of conscience. We could say that conscience is concerned with knowing what is right and what is wrong and not with one's capacity to do what is right and what is wrong. By some means or another the experimental psychologist with the behaviourist tradition behind him (often well behind) would seek to build up a picture of learned habits, or acquired predispositions to behave in a given way and he would see the development of capacity to delay gratification as one of the means of development from an early to a more mature stage of moral development. The social behaviourist, however, would be primarily concerned with giving an account of learned behaviour rather than giving an account of the experience of conscience.

It is beginning to appear that it is not a simple matter to say, psychologically, what conscience is. We can see that there are many elements which combine to make up the sense of right or wrong, a sense of responsibility for one's own actions, a sense of guilt which follows from certain classes of action. The ways in which these expectations of internal punishment are built up relates the person to his social environment over a period of many years and include a number of different mechanisms of social learning. Perhaps one way of thinking of conscience is of seeing the locus of the punishing agent within the self rather than in an external social force. In this sense it might be interesting to consider a quite different kind of empirical investigation. A number of studies have been made of the notion of people seeing the locus of control over their actions as lying primarily within themselves or beyond, particularly here I think of the work of Rotter in his development of a personality scale called the internal-external control or the I.E. scale and its application by Jessor and his associates in Colorado. But I want to take as a final example some work from cross-cultural anthropology based in the
researches of John Whiting at Harvard. This particular study was one I did when I was working with him.

The ethnographies of a large number of pre-literate tribes, together with the accounts of travellers who were not trained anthropologists, have been examined for evidence of beliefs about responsibility for illness in the mythologies of the tribes. It has been found that it is possible to obtain a measure of the degree to which it is commonly expected that a member of a tribe will assume for himself the responsibility of his illness. In some primitive societies when a person becomes ill he believes that it is entirely because of something wrong which he has done. In other societies the individual is assumed to have absolutely no responsibility whatever for his illness and there are varying degrees of responsibility between these extremes. Note that the extreme position of having no responsibility can be due to either the notion of an external personal agent being responsible, or to an understanding of an impersonal causal mechanism. Besides this variable of 'Patient Responsibility' the tribes could be distinguished from one another in terms of another dimension, which can be called very generally, 'Fear of Others' although it is primarily a matter of the incidence of sorcery, or witchcraft. Some tribes practise witchcraft very widely and their members live in continual dread of being subject to the sorcery of their personal enemies. Others have a fear of ghosts of deceased ancestors or of animal spirits. This fear closely resembles the fear of living sorcerers. Whiting and Child developed an index of Fear of Others which was a combination of ratings of tribes by judges who had read the evidence of their sorcery and fear of spirits. This measure of Fear of Others was combined with Whiting and Child's measure of Patient Responsibility to give an overall measure of the extent to which people in the tribes tended to blame themselves or to blame others, i.e. of the extent to which they tended to introject or to project their guilt.
It was expected that the measure of 'introjection versus projection' of guilt evident in the mythology of the tribes would be related to the social structure of the family and especially to the mechanisms of control over sexual behaviour in the later years of childhood and early adolescence. It is well known, for example, that tribes in which witchcraft is practised tend to be polygynous tribes in which there are mother-child households from which children are taken in late childhood or early adolescence to pass through severe initiation rites, after which the boys are separated from women and children until they themselves become full participants as warriors and husbands in the tribal hierarchy. On the other hand, the nuclear family tends to be associated with a tendency to accept personal responsibility.

A study was being made of sleeping arrangements. We read the reports on a large number of tribes (about 50) in different parts of the world as they had existed at the time of the first white contact. We paid particular attention to where children slept in relation to where their parents slept. In many primitive societies there is often only one room in which all members of the family sleep, but in others adolescent children may be separated from their parents. We predicted that tribes which separated adolescent children from the parents of the same sex would be those which tended to project rather than to introject guilt, whilst those who did not use physical separation but required social inhibitions to operate as a mechanism of sexual control would be those which in their mythology tended to introject guilt. This hypothesis was very strongly confirmed. Sleeping arrangements were related to introjection or projection of guilt. Whether one sees in this evidence for the development of a stronger conscience in those families which do not use external, geographical or physical means of social control, is a matter of definition but it accords with studies of family patterns by Seers and others who see much the same relationship of personal guilt to family
structure and patterns of child rearing in contemporary Western society.

Conclusion

I have selected examples from a range of approaches to the problem of understanding the development of conscience. We have seen that many investigators have translated this to mean a study of moral development. There are clear relations of moral development to the types of social experiences which children have from the early years until late adolescence and presumably this development continues throughout the whole span of life. In conclusion I would like to raise the question of whether this broad understanding is properly called development of conscience. There seems to me to be a difference between that kind of compulsion to avoid a given class of actions which is called conscience in the most primitive sense and the pursuit of strongly preferred moral goals which is sometimes also claimed to be a matter of conscience. The pursuit of an ideal, rather than the avoidance of an evil, appears to be characteristic of a later stage of moral development which is more amenable to reason and to social realities. The more primitive avoidance of evil belonging to an earlier stage and functioning very largely below the level of consciousness probably justifies a different kind of social and political tolerance, while the tolerance given to it need not necessarily be a justification for full self-expression which might be demanded on behalf of the more highly developed rational ideal type of conscience. One of the problems of contemporary society is to allow for toleration of conscientious differences when people tend to function at very different levels of moral development in different situations. At the same time, a great variety of circumstances of social development predictably results in the relative predominance of different types of conscience or moral development in different people.
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65.

CONSCIENCE AS OBJECTION IN THE LAW

Geoffrey Sawer

Before turning to the specific question of 'conscience', I shall consider a related and wider problem - that of the interaction between law and morality. This has engaged the attention of philosophers, statesmen and lawyers from ancient times. The classical Greeks and Romans speculated about it, and their views deeply influenced the teaching of the mediaeval Christian Church. In China, the celebrated dispute between Confucius and the 'School of Law' produced a startling consequence - the virtual elimination of the idea of a civil law system as an element in the machinery of social control, and reliance on a criminal law system with a heavy stress on punishment and deterrence and almost immune from any arguments based on clemency or re-education. The Chinese after Confucius wanted to solve the problem of the relation between law and morals by eliminating law and making morals do all the work of social control; they had to admit criminal law as a regrettable consequence of human wickedness. In the West, however, the history and heritage of Rome caused ready acceptance of the view that both a legal system and a moral system were required.

I do not wish to suggest that the Confucian approach is necessarily or forever misguided, and the Western approach obviously or eternally valid. All archaic societies distrusted the idea of a specialised legal profession; it is one of the most modern of the learned professions, and even among the Romans did not emerge in a shape easily recognisable to us until the later Empire. Even after that, lawyers continued to be in various degrees distrusted and unpopular. Here in Australia we have a striking illustration of this thousand year old debate in the case of our industrial arbitration system; it has always been an article of faith among the trade unions and the Labor Parties that you should keep lawyers out of the industrial
tribunals, because they manufacture difficulties, add to costs and prolong proceedings. Nevertheless, the trade unions always employ lawyers to represent them in large and important cases if they can, because they find in practice that they need legal skills, and they also find that actually lawyers can shorten proceedings by defining the important issues with care and organising the argument around those issues.

That part of the dispute about the morality of law hinged mainly on one part of the lawyers' function - the art of advocacy. From Greek times, the skilled advocate has been suspect because the honest layman thought his job was to make the worse cause appear the better by tricks of speech and gesture, or even by telling lies and suppressing the truth - plainly immoral activities. Marxist-Leninist thought tends to concentrate not on advocacy but on the nature of law itself; some of these thinkers contend that law exists only as part of exploiting and property-owning societies, like the State itself, and that the introduction of socialism will mean the withering away of both State and Law. The Soviet Union has found it necessary to abandon that view and instead develop what its ruling oligarchy considers a special Socialist form of law, but to the outside observer it is clear that the Socialist law is little different in form from capitalist law and that it involves all the old difficulties about the relation between law and morals.

Until the nineteenth century, the main theoretical solution to the morals-law problem in Western societies was the conception of 'natural law', which had Greek and more especially Roman origins. The theory became part of the teachings of the Christian Church, and was an especially prominent feature of the system of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). In that system, morality had necessarily to be tied in with theology, and this was achieved roughly as follows. So far as Holy Writ and the collective wisdom of the Church had produced specific commands to be followed by humans, such as
the ten Commandments, these necessarily formed part of the law. So far as the maintenance of social order required further rules, methods of legal procedure and so on, these could be devised by man through the God-given faculty of right reason guided by Christian conscience; there could often be a choice of various rules in this area, and in such matters the decision of the duly appointed rulers should be accepted. This led to some ambiguities in what the Church, or an individual good man, might think and say about particular laws actually in force. A law plainly in breach of scripture, or even a law which was not so plainly 'immoral' but could not be given a rational justification, ought to have been regarded simply as no law at all, because on the theory compliance with the conditions of natural law was a condition of the validity of law. However, in the hierarchical societies of that time, any criticism or questioning of the legal system approved and enforced by the rulers were necessarily open to a good deal of official suspicion. Furthermore, warfare and civil violence were endemic, and it was not only the rulers and the bearers of effective power who placed a high value on order for its own sake. Hence Aquinas and his followers urged on Christian people the duty of not too lightly claiming that unjust law was not law at all; the citizen was urged to put up with apparent or minor injustices, to obey first and argue afterwards. Some thought that existing laws, even ones which might seem extremely unjust, were all at least first approximations to an ideal natural law - as close an approximation to good law as the wickedness of men and of the times permitted. Thus although natural law theory always had the makings of a critical standard designed to ensure that law was brought into agreement with morality, it worked in most countries at most times in a conservative fashion - by providing justifications for law as it happened to be. It was only after the Reformation that the critical and even revolutionary implications of natural law theory began to be exploited in any depth, and the revolutionary implications became most obvious in what some thinkers regard as a corruption of natural law theory - namely the 'natural rights' theory of the American and French
revolutions of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, through all the many variations and vicissitudes of natural law theory it could be said that until the nineteenth century all Western societies took it as axiomatic that there should be a very close and continuous working relationship between law and morals.

From the early nineteenth century, however, a contrary theory arose, most pungently expressed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Austin (1790-1859). On this view, law has to be defined and identified by reference to criteria having nothing to do with morality. It was a system of rules with a specific ('positive') content which might and often should be influenced by morality in its inception; once established, however, the rule was law and had to be given effect to by the instrumentalities of the law - the courts, the legal profession, and enforcement agencies such as the police, without regard to its morality. According to the Austinians, the distinguishing feature of the law was that its rules were laid down by the sovereign authority in the State. This theory went along with a considerable zest for law reform. Moreover, its adherents were not opposed to individual citizens refusing in a particular case to obey a law because of moral objections to what the law commanded. They were far from denying the separate existence of morals, nor the superior command on the individual conscience of what the believer's ethical views required. All that they contended was that these moral considerations had nothing to do with the question - what is law? It seemed to follow that the conscientious objector had to expect (and in some views had a right to expect) that the legal system would proceed to deal with him on its own terms. The Austinian view could be expressed as depending on a theory of division of labour, and there were certainly many ideological interconnections between Adam Smith, Bentham, Austin, August Compte, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and other thinkers in the positivist and utilitarian tradition. The business of lawyers and
courts is to apply the law as it is; they should assume and generally speaking can safely assume that the suitability of the law to the society in question, whether on moral or other grounds, has been attended to by the political system of the State. If the law needs changing, this should be attended to by the legislative authority. This was a view quite suited to a society with reasonably democratic procedures, or in course of acquiring them, and obviously it still has a good deal of validity in contemporary plural or open societies with a fair measure of representative institutions. Equally obviously it is a theory which can entrench dictatorships and oligarchies.

The tendency to separate the sphere of law from that of morals also developed in continental western Europe, though in different philosophical shapes from that of English utilitarianism. Hans Kelsen, the Austrian neo-Kantian (1881-19) tried to construct what he called a 'pure theory of law', and Gustav Radbruch (1878-1949) a German, sought to escape from moral judgment in an 'uncommitted relativism'. Radbruch almost proved that law is bound to be immoral, because of its unresolvable 'antinomies'. For example, law should achieve equality of application; however, this can be done only by abstracting from the total human personality those characteristics which people in general or relatively large groups of people have in common; this prevents the law from adapting to the specific individuality of every person, but on one view such respect for the individual personality is the essence of morality. Julius Stone contends that this difficulty can be overcome by making sufficient exceptions for special cases in general laws, but I think he is wrong in this suggestion. The varieties of human circumstance defy inclusion in a list of special exceptions, and a system of social administration which truly took account of the total personality of every individual could not have any general laws and would be incapable of providing anything like equality of treatment.
However, Radbruch has become a personality of outstanding interest to contemporary legal philosophers, because he lived through the Nazi regime and saw how any theory which tries to separate law from morals will play into the hands of a cruel dictatorship. Hence after 1936 he changed his views and contended for the view that law must have at least a minimum relationship with the moral values of a good society. After 1946, the dispute over this issue spread to England, where Herbert Hart, an eminent Oxford legal philosopher, restated Austin and took up the defence of the view that while bad law should be reformed, it is still law. Hart has had celebrated disputes with the American neo-natural law thinker Lon Fuller of Harvard and with the great British judge Lord Devlin. I think myself that most of this stuff is pretty worthless. It is dressed up as a dispute about legal and philosophical theory, but the key questions are really ones of social organisation and social psychology, and the better view may vary from society to society and at different stages of development of the same society. When there is general stability and prosperity, or at least contentment, and the system of government is open and flexible enough for legal change to be relatively easy, the better view may well be that existing law is law and ought normally to be obeyed; it may then be said that the path of good conscience is to accept existing law but work vigorously to change it or secure appropriate provisos and exceptions where it works unjustly. If, however, rapid social changes in value systems are under way and if in addition the system of government is resistant to change and frustrates principled efforts at reform, then it may well be that it is better to deny the title 'law' to rules which are felt to be grossly unjust, and to obstruct the operations of the legal system by all means short of imitating the immorality of which the system is accused.

A subsidiary aspect of the dispute is the extent to which judges should mould the law by reference to moral views. Obviously there is a danger that they will represent the values of an earlier gener-
ation, or of a stuffy establishment or an oppressing class. On the other hand, it is a commonplace of modern jurisprudence that neither the facts involved in legal cases nor the law to be applied can ever be so clear and beyond dispute that only one legal answer is possible. It is precisely because of this that in a hierarchy of appeal courts, a case will produce close divisions between the judges of multi-judge courts as it proceeds upwards, and in the finish there may be a majority of all the judges for one side and a minority for the other, yet the latter wins because a majority in the highest tribunal decide that way. Legal scholars have long since given up the attempt to argue that in such cases one judicial view is necessarily 'better' than the other in any relevant sense. The differences may be explained by many factors operating on the judicial mind, from the state of the judicial hearing or digestion to his world-outlook. It is impossible to contend that a view of morality either cannot or should not be one of the operative factors; indeed, it would be preferable for the judge to declare such factors if they operate and he can identify them.

My personal conclusion after a life in the law is that a majority of laws have no relation to morality because they concern matters of convenience which within fairly broad limits can be handled in many different ways. For example, the laws about speed limits on the road certainly have a general connection with a profound moral impulse - the urge to minimise the infliction of death and injury on human beings. But the precise limit to be established at any time and place cannot be derived from the morality of the situation. It depends on a complex of factors including the state of the road, of the vehicles, of driver skill, of the weather etc., and on the purposes of the journeys in question. It is then very much a question of respecting the decision of a political authority, simply because there has to be one decision and the observance of its decision is the only alternative to chaos. But in relation to
other types of law, the content of the law is necessarily a direct reflection of a moral view, and in a plural society one must have much sympathy with groups which reject the morality but are compelled to observe the law. A striking contemporary example is the law prohibiting homosexual conduct between consenting adults. Without being in the slightest degree a homosexual myself, I think this law is immoral, the product of the thoroughly immoral views concerning sexual conduct in general which most ancient societies produced from their prevailing ignorance, fear and cruelty and have transmitted to us through the Jewish sacred writings. Hence I find it impossible to condemn contemporary men who despise and reject this law; the ladies, through an accident of legal history, are in any event not subject to the prohibition in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory - though they may be in Queensland and Western Australia, and probably would be in the ACT if the Commonwealth parliament adopted the lunatic draft code of criminal law for federal territories at present before it.

So far as the problem we are discussing concerns merely the clash between majority mores and the special views of fairly well defined and in general law abiding minorities, the law can very often accommodate itself to the minorities by appropriate exceptions. A long standing example is the inclusion of laws concerning military service of provision for conscientious objectors. There is an excellent short history of such laws in the judgment of Justice Windeyer of the Australian High Court - himself formerly an eminent soldier - in the case Ex Parte White (1966) 47 Australian Law Journal Reports 337. He quotes Gibbon as recording from the fourth century AD the case of a young African Christian who was executed for obstinately maintaining that his faith forbade him from being a soldier. In England, special exemption of Quakers from military service began in the eighteenth century. The first Commonwealth of Australia Defence Act - 1903 - allowed for conscientious exception, but only if the ground was religious,
and the objector was still required to perform non-combatant duties; many such objectors died heroically while serving as unarmed stretcher-bearers. In 1910, the Commonwealth Act was amended by a Labor government to include conscientious objection on other than religious grounds, and in this form a similar provision is now in s.29A of the National Service Act. That provision, however, allows both for complete exemption from military service of any kind, or as an alternative exemption only from combatant service. There have been proposals for the provision of some alternative to military service whether combatant or non-combatant, but there are constitutional difficulties in the way of this, since the Commonwealth can act in such matters only under its defence power which implies some form of military service. However, the States could provide for the non-military service, so that cooperative federalism plus uniform State laws could solve the constitutional problem. In England, conscientious objection to military service was provided in both the first and the second world wars in a form which admitted objection to the particular war. Our National Security Act provision has been interpreted by the High Court as extending only to objection to all wars, past and present: Ex p Thompson (1968) ALJR 173. In my view there was not the slightest logical necessity for the High Court to adopt this reactionary view of s.29A; I do not believe that the legislators addressed their minds to that aspect of the problem. The example of the British allowing objection to a particular war in the overwhelming national peril of 1939 is surely sufficient to disprove the parrot cry of the generals and the Menzies-Holt-Gorton-McMahon governments that to admit objection to particular wars would be fatal to the objective of getting a serving army. The truth is that it would at any time have been perfectly simple to provide for such selective forms of conscientious objection, and the Government would have much reduced the extent of student rejection of all military service and indeed of all laws if it had from the start showed some sense on that question.
However, the truth is that conscription was never necessary except to blood the younger generation; a volunteer army for service exclusively in Vietnam could have been raised overnight.

Before the nineteenth century, compulsion to accept a particular form of religion was common in the legal systems of many countries - and not only Christian ones. The martyrs of conscience in those days had to be made of stout stuff, as you could see in the BBC film of puritan dissenters being tortured during the reign of Henry VIII; even that brutal monarch's wives had an easier time than did the victims of his ecclesiastical bullies. It was not until the early nineteenth century that the legal remains of those old human follies were finally removed from the law of England; I am glad to say that they were never part of the law of Australia. However, remnants of such laws remained in the laws governing the form of oaths to be taken, as by witnesses in court. Justice Windeyer tells us that the abolition of such requirements in the case of people with conscientious objection to oath-taking began in England in 1838. When the law has provided for compulsory trade-unionism or a near equivalent, it has been common to provide for some sort of conscientious objection. Compulsory vaccination raises similar difficulties, though here the prevention of the spread of disease may be thought to override the demands of the individual objector. Compulsory fluoridation of water has caused recent outcries sometimes based on grounds of conscience.

In so far as the protests of conscience can be accommodated within the terms of the law itself, it seems to me that any democratic and liberal society should adopt such measures. However, it is likely that at any time the demands of conscience will not be so met, or a social case for overruling the protest will be adduced. My colleague Dr. Tom Millar has a principled objection to being compelled to attend to vote for ACT
Advisory Council, but was not able to persuade a local magistrate that this constituted reasonable excuse for not appearing at the ballot box. This introduces the question of the extent of the imposition on the human individuality of the law in question; it seems to me that to appear at the polling booth on a Saturday and, if you so like, to vote informally is not a serious infringement of liberty, though I cordially agree with Millar that it is stupid social policy to compel voting for such a useless body. I am inclined to agree with the old natural lawyers who thought that the citizen should not too readily reject law on the ground of what he thinks is the call of his conscience, so long as he wishes in general to accept the benefits of the society and suffers no really grievous diminution of his individuality by doing so. However, we can now see on a very small scale in our own country and on a larger scale in many other countries, notably the USA, a much more thorough-going rejection not merely of particular laws but of all law or at least all law of a particular society. Until very recently, human societies agreed in declining to tolerate this attitude. The 'outlaw' had every man's hand turned against him; by rejecting the duties of the law, he also rejected its protection. I think it should be the mark of a democratic and liberal society to put up with a good deal of such root-and branch opposition, and to continue to protect such objectors notwithstanding that logically they should neither expect nor get any protection. However, in the last resort such attitudes, if sufficiently widespread, must produce revolutionary situations and are usually intended to do so. The result may be the abolition of all law and the introduction of an anarchist paradise; hitherto, the only result has been to establish a new legal system, soon seen to resemble pretty closely its predecessor though often a great deal more intolerant of conscientious objectors.
THE MODERN STATE AND PRIVATE CONSCIENCE

Peter Howson

During the course of preparing this paper, I mentioned the subject of conscience to my friend, the Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University. I asked him if he knew of a definition of a good conscience. He told me that some time ago he was listening to two men much older and senior to ourselves, who were discussing the subject. One said he defined a good conscience as something that enabled him to sleep soundly at night; the other said he defined a good conscience as something that did not allow him to sleep soundly at night. They proceeded to argue the merits of these findings well into the rest of the evening. I have not yet been able to find out who slept the best afterwards. I mention this only to show that if it is difficult to determine a definition of a private conscience, it is even more difficult to define public conscience and public responsibility.

My task is to examine the relations between the modern state and private conscience. It seems to me that in this matter we are always dealing with the role of minorities in a state. For instance, if a private conscience and public law coincide there is no problem to be resolved. If in a modern democratic state which acknowledges the right of private property, private conscience considers that stealing is a bad thing, and at the same time, that State has passed laws that prescribe penalties for theft, there is no conflict of interest. Conflict of interest arises when the views of the minority conflict with the views of the majority of citizens and also the laws of the state in which they reside. In a modern democratic state, in the long run, the Government will follow a course of action that is desired by the majority of its citizens. The only key to the premise which I have enunciated is the factor of time.
If we are therefore to take account of the importance of a minority that considers a matter to be of such importance to its private conscience that it must continue to hold its view in spite of the laws of the state, then one of four courses of action must eventually emerge. These four courses are:

1. The minority through dialogue with the majority, influences the majority to accept the desired situation and so in due course, the Government acts accordingly.

2. The majority through dialogue will convince the minority that its conscience has been misguided and the views will cease to be held.

3. There will be a compromise solution.

4. There could be violence.

The task of the Government is to ensure that dialogue can take place as far as possible to ensure that violence is avoided. Its task also is to ensure that the policy in the role of law-making is in line with the development of public opinion. In some cases it happens that public opinion is in advance of Government and the pressures of minorities eventually cause Governments to alter policies. On other occasions it could happen that the Government can see the need for change in advance of the movement of public opinion and in this case, it acts in the role of a minority seeking to change the views of the majority. In the notes that follow I have examined one case in which over the years a minority of citizens has influenced a change in Government policy. I have set out the history of our policy dealing with the Aborigines in Australia. In the second series of notes I have indicated a field in which the Government has in general, been in advance of public opinion and that is in the study of environmental pollution.
Within Australia, attitudes have been gradually changing since Dampier's early description of the Aborigines as the 'miserablest people on this earth'.

When Captain Phillip came to Sydney Cove, he had high ideals and intentions towards the native inhabitants of the country. He hoped to bring about a state of friendship and co-operation between the natives and the newcomers. Very soon his hopes were thwarted and it was not long before sporadic fighting broke out. There was almost no point of contact between the people; neither group could understand the language of the other, and their cultures and customs were so different that there was no basis for learning to understand each other. At the time that the British settled in Australia, the Aborigines, like all other "primitive" peoples, were thought to be backward and inferior, too stupid to develop the land that they now inhabited. The "superior" immigrants tended on the whole to treat the natives as more of a curiosity than as actual people.

A change of Government policy occurred in the 1830's. In 1837 a British Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry condemned the treatment of Aborigines, and a few Protectors were appointed in some colonies to guard their interests. In the latter part of the 19th Century and the early years of this century the State Governments, realising that their earlier policies were inadequate, were moved to more positive legislation. "Protection" was the operative word to describe the new policies. Aborigines in need became entitled to rations of food and clothing, and were entitled to shelter and medical care but were forbidden to drink. White settlers were forbidden to exploit the natives and tracts of land were set aside to provide a refuge for the Aborigines. Aborigines in effect at that time became "wards" of the State, a people incapable of protecting their own interests.
The reserves were mostly run by the missions, groups of dedicated people who tried to bring the Aborigines to the realisation of Christianity and at the same time to look after their welfare. Although their intentions were good, in many cases the missionaries did not understand the cultures and beliefs of the natives and their attempts to bring the Aborigines into the acceptance of the ways of the white man often merely destroyed the previous beliefs without replacing these with any others.

The ordinary citizens considered that the Governments had the entire responsibility for looking after the natives, and that they had no responsibility themselves. Apart from the missions the pastoralists were one section of the community who took an interest in the welfare of the Aborigines. It was partly in their own interest, as the Aborigines made excellent employees for the outback properties. The pastoralists often had whole groups of Aborigines on their property - the actual stockmen and their families, indeed became a virtual settlement. As well as wages, they provided food and clothing and some medical care for the Aborigines under their care.

In the nineteenth century and the early years of this century it seemed apparent that the Aborigines could only be considered to be a dying race, and that the main role of the Governments was to "smooth their dying pillow".

In the 1920's and 1930's several factors heralded a change in attitudes. During this period there had been great advances and interest in the new science of anthropology. A new slant on the interest in other races became apparent, based on the general assumption that people are more "like than unlike" and that studying the cultures of these races provides greater understanding of the nature of man.

At this stage several earlier assumptions in dealing with the Aborigines were seen to be
mistaken. For one thing, they were no longer dying rapidly - the part-Aborigines were in fact increasing. In 1937 Commonwealth and State Governments for the first time conferred together on this problem and agreed on a new policy which aimed to provide at least the part-Aborigines with the same economic and cultural opportunities as the whites with whom they would share full equality in the community.

The need for positive welfare programs for all Aborigines was recognised. Positive programs, directed to the "assimilation" of the Aborigines, were developed and expanded in the 1950's and 1960's. But it was not long before these policies and programs began in turn to come under criticism as being based on unjustified assumptions that the traditional culture had no value and could and should be wholly replaced by our western way of life.

A significant milestone in the development of public attitudes was the Referendum in 1967, which decided that Aborigines should be counted in future Commonwealth censuses and gave the Commonwealth power to make special laws for the people of the Aboriginal race in any State if the Commonwealth Parliament considered it desirable or necessary. This is a concurrent legislative power; that is, the States did not automatically lose their existing powers. The total "Yes" vote of more than 90 per cent was unprecedented. However, it is interesting to examine the actual voting pattern in the Referendum. In brief, the higher the Aboriginal population in an area, the lower the "Yes" vote. The success of the Referendum, did however, express the general willingness of the Australian people to contemplate, in abstract terms at least, the equality of Aborigines.

Following the Referendum, policies have been devised to bring together the Commonwealth, States and territories and to co-ordinate their policies towards Aborigines. Co-operation with the States
and the establishment of schemes for Aborigines all over Australia have aimed at assisting Aborigines to become full citizens, without trying to ensure that their traditional culture should disappear completely.

In several aspects of such schemes, the extent of public interest and conscience has become apparent. It is obvious that most Australians are now anxious that Aborigines should receive better treatment than they did in the past, and on several particular topics are very concerned.

They are more concerned with the actual conditions in which Aborigines live, and more interest has been taken by educators in teaching the present generation of school children about the first inhabitants of our continent. One point of interest is the contrast between the concern for "no discrimination" and on the other hand, the concern that Aborigines should somehow be "protected" from alcohol.

With the interest shown by today's children, as evidenced by the requests for information received every day, such public interest is likely to increase. Aborigines are still at a disadvantage in Australian society, and this concern is a hopeful step. For any real change in conditions and acceptance of Aborigines in Australia, the full interest and co-operation of all Australians are necessary - we in Governments do have a certain responsibility in this regard, but our policies and programs are only part of the overall pattern of change.

This brief history indicates changes that have taken place in our laws and policies dealing with the Aborigines. In most cases changes have resulted because of the views expressed by minorities who have shown how conscience demands a change in attitude. It has been the minority who have gradually persuaded the majority to accept the need for change. We can be thankful that it has occurred.
I turn now to problems concerned with the environment in Australia. It is in this field that I believe the attitude of Governments have been generally in advance of the attitudes of public opinion.

In the environment area the private vice of the 70's may well become the public crime of the 80's; and yet behaviour which is seen as a private vice in the 70's because of its detrimental consequences to the environment was accepted by the community in the 60's and, indeed, even in some instances, regarded with approval. Perhaps, a series of key sentences which are used today as rationalisations by individuals to justify decisions and actions adversely affecting the environment might illustrate this point.

"You can't stop progress". To have challenged such a concept in the 60's would have been seen as being akin to subscribing to a form of economic heresy. The key sentence is still being used today to justify actions such as unnecessary bulldozing of eucalypts for a carpark, mining a beach, subdividing an area of special ecological interest for housing, building another service station in a block which is already crowded with service stations, wrecking buildings of architectural interest to build a higher glass-plated sky scraper, building a freeway through parkland, producing more powerful motor cars, and so on.

In the 70's there will be a growing tendency in our community to challenge the belief that a richer Australia is necessarily a better Australia. The by-products of the produce, consume and dump economy, pollution, waste disposal problems, traffic congestion, destruction of natural surroundings and an eventual shortage of natural resources must lead us as individuals to re-examine our rationalisation, "You can't stop progress".

In fact, we must recognise that progress goes beyond merely economic growth. Progress also
means improving the quality of life of our citizens and realising that quality cannot be measured by material possessions alone. Are we any better off as a three car family when it takes three times as long to get anywhere because of congested highways?

It is in obtaining a balance or compromise between economic development and conservation of the environment that the individual conscience plays a decisive role. In the past many irreversible changes in the environment came about because of lack of information or ignorance. However, there can be no such excuse today. A primary responsibility of individuals in authority and in management is to obtain factual information on the ecological consequences of proposed major projects if we are to manage successfully our total environment.

A close relative of the "You can't stop progress" key sentence is "my primary responsibility is to my shareholders". This rationalisation is employed by some individuals to justify failure to make protective measures to safeguard the environment where such a course would adversely affect profits. Of course, sometimes it is cheaper for the company not to revegetate after mining a particular area, not to treat waste products and not to fit air pollution control equipment. This is obviously an area in which Governments are taking, and will take, action to remove the decisions from the area of private vice to public crime. For example, an industry that pollutes air is obviously affecting the quality of life of the whole community, although the products of the particular industry may be used by comparatively few people. Thus, if the industry continues to pollute, the whole community may suffer for the sake of improving the financial position of a comparatively small number of citizens. The general solution is to make the polluter pay so that the costs of pollution control are built into prices of offending products and processes.
Another close relative of "my primary responsibility is to my shareholders" is "we simply give the public what it wants". "What the public wants" can be motor cars with far more power than is necessary or even desirable on our roads, petrol with lead additives to give that extra performance, detergents for a whiter than white wash, plastic packaged goods, non-returnable bottles and so on. And to make sure that the public buys "what it wants" we devote larger sums to advertising in order to re-inforce our thinking that we really do want these items.

To date our notes have been directed mainly at behaviour of industry but this behaviour is the result of decisions made by us all as individuals or groups. In all fairness it must be said that many industries are taking a most responsible attitude to environmental matters not based on public relations or concern for company image but on a genuine regard for the quality of life.

Another key sentence which is used as a rationalisation by individuals is "as an individual there is nothing that I can do about it". Thus, it does not really matter if each of us throws the odd can out of the car along the highway because what difference does one can make? And if one of us throws the odd can out of the car window, it is not surprising that the children drop their ice cream wrappers on the footpath. It is also too much trouble to make a compost heap for the garden. It is far easier to burn the leaves in the Autumn.

In the marketplace the same philosophy of "as an individual there is nothing I can do about it" can apply. Thus, it is more convenient for us to buy products with excess packaging and wrapping. The non-returnable bottle, and the easily disposable plastic container are chosen in preference to returnable containers.

If one has read that some coloured paper products add insoluble dyes to water, does one buy them because they look nicer on the shelf at the self-service store?
These few notes indicate that private activities in themselves cause little damage, but taken collectively they could break down the quality of life. Australia is fortunate in that the effects of change in the environment are less noticeable than in other nations overseas. It is possible therefore for people in Government in Australia to see ahead of public opinion. Governments, both Federal and State and in municipalities are now acting together in order to change public opinion and to bring about a situation in which the public accepts restrictions involving some loss of individual liberty. In the past individuals have regarded their homes as their castles and their land as their own, which they can proceed to develop in any manner that they desire. In the future it is more likely that individuals will regard land as a heritage which they hold in trust and for which they have duties and responsibilities as well as rights.

Public conscience will conflict with private conscience and this conflict must be resolved if we are to enjoy our heritage to the full.

I have now examined briefly two fields that affect my own department and that are of current interest and importance to us all as individuals. Before I conclude, I would like to refer to one matter that will assume, I believe, greater importance in the future than it does at the present time and in which once again, there will be a clash between individual conscience and the conscience of the State. A paper was prepared in September 1971 by the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches entitled "The Global Environment, Responsible Choice and Social Justice". Some of the matters referred to are common to the matters I have already mentioned in this paper but they have also referred to an additional matter. I quote from Pages 4 and 5 of the Paper:-
"In view of the approaching exhaustion of some valuable resources and growing pollution, there is already discussion of the desirability of a zero growth rate in global economic production. The proposal is open to debate at several levels: economic, ecological, moral and spiritual. From a theological viewpoint, economic growth cannot be called essential, although certainly it is desirable that conditions should be created which will facilitate for all people the fullest possible development of their human potentiality."

The paper goes on to say that many current consumption habits of the developed countries are frivolous and wasteful when set against the needs of developing countries. I quote: "This underlines the need to reconsider the meaning of human life and community. Societies, heedless of responsibility towards other men and future generations, have measured their success in terms of high consumption and growth in the gross national product; but the dangerous inadequacy of such criteria becomes increasingly evident. Economic development, to a degree, is a necessity for human liberation; pursued excessively or made an idol, it is enslaving. A society, freed from both economic privation and idolatry, may offer its members a higher quality of life than most men know today. The Church, in particular, must testify that man, who lives by bread, does not live by bread alone."

The paper then deals with the subject of population. It says:

"The steeply rising growth of world population poses a host of urgent problems. While experts disagree on how many people the earth can support, all are agreed that there is an upper limit. It follows that overall population growth must inevitably stop at some point. Whatever this limit may be, we are in no doubt that we are approaching the critical point far too rapidly for complacency."
Another quote is: "Population growth in industrialised societies, where per capita rates of consumption and pollution are high, is no less urgent an issue than in developing countries." Further on, the paper says: "Population growth, together with migration from rural areas, contributes to the accumulation of people in cities in ever more crowded conditions." On family planning, the paper says: "Populations may continue to grow because people want large families. It has been a cardinal assumption that any list of human rights should include the right of parents to decide on how many children they might have. But this right should not be exercised apart from the right of the children to physical, social and psychological health, to an environment which gives scope to the fulfilment of their human potentialities. Population control puts the emphasis on parents having the number of children that can be adequately cared for in the world, rather than on the number of children parents may want to have."

These matters have been raised by the World Council of Churches. I do not consider that at present these are issues with which we have to contend in Australia. But clearly they raise in stark-form the issue that could arise between public conscience and private conscience. Our task in the future is to ensure that ways and means are found of solving the conflict and I hope by dialogue in the way I mentioned earlier in this paper.

I have indicated in this paper various fields in which conscience has played a part in bringing about change. I believe that they are samples in which Australians can take some pride in that a solution is being pursued in an atmosphere that is free from violence and marked hatred. I am aware that there are many other matters in which the conflict between private conscience and the State have not been resolved so easily or so calmly but
I believe these two fields I have raised are of importance at the present time and I would hope that further discussions of these issues could be of great importance to us all.
The principal thesis of the second Vatican Council concerning religious freedom is:

"It is an injustice done to the human person, and to the order that God has established for men, if a man is denied the free exercise of religion in society; saving a just public order."

There were three reasons which particularly caused the Council to examine the question of religious freedom.

First, there is the fact of contemporary religious persecution. In my own life time more Christian souls have been directly touched by religious persecution, especially under fascism and communism, than in any 50 years since the first Pentecost. Pope Paul, wishing to draw attention to the fact that religious persecution "inflicted a wound inflicted on the Council itself" celebrated Mass in the catacombs before opening the second session.

Second, the Council particularly wished to address itself to the topic of the rights of man, especially the right of freedom. This has been a topic of great interest to thinkers in the West, especially since the 17th Century. Locke was considered extraordinarily liberal in holding that there should be religious freedom for everyone except Catholics and atheists. Voltaire and Rousseau created a climate strongly in favour of freedom of conscience for all. The American and the French revolutionaries proclaimed it. For us J.S. Mill has helped to make it a normal item in everybody's mental furniture. How then does the Catholic church stand on modern freedoms?
Third, there were ecumenical considerations. Many at the Council held that the basis of fear and suspicion of many Catholics entertained by many Protestants was tied up with such matters as the burning of heretics, the activities of the Inquisition, Popes pullying Kings, Henry III made to kiss the feet of the papal legate, etc, etc.

Development of Catholic Doctrine on Religious Freedom

A dramatic way of putting the problem is suggested by quoting, sometimes out of context the 19th Century Popes: e.g. Gregory XVI in 1832 saying that the doctrine of the freedom of conscience is absurd and erroneous, in fact an evil dream. Yet the second Vatican Council has declared it to be strictly the right of the adult. Bishop De Smedt, the official relator, claimed that this was "not a change of doctrine but simply a development". To see that this is not as odd as it might sound let us put the history of the Catholic position in 5 steps.

First Step. St. Thomas Aquinas, about 1260 argued:

(a) No one must ever be forced to join the Catholic church.

(b) But it is in order to put pressure on a lapsed Catholic to return to the church.

(c) There is no right, in principle, to the freedom of practice of non-Christian religions: though that may sometimes be permitted in practice in order to avoid greater evils.

Second Step. The 19th Century popes, even Gregory XVI and Pius IX held that no one at all - a lapsed Catholic or anyone else - must ever be forced to join or re-join the Catholic church. However, they rejected the idea that
there is in principle, a right to positive freedom to practise any religion.

Third Step. Roman theologians in the 1950's were still of the opinion that there is no right in the principle to practise a false religion. Thus the Dominican Garrigou-Lagrange wrote "Per se, freedom for different forms of worship is not something good: considered in se it is an evil; per accidens it may be good, when it involves freedom for the true religion". And the Jesuit, Cappello: "Religious toleration by a catholic state is not justified except to avoid greater evils, and is to be measured precisely by the degree of its necessity. When and if a lesser extent of tolerance suffices, that is a more restricted degree of religious freedom, only this and nothing more can or should be conceded."

This seems to me to be one more case where the theologians are not the best witness to the Catholic mind. There is no doubt that the ordinary Catholic in Australia, the U.K. and the U.S.A. have shown themselves to have had a much sounder instinct for the mind of the gospel in never having accepted these ideas as have the theologians. My father often told me that as a boy in Ballarat in the 1890's he was taught by the Christian brothers that every human being has the right to follow his conscience in matters of religion.

Fourth Step. For the Second Vatical Council, a draft statement was prepared declaring the right of every human being to follow the religion of his conscience. The draft was debated and a great number of amendments were suggested by many of the Bishops and incorporated into a second draft. It was found that the vast majority of the Bishops agreed in substance with its principal thesis, but many improvements were sought in expression, argument and structure.
I personally get the impression that Pope Paul in particular wanted to change the bases on which the right was grounded; he was mainly interested in finding the spirit of the Gospel, and reaching conclusions that were most in tune with that.

The Actual Teaching of the Council:

The final formulation of the Council's teaching began by re-affirming that the Catholic Church is the one true Church established by Christ to bring men to salvation and happiness; and it re-affirmed that every person has the obligation to search for this way and to embrace it once found.

However, a person's only way to this is his "conscience"; nothing but genuine personal conviction can warrant a person being received into the Church.

Accordingly the Council declaration spells out a number of points in a doctrine of religious freedom which may be summarised as follows:

1. Who is entitled to religious freedom?
   (a) Every human adult.
   (b) Religious denominations and communities.
   (c) The family.

2. To what are they entitled?
   (a) Negative, and
   (b) Positive, freedom of religious thought, profession and practice.

3. Against whom does the right hold? i.e. who is it that has the corresponding duty to respect the individuals right to religious freedom?
   (a) The State,
   (b) Every other human power and authority.

4. On what is the doctrine based?
   (a) Conscience,
   (b) The limits of State power.
Personally, I am glad that they did not accept the bases proposed in the previous draft, viz: (a) a theory of the separation of Church and State; (b) A version of Existentialist Personalism.

5. The richest parts of the document: What light does the revelation make on the issue of religious freedom?

Since the act of faith is by its nature a free act, it is only voluntarily that a man can accept God's revelation. A condition of religious freedom, therefore, conduces to a situation in which one can best accept God's invitation to the Christian faith.

Although possessed of all the power of the Godhead, Our Lord forced no one to believe; gentle and humble of heart, He worked miracles to win men to belief, but rebuked the Apostles for suggesting prodigies that smacked of violence, and said that punishment for un-belief should be left to the Day of Judgment; it was not by force but by being lifted up on the cross that He drew men most powerfully to Himself. After Pentecost, the Apostles followed Our Lord's example. In proclaiming the right of the human person to religious freedom the Church has therefore followed the spirit and mind of the gospel; and though there have been actions in the history of the people of God that lapsed from the spirit, the Church has always taught that no man may be forced to embrace the faith.

The Catholic Church claims freedom for herself under two descriptions; as a spiritual authority founded by Christ and charged to preach the gospel to every creature; and as a society of human beings entitled to live in civil society according to the commandments of the Christian faith.

The faithful are reminded that an element in the formation of their consciences must always be the teaching of the Church. They are argued to pray
constantly for all men and to do everything they can to bring them to the truth of Christ by word, witness, and example, but always in the spirit of Christ's gentleness and love, full of respect for the dignity of the free human person.

Finally, the Council welcomes the religious freedom upheld in many contemporary legal systems, but deplores its infringement in many other countries. It is God's will that the human family should respect the right to religious freedom in human society and so, through the grace of Christ and the power of His Spirit, enter into the far more exalted freedom "wherewith Christ has made us free."
A CASE-STUDY IN CONSCIENCE:
Conscience vis a vis Inspiration
Hector Gilchrist Kinloch

At the beginning, may I declare my theological laymanship. Anything I may say about the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) of which I am a member, is only one individual's point of view, and not in any way a statement about the Quaker view of conscience. At best, I offer no more than a Quaker view. Furthermore, I am aware of the dangers of denominationalism; of assuming that there is a Catholic or a Lutheran or a Quaker view of conscience. All I am saying is that I have experienced thus-and-so within the framework of the Society of Friends; and that one man's life and work can be a case-study to help us see conscience in action.

In May, 1971 John Nurser raised with me the possibility of making a contribution to this Summer School of Religion. We discussed on his lively initiative, the theme of 'Spirit Possession', to include both Holy and Satanic versions thereof. At the time of our talk the trail of the Californian cult-leader Charles Manson was a topic in the newspapers; but John ranged even more widely than that. We touched on black magic, witchcraft, Trobriand Islanders, youth cults in the United States, and the sense of conscience in those groups which many of us would regard as demon rather than God-possessed.

Such is the vanity of man that by the end of a most stimulating lunch with John, I really came to believe that I could give a fifty-minute paper to incorporate all those themes. Indeed the challenge was irresistible. "Conscience as Spirit-Possession" was the original title. I suspect I was Nurser-possessed ever to have agreed to it; and gradually I became cold-feet possessed. We dropped the Trobriand Islanders and Charles Manson and witchcraft one by one; although I developed a renewed interest in what has been called
"Ecstatic Religion". After a few months, I began to narrow the topic down to several American sects. In particular I planned to look at the Black Muslims and the Mormons and possibly the Christian Scientists as highly varied unique American religions, each of which would have some special value in trying to examine the nature of conscience.

During those months of gestation I assumed that I knew what "conscience" meant. I recognized it as a kind of moral computer which insists on giving you the print-out even when you don't want it. Into the computer goes the data, all our experiences in life, all our moral, ethical and religious training, and out come judgements such as, "That's the right course of action", or "That's the wrong thing to do". Sometimes we act on the advice, but too often the advice is so unwelcome and painful that we put the print-outs in a waste-paper basket labelled "GUILTY CONSCIENCE".

As for "Conscience as Spirit-Possession" I assumed that whereas fine, upstanding people like ourselves have rational, sober, tertiary-trained, late-model, well-serviced and carefully programmed IBM and SJ type of consciences, there are strange people in the world who refuse to use computers. In any case, they can't read the print-outs. These people prefer to plug themselves straight into the power source, to look for electric-shock treatment, visions on the road to Damascus and instant, intuitive revelations. The kind of ecstatic activity I'm referring to may, perhaps, be represented in the following description:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they
were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

(Acts, 2: 1:4)

"Hold on", you might say. "Surely you're confusing 'Conscience' and 'Holy Spirit'." Yes, there is that danger in using words as labels. Is it really possible to define "the will", "the conscience" and "the working of the Holy Spirit" so that each stands out as a separate part of an interlocking whole? Where does one begin and the other cease? Yet we can recognize something called "a conscience" in everyone including Trobriand Islanders, Nazis, drug-trippers, Buddhists, Anglicans, atheists, humanists, behaviourists, Marists, Marxists, Maoists, Methodists and the Mafia. Adherents of each of these groups or points of view have been programmed and trained to accept that certain things are "right" and other things are "wrong". Is it, however, that knowledge alone which stirs them to act?

What kind of illumination is there in the computer room? Who does the programming? Who switches the machine on and off? Am I wrong in supposing that whatever it is which we call "Conscience" acts effectively only if whatever it is which we call "will" is moved to act in the light of the special illumination which the will receives. For Christians that illumination is described as the Holy Spirit. For Quakers that illumination, the Holy Spirit, is sometimes described as "that of God in every man".

May I now leave this dangerous computer analogy and move to describe an experience of my own; a personal excursion into the mind, will and conscience of a new member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers); a body which has had, in its brief three centuries of existence, a powerful sense of conscience. At the conclusion of this personal excursion I hope we will be better
enabled to look at a case-study in conscience in the life and work of John Woolman, an American Quaker from the colony of New Jersey in the eighteenth century.

At the time of that lunch with John Nurser in May, 1971 I was what Friends call an attender, in process of becoming a member of the Religious Society of Friends. That is a very simple and also quite a complex process. To become a member, one writes a letter asking to become a member; and this request is either accepted or denied by the Monthly Meeting to which one applies. Between the time of writing one's request, however, and being accepted or denied, one's letter has to be received by a Meeting for Business. Then two Friends are appointed to visit the applicant, preferably in his own home. This visit is not an examination of one's knowledge of Quakerism, or of one's moral and spiritual worthiness. In a way the visit involves "concerns of conscience", but basically it is a friendly discussion of one's reasons for wanting to join; and a chance to ask questions; and also an opportunity for the two visiting Friends to suggest some of the 'conscientious obligations' which becoming a Friend involves. There is no credal enquiry, because there is no creed to enquire about. Yet, despite the lack of creed, it would be expected that an attender who wished to become a full-fledged Friend would have certain kinds of views on such matters of conscience as war and peace, race relations and social justice - views which would be in sympathy with the general principles and testimonies of the Society. It is hard to imagine, for example, that a Monthly Meeting would easily accept for membership someone who believed in the innate superiority of Caucasians over Negroes, or of Negroes over Caucasians; or in capital punishment; or who felt that war was a useful, effective and just way of solving international problems. Again, despite the absence of a creed, there is one vital matter with regard to which the term "Credo" would almost be appropriate. On at least one point, the two
visitors would want to find a positive affirmation from the applicant. Does the prospective Friend believe that there is "that of God in every man"? Now, it could be that the applicant might be very vague - as I was - about the concept of "that of God in every man". At one extreme, he might take the view that as we are all parts of creation, then we all partake of whatever created us. An attender, however, who came from what might be called an orthodox Christian background, might mean that Christ came into the world for all men; and that God has given to all men the inner ability or potentiality of relating themselves to Christ; and that it is Christ who is "the inner light". "I am the light of the world" (John: 8:12) Both those views are represented within the Society of Friends. Some Friends are just this side of being humanists or even agnostics; other Friends are just this side of being evangelical Arminian Christians. They are united, however, in accepting the view that there is "that of God in every man"; and, therefore - and this is the logic of silent worship - that every encouragement must be given to allow that inner being, that pure light of Christ, that inner divine wisdom to speak, or to shine or to become evident. To achieve this, there is no need for a hierarchy, or sacraments, or intermediaries. After all, God is within. As there is "that of God in every man", then there must be silence, a holy stillness within which or out of which God can speak to our condition. This is not a trance-like state, a speaking with tongues, a process of the Medium giving the Message; but a deep, prayerful waiting upon God. Then, - dare I put it this way - it is laid on our consciences to speak the truth which comes to us. To repeat the quotation from Romans: 9:1. "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit". May I quote from a book of guidance called Advices and Queries? Here is the piece of advice which precedes all else:
"Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of God. Resist not his strivings within you."

At the time I was applying for membership that piece of advice sounded beautifully poetic, as indeed do so many of the Advices and Queries. But eight or nine months ago, I was still in a state of confusion about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit/the Inner Light - call it what you will. I suppose I accepted the theory of it. There was so much to say "Yea" to, within the Society of Friends, that I did not wish to raise unnecessary doubts about a matter which was beyond my own experience. In any case, I put it in the realm of the poetic. "That of God in every man". Beautiful! "Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of God". Magnificent! As an attender, I enjoyed the silence, the sense of reverence, the handshake at the end of the Meeting; and I found helpful and meaningful many of the things which were said in Meetings for Worship - often simple, uncomplicated, unpretentious and utterly honest comments, usually in everyday language. (I have also to say that after hearing some comments in Meetings I sometimes felt that the Inner Light was at very low ampage or wattage; but it was from hearing such comments that I felt I could myself speak in a Meeting for Worship!)

Anyhow - after my letter of application had been received, and when I was privileged to be visited by two dear Friends, I did not burn with an inner light. I find it hard to remember what I said, but perhaps this would be a fair summary of it; in a serious of statements.

I have wandered around a lot, shopping from church to church; and I find that I do not believe all the things which I am supposed to believe in those churches. I feel I need to be part of a seeking community within which I can be free to express or not express what I believe, without hypocrisy.
I like the freedom of the Society of Friends, the commitment to equality, the steady witness against inequality; the testimony against war. (Although I hasten to say that this was a comparatively minor concern for me at the time). I like the sense of a "Religious Society of Friends" within which there is truly friendship, sharing, caring, involvement and a spirit of love and gentleness. May I add to that, today, a term which I would not then have used, but expresses what I felt; - I like the spirit of "conviviality" - of living vividly, vitally and joyously. I probably also mentioned that I admired the lack of hierarchy, ceremony, vestments, liturgy, set-pieces and patterned responses. During this process, we had tea and biscuits.

I cannot remember, but I think I may have made enthusiastic statements about the witness of the Society of Friends as I had seen it through my study and teaching of American History. The history of the Quakers in America strongly witnesses to liberty of conscience and to religious and to personal freedom. One area of interest, for me, within the field of American History is that of relationships between black and white Americans, first during the period of chattel slavery, and subsequently in the period of segregation on up to the present. Quakers were in the forefront of the abolitionist movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and in the civil rights movement of the twentieth. This I had long admired - the Society of John Greenleaf Whittier. It would be an honour to be part of that heritage.

Lastly, - and how important this is - my wife and I; - but I'm not speaking for her, only for me - came to like (that's too tame a word for it) came to love specific, individual Friends; who, in turn, seemed willing to love us. And so I said "Yea"; and to my constant thanksgiving, they said "yea" to me; although I must have seemed a very marginal Friend; with a personal history which, in times past had verged on the scandalous.
But I haven't finished yet. Just over three weeks ago I went to my first-ever Yearly Meeting. This Ninth Yearly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia was held in the Friends' School, Hobart for a period of seven days, preceded by a three day Summer School on the Quaker testimony for Peace. I was warned, beforehand, in a most kindly way not to expect too much; but I found Yearly Meeting to be one of the peak experiences of my entire life. Many things which I had previously thought to be poetic I found to be real. There really was something which is rightly described as "a holy stillness". Decisions about such mundane matters as the budget, the magazine and appointments to committees were made in an atmosphere of worship. In the actual Meetings for Worship I felt the strength of silence. I was close to tears on a number of occasions, especially one morning when a quiet Australian Friend read out a passage from the journal of James Backhouse, an English Friend who, in the 1830's, visited the penal settlements in Tasmania and New South Wales, and - while doing so - was instrumental in the beginning of organized Quaker testimony in Australia. Building on that reading, other Friends made connections between Backhouse and previous Quaker history and testimony; and then on to the relevance of the experiences of the past to the present, especially to the grievous problem of racism within contemporary Australia, a subject much on the collective conscience of the Society of Friends in the Yearly Meeting. All of a sudden, in that room, I felt cris-crossing links of love spanning not merely the three hundred years of the Society of Friends in England, Australia and America, but back to the fullest expression of love represented in Christ. I cannot adequately describe my sense of sitting there, quite powerless to say anything, but feeling enveloped in love, and what's more, feeling radically changed. The sense of "inner light" was no longer poetry. At the very last Meeting for Worship on the day we returned to the outside world, one Friend said, quite simply - in surroundings of very deep silence - "The Lord's Power Is Over All". He was summing up, in a phrase drawn from George Fox, the
sense of the entire Yearly Meeting. The Lord's Power was over all. It gripped us; and as I recall it here, it continues with us. I have never before known such a sense of joy as I knew that week; and with it, a sense of determination to translate love and joy into action.

I was not, I confess, much bothered at the Ninth Yearly Meeting of Friends with the theme of conscience as inspiration; but it is out of the experience of that week, that this paper comes.

At some point late in the week in Hobart it became clear to me what I wanted to discuss here; not an objective, interesting, possibly even comical session about the strange ways of strange sects; but about the Quaker conscience related to the Quaker sense of the inner light and the interconnectedness of the two. But how to do it? How to make sense of it? How could I show that conscience can be little more than an inactive computer unless illuminated in a very special way? How could I talk about the programming of the conscience, or the quality of the demands of conscience, without getting tied up in conceived analogies and dubious symbolism?

After all, I still don't know what conscience is or how it works. I know that the Oxford English Dictionary can show me a hundred ways in which the word is used; and there is a history of the idea of conscience; and that it is a word which seems usefully to sum up a resource or faculty or quality which we all have. There are, for what it is worth, about thirty uses of the word conscience in the best-known Protestant translation of the New Testament. From my own experience, I can now say that a sense of conscience can be static, or low-keyed, or even suppressed; or it can be excitingly illumined in surroundings of love.

It is at this point that I wish to turn away from my own highly subjective reactions to a recent experience, back to an historical example of conscience acting in love. I returned to Canberra
from Hobart knowing that the next immediate item on my agenda was to prepare for this paper. But I also returned with a most powerful sense of need to steep myself in seventeenth and eighteenth century Quaker history. Two of us, during the week in Hobart, almost simultaneously decided to study the life and work of George Fox; but within two or three days we were both equally determined to look as closely as we possibly could at the life of a less well-known Quaker, but one whose love for his fellow-men and his sense of conscience about the evils of his own day, combine to make him shiningly relevant to "the Conscience of the 1970s." His name is John Woolman; he lived from 1720 to 1772. I now commend him to you.

* * * *

In commending John Woolman to you, may I make three bridging comments!

First, most Protestants are not comfortable with the word "Saint". For Quakers, this is even more true. Some Quakers are even reluctant to use such titles as Doctor, Professor, or even Mister, because the equality of all men and women in the sight of God may be compromised. Yet, functionally John Woolman may be said to play the role of a "Saint" in the history of the Society of Friends.

Secondly, the body of evidence about John Woolman is scant. He wrote little, and little was written about him by his contemporaries. He kept a Journal however, which has become a Quaker classic; a journal which may be described as reflections on the life of a man of conscience.

Thirdly, we need to recall that although Christian poverty is of particular importance in the Catholic tradition, it has not been so within Protestantism. There is no holy vow of poverty for Protestants. If a man's "calling" or "vocation" made him wealthy then he was being rewarded for virtue. A Quaker dilemma has been that most Quakers tend to be moderately affluent, and some Quakers have been
very wealthy.

Who was John Woolman?

What may we now learn about conscience from the case-study of John Woolman? It is my "concern of conscience" in this bicentenary year of his death, to show Woolman's relevance to our world in the 1970's.

John Woolman was born in the province of West Jersey, in the colony of New Jersey on 19 October, 1720; the eldest son, and fourth child in a family of thirteen children of Samuel and Elizabeth Woolman. He was the grandson and presumably namesake of a John Woolman who emigrated from Gloucestershire in England to West Jersey in 1678. In that year George Fox and William Penn and the first generation of Quakers were still very much alive. Penn's city of Philadelphia and colony of Pennsylvania were not yet founded; but already, thanks to Penn among others, Quaker settlements already existed, and the so-called "Holy Experiment" was around the corner. By 1720 those early Quaker settlements were successfully established; and the basis of Quaker prosperity in North America was assured.

John Woolman was born into a way of life very different from that of his grandfather. He grew up in an atmosphere of liberty of conscience and freedom of religion. There were no Quakers in prison for their beliefs in Pennsylvania, or Rhode Island or West Jersey. We may also note the comparative peace and prosperity of these North American communities of Quakers. It is true that a few Quakers, including one woman, were hung for their beliefs in Massachusetts, but further South, the Holy Experiment seemed to be a success. I say "seemed"!

Already by the 1720's, and certainly by the 1740's a number of basic social, political and economic problems faced the Pennsylvania and the New Jersey
Quakers. Let us concentrate on four specific problems.

The first and earliest obvious problem was the relationship between Quakers and the indigenous peoples, the American Indians. There was the question of land-rights. In frontier areas there was also the question of the security and safety of the new settlers. The second growing problem was the continuing antagonistic relationship between French and English colonies in North America. Quakers, as colonial Englishmen, owed allegiance to the Crown, and - therefore - to the military policies, including the taxing policies of England. What were peace-loving colonists to do? A third problem was less visible in Pennsylvania and West Jersey than elsewhere in the colonies, but was unavoidable. This was the existence of chattel slavery, not then limited to the South, but part of the economic order wherever the ships of England found harbours and ports. Quakers owned slaves, and did not find it strange to do so. A fourth problem not unrelated to the third, gradually emerged in the prosperity of colonial New Jersey. Quakers, like other property-owners, became more and more affluent. They faced an old difficulty, of pushing camels through needles.

All of these problems affected John Woolman. After a simple Quaker education; and a thorough training in the conscience-tempering environment of a Quaker settlement, Woolman became a bookkeeper and tradesman. He was an excellent tailor; he executed wills; he taught school; he worked an apple orchard; he eventually ran his own flourishing retail business in Mount Holly, a small town in Burlington County, West Jersey. Mount Holly became his home and that of his wife Sarah - they were married in 1749 - and of his only daughter, Mary.

As a youth, a teenager, Woolman went through a period of spiritual wild oats, or as he describes it: "... I found in me a plant strong and
and extensive which brought forth wild grapes."(1)
The word 'conscience' appears for the first time in the Journal in the section which describes Woolman's season of "wild grapes".

"I remember once, having spent a part of a day most wantonly, going to bed at night, in a window near my bed lay a Bible. I opened it, and I first cast my eye on the text 'we lie down in our shame and our confusion covereth us'. This I knew to be my condition, and meeting with it so unexpectedly, I was affected with it, and went to bed under remorse of conscience, which I shortly cast off again."(2)

Woolman's casting off the "remorse of conscience" was, I suppose, the equivalent of refusing to read the "print-out". In that same section he condemned himself because "my heart was replenished with mirth and wantonness, while pleasing scenes of vanity were presented to my imagination, till I attained the age of eighteen years, near which time I felt the judgments of God in my soul, like a consuming fire..."(3)

We are not given any of the details, but I suppose that was Woolman's way of telling us the Burlington County, New Jersey equivalent of a life of birds, bikes and booze before a conversion experience. From what we know of him, it was probably all fairly innocent.

By the time he was twenty-three, he had become a formally recognized young leader of his Monthly Meeting. It was the beginning of thirty years of a completely devoted and increasingly selfless life, which, I would here like to describe as a life lived under the direct inspiration of Christ or in the light of Christ. He does not, by the

(2) ibid., p.6.
(3) ibid., p.6.
way, use the term "inner light" or "that of God in every man". Illumined by this light, he developed the kind of meticulous attention to matters of conscience which some of us might think as finnicky to the point of eccentricity. And yet he was clearly so loving, so humble, so meek (and I don't mean meek and mild; but meekly under the discipline of his faith) that his life shone in the way he described in one of his last essays written in 1771 or 1772.

"If Christ is our Shepherd and feedeth us, and we are faithful in following him, our Lives will have an inviting Language...."(4)

Let me now be more specific about the quality of inspiration in his life.

In his Journal Woolman often reflects on his inward life; of spiritual strength flowing into him. There are literally hundreds of such phrases as "...the spring of Divine love opened..."; and "...being under a strong Exercise of Spirit". On one occasion he "remembered God, and was troubled, and in the Depth of my Distress, he had Pity upon me, and sent the Comforter". He notes, "...my Understanding became more strengthened to know the language of the pure Spirit..."(5)

How much of this was self-deception, or the recognized religious rhetoric of the day? Could he have been mistaken about the source of his inspiration? Those are unanswerable questions, whether asked of John Woolman or the world of the 1970's. Psychologists might have other explanations for the behaviour of mystics and saints. Cynics might see a lifetime of self-delusion. As one tries as objectively as possible to observe and comment on John Woolman's life and work, however, one can fairly say that he seems to have


(5) Whitney, p.11.
spent most of his life in devoted service to his fellow-men; and that Woolman himself attributed these activities to an indwelling divine presence. One of the most revealing expressions of his claim to inward inspiration is not in the Journal but in Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes (Part II).

"There is a Principle which is pure placed in the human Mind, which in different Places and Ages hath had different Names: it is however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no Forms of Religion, nor excluded from any, where the Heart stands in perfect Sincerity." (6)

What is this "pure principle"? May it be translated as "that of God in every man"; or as "the inner light"; or as "the workings of the Holy Spirit"; or even as "inspired conscience"?

Rather than worry about names, forms and labels, however, let us return to West New Jersey in the mid-eighteenth century to see the working out of this pure principle in practice. How did Woolman cope with the four problems already mentioned?

(i) Quaker relationships with American Indians

John Woolman's direct concern for the Indians came comparatively late in his life, although Quaker relationships with indigenous Americans would have been evident to him from his boyhood. In the early 1760's he visited what was then the western frontier of Pennsylvania to see Indian conditions at first hand. He records the origins of this visit in the Journal:

"Having many years felt love in my heart toward the natives of this land who dwell far back in the wilderness, whose ancestors were the owners and possessors of the land

(6) Gummere, p.380.
where we dwell, and who for a very small consideration assigned their inheritance to us, and being at Philadelphia in the 8th month, 1761, on a visit to some Friends who had slaves, I fell in company with some of those natives..."{(7)

From that original meeting developed a concern for the economic, social and spiritual condition of the Indians. He was upset by the effect of European-Indian contact upon them. He deplored the violent clashes between the two race groups and sought to bridge the gulf. In order to do this he did not approach the Indians in a patronising spirit.

In the Journal he explained that "the desire to cherish the spirit of love and peace amongst these people arose very fresh in me."{(8)

Later, he reflected "on the nature of the exercise which hath attended me." His aim was not to be a missionary, bringing a unique and superior message to the heathen! Rather he wished to visit in order to learn as well as to foster reconciliation.

"Love was the first motion, and then a concern arose to spend some time with the Indians, that I might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of Truth amongst them."{(9)

He was saddened by his visits, as he saw the degrading influence of the English upon the Indians. "And here luxury and covetousness, with the numerous oppressions and other evils attending them, appeared very afflictive to me, and I felt...

(8) ibid., p. 126.
(9) ibid., p.127.
that the seeds of great calamity and desolation are sown and growing fast on this continent."(10)

Woolman's direct association with Indians was brief, but demonstrates his methods. In all his concerns of conscience he tried to identify with and even live like those whom he wished to help, whether Indians, slaves, seamen or labourers. In the case of the Indians, however, his peace mission was unsuccessful. A century of antagonism and bloodshed followed. Quakers could not withstand the pressures of other kinds of European immigrants who made the frontier a battleground. This brings us to the second of the four problems; the related area of English Quakers confronted with the continuing warfare between England and France.

(ii) Quakers and colonial wars

The Quaker position on war is so well known that John Woolman's own peace testimony may be dealt with briefly. His belief in the need for loving and peaceful relationships between European and American Indians was part of a larger commitment against all wars and occasions for wars. He was consistent in that he opposed compulsory military service in the English armed forces. Woolman's references to this are given in the context of issues of conscience. On such issue was his refusal to pay taxes to support warfare. In his case against such taxation he pays tribute to Thomas a Kempis and John Huss, as exemplars of conscience. Huss is quoted with approval. The reference Woolman gives is to John Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

"This I most humbly require and desire you all, even for his sake who is the God of us all, that I be not compelled to the thing

(10) ibid., p.129.
which my conscience doth repugn or strive against."

Woolman's comments here tell us a good deal about himself as a Christian. In an age when Protestants were vehemently anti-Catholic he was able to say of Thomas à Kempis that he was "a man of a true Christian spirit", and "appears to have laboured, by a pious example as well as by preaching and writing, to promote virtue and an inward spiritual religion."(11)

Conscience was given a central place in Woolman's decision in 1755 not to pay the war tax, especially as most members of the Society of Friends did not openly object to being taxed in this way. Woolman noted that "To refuse the active payment of a tax which our Society generally paid was exceeding disagreeable, but to do a thing contrary to my conscience appeared yet more dreadful."(12)

Three years later, in 1758, Woolman was engaged in another rather strange act of conscience against aiding the military. He would not refuse the order to billet a soldier in his house, but refused to accept payment for doing so "having admitted him into my house in a passive obedience to authority."(13)

In that same year, 1758, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting considered the third of the four main problems which faced eighteenth century Quakers in the American colonies, the ownership of slaves. The Yearly Meeting did so largely on the initiative of John Woolman.

(iii) Quakers and Slavery

Specialists in the colonial period of the history of the United States; and of the history of

(11) Moulton, pp. 75-76.
(12) ibid., p.77.
(13) Ibid., p.89.
slavery in the British colonies remember John Woolman not for his attitudes towards the Indians nor because he opposed war. Woolman's name is associated, above all, with the anti-slavery movement. Much of the Journal is concerned about slavery, as are several of Woolman's essays and pamphlets. His tenderness of conscience is most evident when one looks at his anti-slavery activities. His concern about Negro slaves began early, at a time when slavery was part of the normal economic and social life of all the North American, South and Central American and Caribbean colonies of all the European powers.

The very first reference in the Journal to slavery is in the opening chapter. Woolman described an episode which occurred in 1742 while he was a young book-keeper in Mount Holly. Again, the manner of Woolman's dealing with the problem of slavery is as interesting and revealing as the fact of his opposition to it. As with the Indians, or a war tax, or a billeted soldier, Woolman's actions are personal and loving. They are directed towards achieving a useful end, and not merely to taking a posture of righteous opposition.

"My employer, having a Negro woman, sold her and directed me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting who bought her. The thing was sudden, and though the thoughts of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow creatures felt uneasy, yet I remembered I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our Society, who bought her; so through weakness I gave way and wrote it, but at the executing it, I was so afflicted in my mind that I said before my master and the Friend, that I believed slavekeeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion. This in some degree abated my uneasiness, yet as often as I reflected seriously upon it I thought I should have been clearer if I had desired to be excused from it as a thing against my conscience, for such it was." (14)

(14) ibid., pp.32-3.
That was the last time Woolman ever undertook any activity even in indirect recognition of slavery. The final incident referred to in the opening chapter of the Journal is an example of the gentle methods he adopted.

"And some time after this (referring to the bill of sale) a young man of our Society spake to me to write an instrument of slavery, he having lately taken a Negro into his house. I told him I was not easy to write it, for though many kept Slaves in our Society ... I still believed the practice was not right, and desired to be excused from writing [it]. I spoke to him in good will, and he told me that keeping slaves was not altogether agreeable to his mind...."(15)

From 1742 to the year of his death Woolman devoted himself "in good will" to persuading fellow Friends and anyone else who would listen to him or read his pamphlets to give up their slaves, as a voluntary act of conscience. He undertook journey after journey through his own part of the country, and also the northern and southern colonies, to meet with Quaker slave-holders to try to convince them to give up their own slaves.

Over three decades, then, Woolman gradually ordered his way of life so that nothing he did should in any way aid or give comfort to the slave system. From scruples of conscience over bills of sale and wills, he moved outwards to persuade his neighbours and fellow Quakers to share his views of slavery. He always did this in a person-to-person fashion until he and many like-minded Friends at last persuaded the Society as a whole to condemn "the peculiar institution." Sometimes Woolman himself, moved by "the stirrings of the Spirit", would become what seemed to some Friends excessively scrupulous. By 1765 he had long since given up rum, molasses, sugar and other goods tainted in his mind by their mode of

(15) ibid., p.33.
production, namely by slave labour. In that year he took on yet another kind of self-denial.

"An exercise having at times for several years attended me in regard to paying a religious visit to Friends on the eastern side of Maryland, such as the nature of this exercise that I believed the Lord moved me to travel on foot amongst them, that by so travelling I might have a more lively feeling of the condition of the oppressed slaves, set an example of lowliness before the eyes of their masters, and be more out of the way of temptation to unprofitable familiarities." (16)

Woolman's wearing of undyed clothing also stemmed from this kind of scrupulosity. It even smacks of a rather unpleasant kind of self-righteousness, except that Woolman himself is worried about and aware of the danger of a kind of "singularity" and spiritual pride. He notes in 1761 that "the apprehension of being looked upon as one affecting singularity felt uneasy to me. And here I had occasion to consider that things, though small in themselves, being clearly enjoined by divine authority became great things to us, and I trusted the Lord would support me in the trials that might attend singularity while that singularity was only for his sake." (17)

The question of wearing undyed clothes leads to the fourth problem which was common to many Quakers by the mid-eighteenth century. Slavery was an observable evil. Quakers could free their own slaves and encourage the rest of the world to do the same. On that matter, therefore, they could have "easy" consciences by the end of the eighteenth century. Clearly the Quakers had pioneered in the anti-slavery movement for which they continued to work in the nineteenth century. Far more difficult was the increasing affluence of American Quakers.

(16) Ibid., p.145.
(17) Ibid., p.121.
Quakers and Affluence

The simple life of John Woolman was a quiet and Quakerly reproach to slaveholders. At the same time this strange-looking man, oddly dressed, on foot, meek in his manners, was a reproach to men of property of all kinds. It is in this last problem area that Woolman's life is still a prick to our own consciences. Slavery, after all, has gone. Indians are no longer the victims of white settlers. But when, in the 1970's, we are confronted with Woolman's life-style, we are forced to look again at our own comfortable lives. In his Journal, even more in his Considerations on the true Harmony of Mankind, and his A Plea for the Poor, Woolman makes a case for a Christian economic order in which the stress should be on the simple life.

As in all matters about which he had a conscientious concern, Woolman sought spiritual guidance and then acted as an exemplar to others.

In 1756, the year in which he began writing his Journal, Woolman decided to give up his business because it interfered with what was central in his life. The following passage is a classic "extract" in Quaker literature:

"Until the year 1756 I continued to retail goods, besides following my trade as a tailor, about which time I grew uneasy on account of my business growing too cumbersome. I began with selling trimmings for garments and from thence proceeded to sell clothes and linens, and at length having got a considerable shop of goods, my trade increased every year and the road to large business appeared open; but I felt a stop in my mind.

Through the mercies of the Almighty I had in a good degree learned to be content with a plain way of living. I had but a small family, that on serious consideration I
believed Truth did not require me to engage in much cumbrous affairs. It had been my general practice to buy and sell things really useful. Things that served chiefly to please the vain mind in people I was not easy to trade in, seldom did it, and whenever I did I found it weaken me as a Christian.

The increase of business became my burden, for though my natural inclination was toward merchandise, yet I believed Truth required me to live more free from outward cumbers, and there was now a strife in my mind between the two; and in this exercise my prayers were put up to the Lord, who graciously heard me and gave me a heart resigned to his holy will. Then I lessened my outward business, and as I had opportunity told my customers of my intentions that they might consider what shop to turn to, and so in a while wholly laid down merchandise, following my trade as a tailor, myself only, having no apprentice. I also had a nursery of apple trees, in which I employed some of my time - hoeing, grafting, trimming, and inoculating."

The lessons to be drawn have been obvious to generations of Quakers: to avoid too much wealth; to shun unnecessary extravagance and luxury; and to use a considerable proportion of one's earnings to help the economically underprivileged.

Woolman went further than this, however. He was concerned with the right ordering of the world's resources especially of the labour of his fellow men. Logically, he also objected to the misuse of the labour of oxen and horses. Any kind of activity in which wealth was desired for its own sake and brought about unnecessary hardship was

(18) ibid., pp.53-4.
condemned by Woolman. His tract A Plea for the Poor, probably composed in the 1760's but not published until 1793, spoke so feelingly about the misuse of wealth, the burden of poverty, and the wasteful exploitation of the earth's natural resources that the Fabian Society became interested in its message a century later. A portion of A Plea for the Poor was reprinted as a Fabian Tract in 1898. (19) But Woolman was not a socialist. His motives were not related to class struggle and a critique of capitalism. His concern was to stir the consciences of those who owned property, whether land, "beasts of burden", or slaves, in order to promote reform from within. Good deeds were to be done for their own sake by men of good will; not forced upon men by governments. Woolman's message is exemplified by this piece from A Plea for the Poor.

"As cherishing the spirit of love and meekness is our duty, so to avoid those things which they know works against it is a duty also. Every degree of luxury of what kind soever and every demand for money inconsistent with divine order hath some connection with unnecessary labour." (20)

Modern ecologists and conservationists would find Woolman's language quaint and strange. Comparatively few of them would agree with his basic premises about what is now called the "biosphere". Yet conclusions in the 1970's about the reasons for the rape of the environment and the mis-use of natural resources are similar to Woolman's analysis two hundred years ago. We now recognize that human selfishness, a desire for rapid economic growth and a lack of concern for either posterity or the environment which posterity will inherit have brought us to our present situation

(20) Moulton, p.246.
of potential ecological disaster. Modern prophets and Jeremiahs now try to quicken our consciences about the mis-use of fossil-fuels, land, minerals and the products of our industrial society. Woolman saw that the hunger for wealth, luxury and possessions was both spiritually disastrous and harmful to the natural order. Is he, in his own way, speaking to our own time as well as to the American colonists in the following section of A Plea for the Poor, a section which is headed, "The heavens, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men". (Psalms.115:16)

"As he who first formed the earth out of nothing was then the true proprietor of it, so he still remains; and though he hath given it to the children of men, so that multitudes of people have had sustenance from it while they continued here, yet he hath never aliened it; but his right to give is as good as at the first, nor can any apply the increase of their possessions contrary to universal love, nor dispose of lands in a way which they know tends to exalt some by oppressing others, without being justly chargeable with usurpation. "

John Woolman, 1772-1972

In 1772, Woolman undertook a voyage to England. Possibly it was a kind of pilgrimage to see the origins of the Society of Friends, in addition to a wish to spread his feelings about slavery. England, after all was still the fountain of colonial power. The slave-trade operated in English as well as in colonial ships.

While on his journey on board the Mary and Elizabeth, Woolman travelled steerage. Sailors

(21) ibid., p.257.
as well as slaves were at the bottom of the economic order. Woolman wished to live as they lived in the most cramped and unpleasant part of the ship. Steerage, as he recorded, "nath afforded me sundry opportunities of seeing, hearing and feeling with respect to the life and spirit of many poor sailors." (22) His Journal describes the dreadful conditions of labour. His concern for the masters of slaves is matched by this new concern for the masters of seamen.

"Now as I have been with them in my lodge, my heart hath often yearned for them and tender desires been raised in me that all owners and masters of vessels may dwell in the love of God and therein act uprightly, and by seeking less for gain and looking carefully to their ways may earnestly labour to remove all cause of provocation from the poor seamen...". (23)

This same worry about "those in the lowest Stations" extended to the post-boys on stage-coaches. So tenderly did he feel towards them that he wrote back home to urge Friends not to write to him, because their letters would have to be carried by stagecoach. He comments

"I have felt great distress of mind since I came on this island on account of the members of our Society being mixed with the world in various sorts of business and traffic, carried in impure channels." (24)

Finally Woolman reached the north of England, one of the strongholds of eighteenth century Quakerism. While visiting Yorkshire he felt impelled to minister to the poor during a smallpox epidemic. He himself then caught the disease and died in York on the 7th of October, 1772.

(22) ibid., p.166.
(23) ibid., p.168.
(24) ibid., p.134.
Esther Tuke, an Englishwoman Quaker who nursed Woolman during his last days, wrote to Samuel Emlen of Philadelphia about Woolman's life and death. Her comments are a fitting tribute to a man of conscience:

"...though he appeared to us in some things singular, and the path he trod, straiter than the liberty some of us have thought the truth gives, yet I may say to thee that I cannot help thinking it was the way truth led him;...". (25)

As a man of conscience, John Woolman continued to have relevance for the 1970's, if only as an exemplar of where conscience can lead us. One American historian, however, goes much further than this. Let us conclude with Edwin Cady's conclusion about the role of John Woolman in our own time.

"John Woolman, who died in 1772, was the soul of kindness, of quiet humility, of gentle Christian charity. Nevertheless he stands at this moment in unique and terrible judgment upon the United States of America. Wholly American, he did not live to see his country formed politically. Yet he lived and wrote to form its necessary conscience. More important, his moral imagination, vital after two centuries, invites us from the pages of his Journal and essays to create the conscience necessary to the health of the world as well as the nation of our times.

The roster of American saints is short and the public memory of their names shorter still. We have rightly felt that, on the whole, the national morality was best in the keeping of simple, unsung

average men, not in any spiritual elite. But just now history if not God seems to demand a creative response from the American conscience which cannot remain inchoate. Within and without our borders the three most fateful American problems concern money, race and power. Woolman speaks intimately, profoundly to our condition with regard to all three. He is a genuine American saint. We sorely need to hear his voice and feel the power of his aesthetic as well as his moral imagination". (26) Edwin H. Cady, John Woolman, (N.Y., 1965) p.ix.
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INTRODUCTION:

In the cartoon strip "Peanuts" by Schultz, there is a delightful sequence where Snoopy, once again, tries to rid Linus of his blanket. Snoopy, playing the role of Christian in the strip, according to Short, clasps the blanket in his teeth and with Linus trailing behind rushes out of the house and into the snow. There follows a desperate effort by Snoopy to shake Linus free from his blanket. He swings him, he leaps on him and he rushes him. Despite this massive assault, however, Linus' grip holds and exasperated Snoopy lets him go. Linus stuggers back to the house to be let in by Lucy, his dear sister, who starts right in chastising him. "What on earth" she whines "are you doing out there in this weather? You'll catch pneumonia. You must be crazy!" Linus who has reached the fire stands warming himself with his blanket. Very softly over his shoulder, he replies. "The struggle for security knows no seasons!"

Typically Schultz has highlighted a fundamental human dilemma in an all too familiar setting. Can we not identify, with any of the three roles depicted? We laugh most comfortably I fear with Linus and his blanket. Dare we laugh at him? Linus' blanket bothered Snoopy. Somehow I think it bothers us too. (Particularly so as it is someone else's blanket). It isn't quite right we feel. Security should lie within a man. An external visible blanket is not very convincing. Man, like Liberated Woman, should dispense with visible means of support.

Some of us have met men like that. We sense the inner calm and certainly about them. It is good to be in their presence. We feel that this is how it should be. We too can relax near their reassuring strength, their comforting authority. This man, we say, is authenticated. Very likely we don't say that at all but it brings me to the
subject matter of this paper:

The Quest for Authenticity and the Ego-Ideal.

I would like to approach this topic from the point of view of a rather busy clinical psychiatrist. My treatment of the theme will therefore be pragmatic rather than academic. Almost every day I see this quest enacted out before me in people's lives. It is something of which I am very conscious and I will attempt to share some of my experiences with the hope it may crystallise some of our thinking in this discussion and perhaps help us to learn something new of our own selves.

Because much of this material is personal observation I cannot apologise for its subjectivity nor would I want to.

DEFINITION:

These papers have been looking at different aspects of conscience. I am sure that by now there will be some understanding of what is usually meant by conscience and its relationship to the term Ego-ideal. Very simply of course Freud saw personality as consisting of three major elements. "The Id" wherein lurked our basic drives such as the need for food, sex, etc. We would now add aggression and curiosity. "The Ego" seen as in touch with reality checking the inner and outer environment and attempting solutions in behaviour designed to reduce conflict with the "push" from below as it were in the Id and the "pull" from above in Conscience or Super-Ego. Freud saw the super-ego as the repository of "all the age-long values which have been handed down ... ... from generation to generation. The Ideologies of the super-ego perpetuate the past - yield but slowly to - the present and - play an important part in man's life. Besides its individual side, this ideal has a social side: it is also the common ideal of a family, a class or a nation".
Hadfield in his book *Childhood and Adolescence* makes the point that the mental health of the child depends very much on the Ego-ideal the child adopts. He shows how the child achieves his Ego-ideal by Identification with another significant self, e.g. the parent. Before - he imitated; now - he identifies. "He scraps the person but keeps the character", says Hadfield. "No longer does he say "I'm a brave boy, like Daddy" but "I'm a brave boy". Somehow Wordsworth's "The child is father to the man" has come true. Hadfield asserts, and others, including myself assert, that the child has incorporated into himself the ideals, security and control which once lay outside himself in his parents. Indeed has not the child become his own parent? Herein in fact lies the importance of the parents' Super-ego for it the Ideals are too severe then they become a heavy burden for the child, repressing him. On the other hand if the Ideals are too easygoing then they will lack the power to guide and control.

A few years ago in Sydney I had to deal with two adolescents both with drug problems. The first, a lad of 18 dependent on morphine. He had quite a good I.Q. and was in the process of dismantling a career in Engineering. When he wanted to go out his mother had to ask her mother if it was O.K.

The second was a lass of 17, brought in found using amphetamines. Almost immediately the parents were there. "Can't understand it," said her father, "We're a close family. Always discuss everything. Why some months ago the kids (which included our patient) wanted to leave home. Have the flat below, I said, have the flat below! Can't understand it. They only stayed there a week!"

The boy was cabinned, cribbed, confined and could not break out (indeed he broke in and went to jail). The girl knew not when she had crossed the border. The one, fenced in; the other, fenceless.
A healthy Ego-ideal will direct the drives within a person to a common satisfying goal. The Ego-ideal then is intrinsically bound up with our goals and consequently our behaviour.

Authenticity has been defined for us by Jourard in his book The Transparent Self. "Authentic being means being oneself, honestly, in one's relations with our fellows", he says. Eric Fromm helps us in his book The Art of Loving. There he describes the fearfulness of isolation in man, Man, he says, is above the animals though part of the animal kingdom. Man, says Fromm, has reason and thus man is "life being aware of itself".

It is this self awareness, Fromm maintains, that startles man. Animals with other living things are not so aware. Man on the other hand sees himself and the perennial questioning about the environment - "what is it?" Is turned in onto himself - "who am I?".

"What is man ... ...?" asked King David.

"... ... we are but players ...." answers Shake- speare. And this is Jourard's (not Portnoy's!) complaint. Authenticity to man means self revelation. In irreducible terms "the real me." "The child" says Jourard "is itself". The adult has learnt to dissemble and cloak.

THE QUEST:

So in summary then we are talking about a quest for ourselves and our values. Authenticity and Ego-ideals. It is a little more than just who am I? I am a man (or woman as the case may be) but what kind of man am I? Nor is it just what do I believe in? But what does what I believe in make me do?

"It is not so much that I believe," said Thomas Moore in 'A Man for all Seasons', "but that I believe".
THE NEED FOR THE QUEST:

Why should the need to know who I am and where I am going bother me so much? Why does it matter? How does it all become an urgent and relevant quest? Why should it move Snoopy to thrash Linus, albeit unsuccessfully, in the snow?

Perhaps we should go back to Eric Fromm. He asserted that "man is life being aware of itself." He goes on to say that this immediately puts man in a position of separateness. This is me; that is you. But paradoxically this separateness is a fundamental part of the process of coming to know the self.

It is something like the experience the astronauts had when, being separated by space, they were able to look back at Earth and see its dimensions, colour and form in all its authenticity so to speak. Being out there in space of course generated its own particular brand of anxiety, relieved it seemed by a successful re-entry and splash down. Fromm says that our awareness of being separate is the basis of our anxiety and gives energy and urgency to our quest. "The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love - is the source of shame", he says. "It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety".

Is it not significant that the first two questions in the Bible are in the first instance "where are you?" and in the second "where is your brother?" The first question follows on from the Fall of Man when Adam and Eve had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and "their eyes were opened and they saw that they were naked - and they were ashamed". Naked and ashamed not surely in the Victorian sense for this story is older than that, but naked in the psychological sense. Aware of self and aware of self being separate - and anxious. And Adam hid himself and God said "Where art thou?"

This concept of uniqueness in being different is
fundamental to our experience. We see it clearly in physiology and anatomy. We are all conversant with the phenomenon of rejection of that which is "not self" in organ transplants. Personal identification by finger prints or even by blood groups underlines this again. Skeletons come to talk again through their teeth provided the dentist has kept his records well. "I'll never find another you" sang the Seekers and of course they were right.

There is some scientific evidence to support the concept of anxiety roused by feeling separate in the Sensory Deprivation experiments in America. Students were invited to spend a week in a sound proof, light proof, sensory proof room. The pay was good. No one stayed much longer than three days and by then some were hallucinating. The more man is isolated the more he begins to shake, - a fact well known to jailers with their treasured possession of solitary confinement.

The words exile, alien, stranger all conjure up this uneasy feeling in us. In fact Fromm took this a little further when he postulated that absolute failure to close the separation gap for man meant insanity. By denying reality in madness one was no longer cut off from reality. One cannot be separated from that which no longer exists. Jourard substantiates this when he quotes an ex-schizophrenic patient as saying that the crucial "break" in schizophrenia is with sincerity, not reality. This may sound as a play on words but the point Jourard is making is that this break was indeed a self-alienation. A kind of false presentation of the self. Watzlawick in his book The Pragmatics of Human Communication says much the same thing. The great problem of the schizophrenic he says is his desire not to communicate. This, Watzlawick maintains, we cannot do! Our very turning away bears in it a clear message. "He was conspicuous by his absence".

Indeed an ex-schizophrenic patient said to me of her experience in the locked observation room
where she was alone, "I wished to communicate with no one and the thing that made me furious was the fact that my doctor understood!" Another young man, a student, wrote of his experience in verse:

"Lifeless, floating in a vacuum
Unseeing, unhearing, uncaring
Yet caring to remain inert"

Schultz has something to say on this also. Lucy has approached Linus once again. This time she wants him to quit a habit he has developed at school. He has been patting little birds on the head. Linus of course flatly refuses to stop. Charlie Brown's help is enlisted. "We wish you would stop patting little birds on the head", he says. "Why?", says Linus, "why should I stop? The birds like it, and I like it, why should I stop?" Charlie Brown draws a little closer "No one else does it!" This of course is the cultural basis for a diagnosis of madness. If you do what no one else does you at least become suspect.

I found it fascinating to read the Greek New Testament. I also found it difficult. One word recurred often, "Idios". From this of course we get our words idiosyncrasy and idiot. Both underline degrees of difference. "Idios" was translated as Christ. Then, the word referred to His uniqueness. He was God's only son. Elsewhere the Jews are spoken of as a "Peculiar People", again highlighting this uniqueness. Today these words carry more sinister overtones. People set apart, separated out, put away.

People who some to see me professionally all have this in common. They feel isolated, estranged. And they feel anxious. Stengel in his book Suicide and the Attempted Suicide says this quite simply. "The would-be suicide", he says "has a deep sense of personal rejection".

A young lass of 16 is admitted following an attempt on her life. Her father is an alcoholic, her mother promiscuous. When she was 11 the
family disintegrated and the police placed the five young remnants in homes. Her head hangs down. She has long dark hair and her face is not visible at first. Next day she looks up and shows me a rather pretty little face. Spontaneously I exclaim "You are just a little flower". She scowls, "I'm a Poison Ivy!"

Professor Hetzel in this year's Boyer Lectures on the A.B.C. points up what he calls our "modern epidemics". There are four: Heart Disease, Cancer, Accidents and Suicide. In the ten years between 1955 and 1965 the suicide rate in Australia doubled and it seems it will continue to rise.

International figures often show an inverse relationship between suicide and homicide. The higher the suicide rate the lower the homicide. Does this mean that, in our society at least the cry "we don't want your effing war" forces people into isolation even in their personal hostility? Or is it the other way round?

Another factor in our present day which causes me, and I'm sure all of us concern, is our apparent inability to become personally involved with the Road Death Rate. How often does one say "we passed a nasty accident"? The T.V. doesn't help much either. Adams, the Television Critic for The Australian, says "only cars have accidents". The anxious camera shys away from flesh and blood.

Is this just another example of the depersonalising of our society? The car isolates. Walk round a "drive in" while a show is on and see what you make of it. Could a live stage production succeed at a drive in?

In Djakarta there are little buses very often all over. If you want one you hail it. When you want to alight you tell the driver. They only hold about eight people and the thing that struck me about them was that inside everyone talked! It
wasn't difficult to overshoot your stop but some­how it didn't matter. In the shops too you vigor­ously bargained. Whom do you talk to in a super market? And while you're on a drug trip - do you need to take anyone along? Can you? All this in the '70's when we now hardly bother to both hear and see the man on the moon. Refined communica­tion that, if you want it.

Perhaps we have made the point. Born naked we run for cover. But instead of rest we find a dilemma. Which of us dares leave his "hide" to answer the pertinent call "Where art Thou"; which of us dares to remain hidden, alone? It was surely all summed up by the Ancient of Days long ago at the beginning.

"It is not good for man to be alone,"

THE QUEST: PATHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

When you were very young did you ever have a secret? Mothers should beware how they handle the contents of little pockets. "Ugh, what do you want with that dead snail?" "A bent nail and a smooth little stone?" Paul Tournier in his little book "Secrets" shows us how the very first step in becoming a person is to have a secret. This is one thing not "given" by our parents. It marks us off from them. It's our very own. Even though it smells.

Also, he says, a secret has another role to play. We can choose to whom we will give it. This he says is the second step in becoming a person. It is our own choice. Even if we lose it.

This surely gives us a clue in our quest. We have to make a move out. Out towards another. Adam must come out from behind his tree. "There came a time in my life," said a friend, "when it was no longer necessary for my parents to know all that I did". The quest begins with our parents. We begin in a state of dependency. We struggle through to independence. Surely not to remain in
grand isolation but to establish an inter-
dependency. I see many people in my rooms caught
in the struggle.

"The trouble with my wife", says a husband "is
that she just does not listen to what I say".

"While you're not doing anything", says the
resentful housewife at the clothesline to her
professor husband gazing out over the hedge, "you
might help me hang out these clothes!". "Not
doing anything" says the smarting husband, "I was
just about to solve that Physics problem!"

Innocently I interrupt a housewife in full flow -
"Do you ever tell your husband these things?"
"Tell him, doctor? What's the use? All he does
is pick up a book and turn his back!"

A fairly eloquent response I observe:

"I cannot tell my father anything", sobs a teen-
age daughter at her father, her clenched fist
pounding the arm of the chair. Father looks on in
stunned silence.

"How does that make you feel?" I ask of the
father.

"In my job", starts off father, "you must realise
that all the travelling about ......."

"What does that make you feel?" I ask again.
Father tries once more "In my day of course the
problems were quite different; there was no T.V.
.... "Excuse me", as I gently interrupt him,
"but how does that make you feel?" "Awful", says
father.

There are two things going on here. Two levels
of communication. Verbal and non-verbal signals.
The father's words and the father's feelings.

Now the Seventies is the decade of the computer.
Depersonalised perhaps but brilliant thinking
machines. One wonders, however, as programming continues to develop whether they will remain de-personalised. There are two kinds of Computers. Digital and Analogic. A simple example of the Digital Computer is the Desk Calculator, while the slide Rule is an Elementary Analogic Computer. The former deals with digits and the latter with positive magnitudes - the analogues of the data. In human terms a Digital Communication is made up of words only. The "digits" if you like of human communication. If Digital Communication is words, then Analogous Communication is all non-verbal communication. Compare the T.V. set. It communicates by sound and a picture. It is this analogic component of our communication spectrum that causes us some difficulty. Analogous communication clues seem more primitive and basic as shown by Tinbergen and Lorenz (in Animal Behaviour) and Bateson and have a great deal to do with the area of RELATIONSHIP.

In the area of Interpersonal Relationships it is often a failure to decode the analogous communication being sent as it were between two people that leads to so much confusion and eventual breakdown in that relationship.

A daughter overdoses. Both father and mother are interviewed with the daughter. The daughter begins to cry. Mother continues to talk right on about her daughter. Neither Father nor Mother moves to comfort their daughter.

A six year old boy is brought up for consultation. He has an unfortunate problem. When his four year old brother was born he was very jealous but this was overcome. Good. His problems now? Well you see he will go into his younger brother's bedroom, pull out his lower drawer and wee into it. Primitive, inarticulate, perhaps - but very eloquent.

In observing this breakdown in communications one begins to ask which one is the patient. I mentioned above that it is important to realise that we
cannot communicate analogously a NOT.

A teenager is admitted with an overdose. She talks of a conflict with her mother. It is always my fault, she says. At an interview with her mother and stepfather, mother breaks down and cries. The daughter reacts at once, says "See, there I go again!" and makes for the door. We persuade her to stay. Mother is upset, NOT with daughter but with her husband who drinks. She feels, she says, on the point of leaving him. A missed cue on behalf of the daughter. The daughter stayed on to learn that everything that went wrong did not necessarily originate from her, and a marked improvement followed.

The ambiguity of analogous communication helps to make things difficult. One of the more positive results of World War II was an understanding of feed-back in systems. In order that a missile hit a moving target constant feed-back from the target to the missile was seen to be vital. Thus the behaviour of the target came to directly influence the behaviour of the missile. There arose a concept of positive and negative feed-back in relation to systems. The system consisting of the relationship of one unit to another unit in communicational contact with it where change in one had a direct bearing on, and influenced change in the other and vice versa. We have all heard the whistle at a public meeting when the microphone is too close to the speaker. Here the sound is entering the microphone, being amplified, leaving the speaker and so on until you think something is going to give. This is primitive feed-back. Positive feed-back tends to "open up" or "break-down" a cycling system. Negative feed-back on the other hand tends to maintain or contain the system.

If we view the ongoing interpersonal relationship between people, e.g., members of a family, where the communicational feed-back each gives the other constitutes a cycling system then we begin to see how some rather puzzling relationships are maintained. I have already referred to the nagging
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wife and the silent husband. The more she nags the more withdrawn he becomes. Games without end.

A woman presents herself and is talking before she sits down. She talks and talks. I reach for the phone directory and look up a number nodding the while appropriately. I dial the number and pass a short message. She is still talking. Shortly she will say, "Am I boring you?" My reflex reply would be, "No, of course not!" and, being reassured, she would continue. A negative feedback. What if I had said "Yes, you are," as I did in this case. The flow of words stopped at once. Eyes looked to the floor. "Why do you talk so much?" "I talk when I get anxious", was the soft reply. "What is worrying you now?" "My husband has lost his job again".

A good marital brawl is on. The wife has gone to fetch the rifle. "I will shoot myself". Husband changes course and offers some positive feedback. "Go on then, shoot your so-and-so self". Silence. Then the rifle is discharged - into the ceiling. Asked afterwards how she felt at that point, the wife said "I didn't know what to do!"

Often we are called in (as doctors) to help anxious disturbed people. We feel our role to be one of soothing and mollifying of the upset one. Called to see an old lady widowed two years previously in Sydney, following news of the sudden death of a son, I presented myself with my bag and appropriate mutterings. "Don't give me a needle, doctor", she said, "you gave me one when my husband died and I couldn't cry!"

Tranquillisers are reliable and close at hand but they often contain a situation that should be given room to ventilate. A fourteen year old girl rushes to her bedroom and takes an overdose of her tranquillisers that she has been given for "nerves" over the last three years. Some months later her father is admitted for Psychiatric treatment. "Dad is the trouble", said her brother at the time of the girl's admission.
By offering negative feed-back to a disturbed system we can do the patient a dis-service. Often some positive feed-back, perhaps as simple as "what's eating you?" is all that is needed. After all it is being honest with them.

Besides the double-edged attempt at communication there is also something else at work. It becomes clearer if we look at the participant's position when the analogous element in the communication has not been "decoded". Often it is not even acknowledged.

A young lady is hostile with her parents. "I don't want you to visit me at all", she says, and then when they've left runs straight away to the phone to ring them up. Some of you may recall the Welshman in Tommy Handley's "ITMA" on the B.B.C. "It is a lovely day. I have never seen such rain!" "Come down by all means. I have taken the ladder away!" Just what can you do with that? It's called the "Double Blind".

The parents of our young lady didn't know what to do with theirs either. Both parties remained where they were. Separated. Plenty of talk. Plenty of feeling - stacked up in fact. No relief. After the row husband and wife return to their corners - hurt. Again feelings stacked up, no relief.

The anxious wife trying to cope with the second baby, she already has a toddler of two. "My husband is so irritable I feel he doesn't love me any more. You don't care, do you?" she thrusts at husband. He turns and looks out the window. Typically later on as we stand to go, husband says "Actually it's my mother who is getting my goat!" She had come to help for a few weeks. The old conflicts between mother and son were re-kindled. The wife looks incredulously at her spouse, "I didn't know you felt like that!" A sense of relief pervaded the room.

Because we conceal ourselves we prevent, it seems to me, a vital contact occurring. The fact that
we keep at it underlines a strong need or drive to make that contact. Because the parties involved remain as they were, isolated, the effort must be made again. The need is on both sides. The father needs his daughter as much as the daughter needs the father.

A girl of fourteen presents with an overdose. "Life is boring", she says. A profound digital communication you say? She says it staring at the floor her face colourless. There is no mistaking the analogous communication. "What of the future?", I ask. "There is none", she replies. At fourteen? The family is brought together and the parents explain with some pride that they haven't had a row in ten years. I'm not impressed. It now becomes clear that all messages from the daughter to her father and vice versa pass through mother. Father and daughter are out of touch. Mother also is very unsure. When she visits her daughter on the ward she asks another patient first how her daughter is! The rule at work was "Parents must not be upset". Feelings are taboo. Reinforced in our little girl by a visit from grandmother, "Don't upset your mother". The mother later relates how at a party the daughter had sneaked some alcohol. She went upstairs and hugged her father. "And father?", I asked. He was delighted. As I said, they needed each other but it took some alcohol to disinhibit. It is a desperate feeling to be out of touch. We were able to help this family and at our last interview the father and mother shook my hand warmly. The daughter didn't. She planted a big kiss on my cheek. Contact, I felt, has been made!

It seems to me that we can only come to know ourselves through interaction with ourselves. Through the feedback we either draw close or are repelled. Freud said that the super-ego of the child is not built up on the model of the parents but on the ideals of the parent's super-ego or conscience. Thus for one generation to find itself adequately there must be room for this to happen within the attitudes contained in the older generation's ideals. Do the ideals of the '70's
allow for this?

In passing, is one of the drives behind the recent push in pornography a kind of futile effort at unmasking the concealed self? To-day's issue of the Women's Weekly (I try to keep up with my reading) has an article on Germaine Greer. It also has a picture. Predictably she has posed to leave no doubt she is not wearing a bra but the interviewer says this, "She threw back her head and laughed. It's a full-bodied, un-selfconscious characteristic laugh, and it tells you right away she's for real." I am not suggesting that pornography and Germaine Greer are in any way connected. The link was purely free association. Frankly I think Germaine leaves pornography for dead. Pornography per se is surely a dead end anyway. The spirit of Germaine Greer is certainly not dead. Actually she goes on to reveal something more of herself. I think it is pertinent to our discussion. "My father" she says, "was a stranger to my mother, too. It must have been tough for her" (No one let on? My parenthesis) "They did stay together in a formal sense. I was misfit in the house - probably as much my fault as theirs." (The concept of analogic communication, each part of a relationship). "Nobody wanted me and so I've looked for affection all my life". She begins to tell us something of the joy of liberation as she began to find herself by giving. "Going to school was a tremendous release. I was a different personality there, quite mad and bursting with vitality." Is Germaine asking us to share in the freedom of being herself? I think of the Rich Young Ruler in the Gospels "What must I do to inherit eternal life?", he asked. "Go sell all you have and give to the poor and come follow me." And he went away - sorrowful. If you want, said Christ, you must give.

What I have been trying to say at this point is two things. First that in our contact with each other we can leave a great deal unsaid. Often it's about ourselves we don't say. Much talking, little contact. Secondly the need to make contact keeps
us at it. Even if we only make a hostile contact it's better than being ignored or unwanted. It was the importunate widow that got the Judge out of bed.

We need to make contact because as I have tried to show, we begin from the position of self awareness of separateness. We need to make contact to know ourselves. Strangers to others a stranger to ourselves. Unknown to others, unknown to ourselves.

Somewhere there has to be meaningful vital contact. Somehow it's like touching an electric wire. We leap back trembling. "It's alive," we say. I sometimes see it in the branding of cattle, which I once did. The beast leaps away smarting from the red hot iron. You can smell the burning. But the beast is marked for life. It's real. It happened. There's no doubt. Authentic.

A quiet dignified father in a responsible position is interviewed with his family. His teenage son has taken an overdose. The air is tense.

"How did you feel when you knew your son had taken the tablets?"

Pause: "I was worried".

"Worried?"

"Well, I was angry." Wife is nodding vigorously in the background.

"You agree?" "He was furious."

"How did you know?"

"He drove the car to the hospital and I never thought we would make it."

"Were you furious?" "Yes".

"Son, did you know your father was furious with
you?" Son, who is looking at the floor while father gazes at the ceiling, answers, "No, I didn't know".

This man had a number of sons. All had shown disturbed behaviour in their teens. He tended to approach his boys and talk to them expecting, he said, as an outcome "reasonable behaviour". The sons rarely if ever knew how their father felt about them. In a sense they were emerging into adulthood unconfirmed in themselves as young men. If one has a corral with some young stallions in it one doesn't go down and talk to them. One takes a cirsingle, bridle and whip. The outcome one hopes is a good working relationship where each is secure in his role and all the energy now under direction usually satisfying to both.

Watzlawick points out in his book that our mental health as an important part at least depends on the confirmation we get of ourselves from other significant selves. Feed-back.

Later the two elder brothers come home and find their mother distressed again. "What's up?" they asked. "Oh, your brother's up with his girl friend again and won't come home!" "We'll fix him", say the brothers, rolling their sleeves up and marching out of the house. "Oh, no. no", pleads mother, wringing her hands. Actually they do beat this brother up and bring him back black eyed and bloodied now for Mum to nurse. Paradoxically, ever since that the brothers have been very good friends. Contact. Authentic. Relief. Someone cares that much about me.

What am I that someone should thus care? The discovery of the self has begun.

You recall the story of the daughter who couldn't talk to her father, earlier? Later the father rang me to say how desperately anxious he was about his daughter. She remained very depressed and suicidal. "I have come back from my vacation" (you remember she had sent them away) "because I am so worried. I have told her, however, that I
had some letters to attend to at the office!" Come down. "Why?" I asked, "haven't you told your daughter the real reason for your visit? How can she ever know how you feel about her if you don't tell her!" I asked for the daughter to be brought from the ward to talk with her father. She began by looking at the floor. "I have come to see" said her father, "that I have hidden behind my armour. All those wakeful nights have not been about my office affairs but about you." Her eyes were riveted on his face. "I can't believe it", she said slowly. She turned eagerly to me. "I have always known that Daddy has loved me just like all parents love their children but I have never known he felt like that!"

Unloved it seemed, by another significant self, she could not leave herself. "I hate myself", she said, "I wish I was dead." "Could you talk to your own parents?", I asked the father. "Never", he said "but I did have a friend at Boarding School".

Surely the violence of the suicide, the upheaval in the overdose or the degree of self-destruction in the drug abuser all give a glimpse of the other side of the coin. The anguish and anger of the self left separate. Does not the violence under-line the profound need of contact? The bitter complaint of the estranged and anxious to me indicates how fundamental it is to our human experience to make this vital contact with the self.

Surely if it didn't matter, would there be so much fuss?

"I just don't care any more", says my patient.

"Really?", I ask. I don't think we realise just how anxious we are to show ourselves. It isn't easy, however vital.

Douglas Stewart, the author of Fire on the Snow, the fruit of seven years reading of Scott's diaries of his journey to the South Pole, took his beautiful work to a friend. "Quickly", he said,
Somehow I think life itself helps. "Something funny happened to me on the way to the forum". Often the traveller on life's journey says "Ah, this is a lovely Inn. Good food, good company, nice view. I think I'll stay here". One day life kicks the foundations away and the Inn comes tumbling down. "What the hell's going on", shouts the traveller. "Life", comes the answer, "there's a lot more you know. This Inn isn't the end." It helps a lot, I think, when you realise life is like that. I have summed it up in my own little philosophy, "when you fix the toilet the roof leaks".

**THE QUEST: NON-PATHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.**

We have seen how we begin in our quest for authenticity. We start with self-awareness and being separate. We have looked at how important it is for us to meet in order to find ourselves. As Iron sharpeneth Iron so the face of man sharpeneth that of his friend - *Proverbs*.

We have spent a few minutes in looking at feedback and how it works. We have tried to show how important feedback is in getting to know where we stand with another and consequently how we stand. We can see how Ego-ideals assume their important role in the parent child relationship. What I as a parent believe about you, you may well come to believe about you too. And we have spent some time trying to illustrate the kinds of problems we get into when we are "sick" psychologically, the inability of people to handle the full implications of communication with another person.

I would now like to spend a little time looking at people caught up in a relationship who are not "sick" psychologically as we know it. By way of introduction, however, I want to give you a brief schematic thumb-nail sketch of patterns of behaviour normal and abnormal. What I want to show you is the meaning in behaviour, both normal and abnormal.
It goes like this. When we are born we are given two basic things. First we have our Genetic Endowment. All our inherited factors. Height, sex, hair colour etc. So far we have little control over that. Secondly we have our Environment. Town, country, black, white, rich, poor, small family, big family, religious, non-religious, etc. At first at least we have no choice about this either.

Then as we begin to grow we run slap bang into various stresses. Little, or maybe big problems. They seem to begin right away. The suckling has to tolerate being "put down". Then it has to quit the breast. Learn to walk. Share toys with number two or three or four (I'm speaking B.E. "Before Ehrlich"). Go to school. Fail an exam. or come top. Make friends. Leave school. Get a job. Handle new feelings like sex, independence. Become engaged. Get married. Or choose not to. Become a parent. Handle a promotion. Face retirement. Grow old. Die. The Seventeen ages of man! And this is not to mention fire, famine and flood.

All these events produce in us a certain feeling. An uneasy feeling. We sense the stress coming. Can we handle it? What's the answer. Will I win? The feeling we call anxiety. Stress makes us anxious. Stress is part of life. So then is anxiety. Remember Fromm said our very self-awareness, our separation made us anxious.

What then do we do with our anxiety? Well, it seems to me we have three choices.

First, we can look the stress in the face, cast about for a solution, maybe share the anxiety with someone we trust and produce problem solving behaviour. Adaptive behaviour if you like.

Secondly we can fail to face the stress clearly and adjust in a way which somewhat avoids the problem but lets us get by. We don't allay the anxiety, we tend to contain it, but we survive, more or less. Can't handle a close relationship with the opposite sex? We have lots of encounters
but never settle. Like "Georgy Girl", we are, "always shopping, but never stopping to buy". We go off in our circle. We can call this maladaptive behaviour or if you like neurotic behaviour.

Thirdly, we can be so overwhelmed by anxiety that we withdraw altogether from it. Depending on our genetic make-up in part we "opt out" of the game for a while. We turn to crazy behaviour. Non-adaptive or if you like Psychotic.

Now having quickly de-mythologised mental illness, let us go on and look at behaviour in so-called normal people under stress. I would like to look at the twelve disciples. I have chosen them because we all know something about them and also because we now call them Saints.

These men had been chosen for a special mission. "Come follow me", was the invitation and "I will make you fishers of men", and they had come. For three years they were very close to their teacher. Day and night, up hill and down dale, crowds, solitude, tight spots and miracles. They saw it all, first hand. But not only that. Wherever Christ spoke in Parables he called the twelve over and explained it to them. They of all people had inside information.

One would be excused for thinking that these twelve men would, when it came to the point, pass their final examination. Three years is long enough to get a University Degree. But what did happen when these men met the stress of Easter? As far as I can see they failed utterly. They slept. They betrayed. They denied. They cursed and they all forsook Him and fled. And one suicided.

In my book they all produced maladaptive behaviour. Almost across the board. None handled the stress and anxiety with any problem-solving manoeuvre. In one sense they all had a nervous breakdown at Easter. Certainly they drew a large zero in their final exam. They all failed. Back they scurried to their old safe job - fishing. But what devastated, disillusioned men they were. It
had all looked so good. It had all come to nothing. So Easter came and went.

Have you ever thought how Christ must have felt after Easter, about his disciples? Again, in my book, he would have been quite justified in sounding off long and loud about them. Don't talk to me about my disciples. How they hurt me, let me down. After all I'd done, all I'd given, the ungrateful selfish yellow lot. Why if I could get my hands on them ... Or He could have grown sad and said something like "What can I build with this lot? You couldn't even start a service station with them. Let alone a great church. I shall have to start again with another twelve".

He didn't of course. Well what did happen? They came back. I've already said our need to belong is very deep. And they saw Him and something very interesting happened. I say to folk, "What did He do when they came back?" and they usually say, "Oh, He forgave them", but it doesn't actually say that. What they said fascinates me. In Mark's Gospel it says "And they believed not for joy." For joy! Not because they had been disappointed too often, or hurt or let down or weren't good enough, but for joy. And the New English translation has it that this "was too good to be true."

How often have I had folk in my room saying just that? "Oh, yes doctor" they say, I know what life should be like, I have my little picture of it up here, but no, I've been let down too often, disappointed too much, or I'm too bad or whatever. That couldn't happen to me. Not to me. It's too good to be true, for me." And this is what the disciples said. This is too good to be true! What was? Well, before Easter they were "My disciples" and after Easter they were - "My disciples". There had been no change. They had sorely faltered but He wasn't holding it against them. It suddenly came crashing in on these men that they were acceptable. Like that. As crass failures.

This is what they found so hard to believe, that someone loved them, like that, after what they had
done. Or was it what they were? Didn't Easter strip from these men any semblance of self delusion? They were laid bare. Adam had gone behind a tree, but the tree had fallen down. And somehow it was all right. Incredible, incomprehensible but a fact. And now look at their behaviour after Easter. Off they went across Europe in the next 20 years with their message and they could not be stopped. The failures had become successes. Is not this why they were able to sing while in jail? It didn't matter so much what they did. It's what they were that mattered. And they knew now, whatever else they knew about themselves that they were loved men. Self aware but aware of another significant self's acceptance. No longer separated. No longer anxious. "For with love there is no fear".

In the mighty drama of Easter each had revealed each to the other and both had emerged in a new relationship. "Henceforth", He said, "I call you friends."

I personally see no difference in the mechanism of interpersonal relationships and the self coming to know and accept itself in the context of the relationship with another significant self and what happened at Easter. The difference lies in the fact that there the significant other self was God.

A brilliant young student overdoses. For the greater part of her life she had stood on the side line, watching the game. It's boring - the side line after a while becomes boring - the game lost its point. What is the point of a football match anyway? Pretty futile if you don't have the ball. "Love", she said, "is just a moral obligation". Then something happened and if you like her tree fell down. She stood exposed and in a way it was her Easter. Life had thrown her the ball. It was real.

"How do you feel now?" I asked.

"Vulnerable", she said and then added, "but safe".
"Before", she said, "I felt safer, but it was dangerous".

I felt she had put the paradox beautifully.

"Except a corn of wheat die, it abideth alone ... .. "

A young man comes to tell me how he is improving. A scapegoat in his family he had been given and assumed the role of failure. He can look more clearly now at himself and his relationship at home. Suddenly he stops and says, "You know I'm afraid as I tell you that you'll say it's all wrong". Beginning to gel.

A young student becomes very disturbed. Slowly she makes contact again and relationships with self acceptance grows. She talks in her pictures. First they are a mess of black and red and green. Green is family, red is anger and black is depression. The mess alters to bars of black. Red and green still mixed but a little gap in the bars. Now much later she shows me her latest. It's a flash of gold on light blue. "This is me" she says, pointing to the gold. I notice it has a firm solid core.

May I finish the poem, the first verse of which I quoted earlier?

Lifeless, floating in a vacuum
Unseeing, unhearing, uncaring
Yet caring to remain inert.

Hands reached out to help
Groped and found no grip
How can something lifeless cling?

Slowly a finger touched
Feeling thus thought thus life seeped back
Drifting dawned to direction

Found a harbour
A port
A transient resting place
Reloaded for the next journey
Sails set.

Confirmation of the self. Authenticity. You are acceptable as you are. Ego-ideal. "or to-day shall you be with me in paradise, you thief."

For you shall love your neighbour as yourself.

For you shall accept your neighbour as you accept yourself.

Indeed can we begin to love/accept one's neighbour until we can accept ourself?

For God, so loved ... He gave ... His Son.
ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN AS THE CONSCIENCE OF RUSSIA

A case study

Nina Christesen

'Convictions based on conscience
are as infallible as the internal
rhythms of the heart.'

From Solzhenitsyn's letter to
three students, October, 1967.

One cannot speak of contemporary Russia without
taking into account the historical premises of the
Soviet Union, which is an outcome of a world-shattering revolution. The roots of that revolution reach deep into the past and, however distorted the ideals of the early Russian revolutionaries became in actual practice, it must not be forgotten that some of them were originally motivated by the highest of humanist principles and adhered to standards of morality akin to those of early Christians. At the risk of oversimplification one can say that, in some contexts, the Revolution in Russia was the result of the promptings of conscience among the best members of its intellectuals. This explains why so many of them welcomed the Revolution and for so long remained under its spell. In imaginative literature this attitude is exemplified by the reactions of Doctor Zhivago, who described the Revolution as 'such splendid surgery'. 'You take a knife and you cut out all the old stinking sores. Quite simply, without any nonsense, you take the old monster of injustice which has been accustomed for centuries to being bowed and scraped and courtseyed to, and you sentence it to death.' To people like that, people 'burning like candles with the flame of their ideals', the Revolution took place 'in the name of humanity in defence of the weak, for the good of women and children'.

Although the use of the word 'conscience' became rare in the literature of the Stalin era, doubtless because of its association with the system of Christian ethics, it never entirely disappeared
from either literature or life, nor is the concept of 'conscience' alien to the processes of thinking in the Soviet Union today.

For instance, a popular version of 'Lenin's last testament' attributes to him the expressed hope that 'one day there will develop a people who will learn never to utter so much as a single word against the dictates of their conscience.' A Soviet Dictionary of Ethics describes the notion of conscience as consistent with communist teaching, but quotes Marx: 'A republican's conscience is different from that of a royalist, the have-nots have a different one from those that have, a thinking man's conscience is different again from that of one incapable of thinking.' One of the best discussions in the Soviet press on conscience appeared in a November 1971 issue of the monthly journal Novy Mir, in a fine critical reassessment of Dostoevsky's work; however, the author felt it incumbent upon him to justify his use of the word itself. As another example one can take a September 1971 issue of Znamya which devotes some pages to aphorisms from Kant, Seneca, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Tolstoy, Cicero, Pascal, and so on, under the general title 'Man and his Moral Code', containing various definitions of conscience. The appearance of this article in a monthly journal published by Pravda could indicate something like official sanction for public discussion of the topic.

Apart from such isolated cases, one can say that the concept of 'conscience' in the Soviet Union today is kept alive mostly by its dissident writers, intellectuals, scientists, who feel impelled to utter unpopular truths.

Imaginative response to man's suffering, injustices and crimes is not, of course, confined to Russian writers. Nor are the Russians the only people who need a spokesman to lighten the burden of their guilty conscience in a world that still tolerates the obscene inhumanities of Vietnam and other regions; a world in which 'vulgar materialism, selfishness, aimlessness, neurosis, mendacity,
pettiness, moral slothfulness and cowardice are still prevalent'; 'a world that has lost all coherence and consistency, and governments spending billions for armaments to defend a state of affairs in which youth, the very future of the people, is left without adequate institutions to safeguard its healthy development'; a world that seems bent on destroying itself.

But this paper is concerned with the Soviet Union. And it is well known that, for various historical reasons, the rôle of the writer has always been particularly important in the social structure and functioning of the Russian State. Perhaps in no other country has literature been taken so seriously - and that long before the Revolution. Perhaps in no other country, or to the same extent, was the writer such an important person: prophet, martyr, teacher, source of aesthetic experience, the conscience of the people and their leader in the realm of ideas. To the extent to which the writer was taken seriously by the people, he became a menace, a threat to or a potential ally of government. That is why governments were prepared to court or buy or try to force the allegiance of writers. Censorship, persecution, arrest, confinement to a lunatic asylum, imprisonment, exile and hard labour in Siberia, even death of writers can be instanced from Russian nineteenth century history, though not on the vast scale practised in the twentieth century.

As Solzhenitsyn says through one of his characters in The First Circle, 'For a country to have a great writer is like having another government.' And the first and basic duty of a writer is to tell the truth: 'It is incumbent upon a writer to inform society of all that he is able to perceive and especially all that is unhealthy and a cause of anxiety.'

'I do not believe that it is the task of literature with respect of either society or the individual, to conceal the truth or to tone it down. Rather, I believe that it is the task of literature to tell the people the real truth,'
which is what they expect from him. Moreover, it is not the task of the writer to defend or criticise one or another mode of distributing the social product or to defend or criticize one or another form of government organization. The task of the writer is to select more universal and eternal questions, such as the secrets of the human heart and conscience.

A Czech writer, Gabriel Laub, has specifically called Solzhenitsyn 'the conscience of Russia in the 1960s'. The particular rôle of Solzhenitsyn in the 'sixties has been to tell the uncompromising truth about Stalin's concentration camps. It is difficult to overestimate the importance, for the people of the Soviet Union, of this achievement. His was the first openly published record of the most tragic, the most traumatic, the most shameful period in the life of the whole nation. No one in Russia who has lived through that period has remained unscathed by the terror and the shame of those years. Truth eventually had to be told about the countless innocent people who perished (even though some were posthumously 'rehabilitated'), truth had to be told for the sake of the relatives of the victims, for the sake of those who lived long enough to be 'rehabilitated', for the sake of posterity. Truth had to be told about the guilty informers, false accusers, perjured witnesses, the jail wardens, the executioners - 'not', as Lydia Chukovskaia puts it, 'in order to wreak vengeance upon the guilty, but in order that we should arrive at clear thinking and precise statement of what actually took place'. Truth has to be told for the sake of those who were genuinely misguided. For the sake of truth itself.

Evidence of the tremendous impact upon the Soviet people of the publication of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich is to be found in the letters of those who had the courage to write to Solzhenitsyn about their own experiences in similar camps. 'Our fellow-countrymen', he records, 'too seldom have the opportunity to express their views on social questions; this applied even more to former prisoners. They have already been disillusioned,
deceived, too many times, but all the same, this
time they believed that the age of truth had come
and that they were free to write.' And it was as
if a common cry went up. 'Some correspondents
signed their names, others disguised their hand-
writing, others were even more careful - they did
not write at all ('after all, one can be traced
from one's handwriting') - but they all illustrate
the fundamental need to know and tell the truth.

'The reader badly needs the full truth about
life', Alexander Tvardovskiy wrote in Novy Mir
(January, 1965). The words 'We must not suppress
knowledge of evil. It only becomes more powerful
as a result' express the prevalent attitude of the
Moscow writers called to discuss the first part of
Cancer Ward in November 1966. 'No one can bar the
road to truth, and to advance its cause I am pre­
pared to accept even death', Solzhenitsyn himself
stated in an open letter to the fourth Soviet
Writers' Congress in May 1967.

It would seem that the conspiracy of silence was
over. A craving for the truth was not confined to
those who had suffered personally or through their
relatives, or to 'non-conformists', but was
displayed even among the orthodox and convinced
supporters of the regime. Thus it was that
Tvardovsky, Granin, Paustovsky, Kaverin, Bulat
Okudzhava, Yevtushenko, Simonov and others came out
openly on the side of Solzhenitsyn. As did Georg
Lukács3 and Jack Lindsay4, among other marxist
intellectuals.

The burden of a guilty conscience upon the vast
masses who knew of the concentration camps and the
Stalinist terror, but did not act to prevent the
tragedy, who took part in it through cowardice,
inertia, ignorance, helplessness, self-interest or
mistaken loyalties, was weighing them down, was
corroding to the whole fabric of life, impeding
intellectual and spiritual progress, paralysing the
creative energies of the people. There is a
psychological need to understand tragic events and
one's part in them, to tell the story of a crime
committed, as it was told by the Ancient Mariner;
to kneel on the ground and confess to all the world, as did Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, Nikita in The Power of Darkness, Katerina in Ostovsky's The Storm. Men of genius, such as Coleridge, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, could see that without such confession there can be no illumination, no healing catharsis, no rebirth.

The 'irresistible power of unarmed truth and the attraction of its example' is amply illustrated by Solzhenitsyn's own life and work. His heroic struggle has been ably documented in English by Leopold Labedz in Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record (Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970). The outlines of Solzhenitsyn's biography are fairly well known. Briefly, he was born in 1918, studied mathematics and physics at a provincial university, won a Stalin scholarship, completed externally a two-year course in literature, joined the army in 1941, was twice decorated for bravery and promoted to a captaincy. He was arrested in 1945 for criticizing Stalin in a private letter and sentenced to eight years' hard labour in a prison camp from which he was released in 1953, but again sentenced to 'perpetual exile'; during this exile he was treated for and seemingly cured of cancer. Being released in 1956 and 'fully rehabilitated' in 1957, he settled in Ryazan to teach mathematics in a local school. Thanks to Krushchev's 'thaw' after the Twentieth Party Congress revelations, and to the liberal policy of Alexander Tvardovsky, editor of Novy Mir, his novel One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich was published in 1962. The novel was immediately sold out. Upon publication of further Solzhenitsyn stories in Novy Mir - 'Incident at Krechetovka', 'Matroyna's House' and 'For the Good of the Cause' - die-hard Stalinists launched an attack on the author and his friends. This was countered by Tvardovsky, and the editorial board of Novy Mir even nominated Solzhenitsyn for a Lenin Prize. The deputy editor wrote an essay entitled 'Ivan Denisovich, his Friends and Enemies' and the editorial office was inundated with further correspondence expressing solidarity with Solzhenitsyn. But opposition to him was
intensified and out of his considerable output of novels, stories, film scenarios and stage plays only one short sketch was printed after 1963.

In May 1967 Solzhenitsyn appealed to the Fourth Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union with an open letter that has become famous. He was supported by a letter signed by eighty members of the Union, individual telegrams and letters from other writers, but opposed by powerful men like Sholokhov and Fedin. Solzhenitsyn received no reply so he wrote again in September, whereupon he was invited to meet the Secretariat of the Writers' Union. At that meeting Alexey Surkov declared Solzhenitsyn to be more dangerous than Pasternak: 'Pasternak was a man divorced from life, while Solzhenitsyn, with his animated, militant, ideological temperament, is a man of principle.'

It was at that meeting, too, that one of Solzhenitsyn's antagonists was impelled to say: 'I am no child, my time will come to die, perhaps in an agony like that of Solzhenitsyn's heroes in Cancer Ward, and then the crucial issue will be how was my conscience? What are my moral reserves?'

Opposition to Solzhenitsyn comes at various levels. Some Stalinists who are still in office fear the truth, fear recognition and possible retribution. Others may be motivated by petty professional jealousies. Some hardliners fear the effects of Solzhenitsyn's 'moral socialism' upon the communist programme of development. Others (and not without reason) fear the use for propaganda purposes made of Solzhenitsyn's works and his moral stand by external enemies of the Soviet Union. To minimize his impact upon Soviet citizens his opponents have tried to extract from him some conciliatory statements that could be published under his signature. Solzhenitsyn has repeatedly rejected this suggestion. He is concerned above all with his conscience as a writer: 'My mind is dearer to me than the fate of my books.'

Solzhenitsyn made no compromises with his conscience at the meeting in September 1967, any
more than he had done earlier in the concentration camp or during subsequent persecution. The important thing is that he has gained an increasing number of supporters, that despite a new 'freeze' the example of his stand has fortified others. He was attacked in the press by the editor of Pravda as a 'schizophrenic' and an 'enemy of the Soviet people'. Thereupon Tvardovsky wrote a magnificent letter to the secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union, Constantine Fedin, calling upon him to act 'according to his mind and conscience', but this was to no avail. In November 1969 Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Writers' Union. Protests from Russian writers and such eminent scientists as Jaures Medvedev followed. Medvedev wrote: 'Alexander Solzhenitsyn has deservedly acquired in the USSR and the whole world the reputation of a patriot and of a fighter for real truth. He has not betrayed that truth, those humanitarian ideas, he has not betrayed his conscience...'. When Medvedev, in his turn, was forcibly incarcerated in a mental institution, Solzhenitsyn made a powerful statement on behalf of Medvedev and others who were declared 'officially insane' because of their sensitivity to injustice and to stupidity. He concluded: 'It is shortsighted to think that one can live by constantly relying on force alone, constantly ignoring the objections of conscience...

Deprived of his means of livelihood and fearing reprisals from his enemies, Solzhenitsyn has taken sanctuary at the country dacha of the world-famous 'cellist, Matislav Rostropovich.

In October 1970 Solzhenitsyn was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, 'for the ethical force with which he has pursued the indispensable traditions of Russian literature.' Like Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn has not been allowed to receive the prize in Stockholm; like Pasternak, he has been abused by the Soviet Press, and only last year an ugly incident befell one of his friends. Again the writer squarely faced the danger, interceded on behalf of his friend, and even extracted an apology from the K.G.B.
In December 1971 Solzhenitsyn made his first public appearance for several years past, at a funeral of his champion, Alexander Tvardovsky. His passionate statement on that occasion recalls the famous poem of Lermontov upon the death of Pushkin. It can only be hoped that the history of the Pushkin-Lermontov syndrome will not be repeated.

The magnificent example of the workings of conscience in Solzhenitsyn's personal life is paralleled by the values expressed in his writing. The unheroic hero, Ivan Denisovich, succeeds in preserving his integrity, his inherent decency and dignity, in the midst of appalling conditions. The gentle baptist Alyochka in the same novel prays 'that the Lord may drive out all angry feeling from our hearts', and grows stronger in his faith through suffering. An 'untypical Soviet woman', the inefficient, uneducated, unworldly peasant Matroyna, acquires biblical dimensions in the story 'Matroyna's House', which concludes: 'We all lived beside her and did not understand that she was that righteous person without whom, according to the proverb, this village could not stand. Nor this city. Nor all our land.' In 'Incident at Krechetovka' the rigid but fundamentally decent young communist Zotov ruins the life of an innocent man through mistaken zeal, but one can see glimmerings of conscience in him, and perhaps he deserves almost as much pity as does his victim. In 'For the Good of the Cause' Solzhenitsyn attacks petty despots, heirs to Stalin. The local party secretary and the Komsomol leader are on the side of truth and justice, but they are powerless before the selfseeking director and the omnipotent party machine in Moscow. The decent, public-spirited young students become victims of ambitious bureaucrats and one feels that Justice itself has been victimized. Sixteen remarkable 'miniature tales' or 'prose poems' provide variations on the themes of freedom, faith, love of one's country, death, compassion and the sense of wonder at the miracles of nature. 'Zakhar Kalita' is an ironic and patriotic tale with the underlying theme, 'Bitter is the truth in history, but it is better to tell it than to conceal it.'
From the mediaeval Everyman to Tolstoy's Death of Ivan Ilyich to modern existentialist literature, death as man's constant companion is a basic theme, but it is not so in modern Soviet literature. In Cancer Ward Solzhenitsyn returns to this theme by confronting man with death and making him re-appraise his value for life. 'Face to face with death you begin to think of the most important things which we have been very little accustomed to in Soviet literature' - this was said at a meeting of the Moscow Writers' Union called to discuss the first part of this novel. 'Solzhenitsyn belongs to those remarkable writers who arereviving in Russian literature the great categories of good and evil, of life and death'; 'Solzhenitsyn's writing is the Renaissance of Russian spiritual life...' The novel's basic orientation is moral. Characteristically, Tolstoy's book of moral tales, including the story 'What men live by', forms one of the main topics for discussion among the patients of Cancer Ward. The forces of good and evil are illustrated through the characters, dialogue and author's comment. It is one of the most optimistic novels in Russian literature, one of the most life-asserting.

The First Circle also deals with the categories of good and evil. Conscience is the underlying theme of the novel. In Innokenty Volodin, a privileged young diplomat, one sees the wakening of conscience when he tries warn a friend of an intended frame-up by the KGB. Volodin accidentally ('Inscrutable are the ways of the Lord...') comes across a diary of his mother's with some old-fashioned entries in it: 'Respect the opinions of other people even if they are opposed to yours'; 'What is the most precious thing in the world? It seems to be the consciousness of not participating in injustice'; 'Compassion is the spontaneous movement of the virtuous heart...'. Innokenty has been taught at school that pity is as shameful and degrading for the one who pities as it is for him who is pitied. In the Soviet context, pride is a virtue. The acknowledged legislator of Soviet literature is Maxim Gorky. 'Man whose name has so proud a
sound; man as the superior animal on this earth; man who can remake nature, conquer space... is his creed. Innokenty's inner dialogue with his mother illustrates the gap between the older generation who held meekness and forgiveness as their ideal, and the new generation - taught that such attitudes are to be ridiculed and despised. In her Memoirs Nadezha Mandelstam speaks wistfully of a time 'when there were still many kind people... For our generation kindness became an old-fashioned, vanished quality, and its exponents were as extinct as the mammoth. Everything we have seen in our times - the dispossession of the kulaks, class struggle, the constant "unmasking" of people, the search for an ulterior motive behind every action - all this has taught us to be anything you like except kind.'

The questions of pride and kindness, of inner freedom, moral responsibility, spiritual values are put forward once again by the principal characters of the novel, Nerzhin, Sologdin, Rubin - and these concerns are shown to be greater than their physical sufferings.

The action in an untranslated play, A Candle in the Wind, is projected into the future, where computers are used to solve human problems. In particular, 'biocybernetics' is applied to cure psychological disturbances. This, through his protagonists in the play, Solzhenitsyn shows to be a new threat to humanity which seeks 'to interfere with nature's most perfect creation', man himself.

Alex has a Tolstoyan abhorrence of civilization. He chides those who have no time to stand and stare: being 'too busy' means simply that we are not living correctly, that we are losing our souls. Like Tolstoy, Alex is critical of technological revolution:

'Are all these modern comforts, all these gadgets, all this material wealth really necessary? Are we the better for having them? Or any happier? We seem to spend all our intelligence and spiritual potential on material achievements - and on improving means for exterminating each other and on exterminating all other life on the
planet. What indeed does modern man live by?'

Again and again Solzhenitsyn speaks of the impossibility of human happiness unless our actions conform to the dictates of conscience.

Another untranslated play, Olen i shalashovka, deals with life in a concentration camp in autumn 1945. The inmates are mainly political prisoners just back from the war front, partly ordinary criminals. The hero is an unjustly condemned army officer, the heroine - a tramp; and this is how they see their common predicament:

'After all, our skin may not be the most precious thing we have.'

'But what is precious, then?'

'Somehow, not that it is an easy thing to say in a camp, but perhaps it's... conscience?'

Yet another character in the play, a woman sniper, interned for murdering her husband in a fit of jealousy, turns down the much-coveted job of dispensing bread rations among fellow prisoners 'because it involves short-rationing others'.

The brief story 'The Easter Procession' gives a profoundly moving example of a moral victory achieved by a few defenceless women over a crowd of hooligans.

Finally, the historical novel August 1914 (1971), not yet translated into English, which describes a brief campaign in Russia at the beginning of the First World War. It is the story of Russian defeat, but deals essentially with the eternal questions of right and wrong, justice, courage, truth - words that constitute the vocabulary of double-talk, but that can also be meaningfully spelt with capital letters. (It may be a matter of some curiosity to note that Solzhenitsyn gave as one of his reasons for not publishing this book inside the Soviet Union that there 'he would have been obliged to spell God with a small letter,
while spelling GUM, CPSU, and KGB with a row of capital letters').

The 'case' of Alexander Solshenitsyn illustrates the vitality of conscience in at least one outstanding man. But it must be emphasized that he is not alone: 'The friends of Ivan Denisovich', as Lakshin called them, are a living testimony to that. They are people who are prepared to take grave personal risks in matters of conscience, whether they are distinguished scientists like Sakharov or great artists like Rostropovich. But what of the rest of the people? For what this kind of evidence is worth, one can draw certain inferences from current Soviet fiction.

Whether a computerized word frequency count would corroborate this statement or not, it seems that the term 'conscience' does appear more frequently in the pages of contemporary Soviet writing than it did in the Stalin era. This applies also to the moral concept itself. For instance, Arbuzov, one of the most talented of present-day Soviet playwrights, has just published a new play in two acts, Choice. The theme is that of academic conscience. A promising research worker has the choice of making a brilliant career by compromising his conscience - or of keeping his integrity but going through all manner of difficulties and dangers in order to continue with important research. When the hero chooses career and conformity, he allays his conscience with the familiar argument that power will enable him eventually to be all the more effective in a crisis. But when the crisis does come (in a way reminiscent of the film, The Seventh Cross), he makes a further compromise with the Establishment and with his conscience, thus letting down an old friend and jeopardizing a valuable piece of research.

It is easy to multiply such examples from contemporary Soviet literature to support my contention concerning the vitality of conscience among the people of the Soviet Union. I have deliberately refrained from quoting the more spectacular cases of Sinyavsky, Daniel, Galanskov and others,
wishing to avoid the more emotive political issues which sometimes obscure the fundamental and permanent truths. I believe most earnestly with Solzhenitsyn that 'not all the ways of goodness in the Soviet Union - and elsewhere - are blocked', but that they must be cultivated and fought for every day of our lives.

1. T.H. Rigby: 'Christian and communist in Russia today'.


