

Moral conceptions wield tremendous power over people. The quest for rights, in school or out, is a quest for power. Such a quest is born of a relationship of power. The word 'rights', being a moral term, suggests that something more important is going on — much of the power of morality derives from this very deception. Human history is the tale of overriding power slipping from here to there to there ad infinitum or until the human race is no more. Morality both constrains human conflict and provokes it. Schools will not escape the consequences of this dilemma.

## STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND STUDENT POWER

### LAURENCE STOTT

In many parts of North America, students are militantly demanding the right to do this, that, and the other. On behalf of these rights, students are organizing themselves into power groups and/or are infiltrating positions of power. Most education administrators view this militancy, this pursuit of student power, with alarm. Confrontation is, currently, a recurring phenomenon on the educational scene.

The philosopher seeks a certain unique perspective. Like the spotter in the spotter's box, high above the football field, the philosopher tries to see the contest as a whole. Football coaches are in constant contact with the the spotter — they appreciate the worth of the spotter's unique perspective. And football players do not resent the fact that the spotter is not actually playing, for they too appreciate the value of his perspective. The philosopher, however, is often subject to resentment. At best he is accused of being impractical, and at worst, of being immoral. The philosopher is doubly hurt by such charges: they are true in the sense that he, very likely, is not playing, is not struggling on the field of battle, and yet they are unjust inasmuch as he is merely trying to present the truth about the game as a whole and he cannot see how such an attempt could be impractical or immoral. The philosopher sees his perspective as being of utmost value, but it is often the case that others do not see it as such.

The spotter does not urge players to leave the field, nor do players urge the spotter to leave the box. The philosopher, in presenting his perspective, is not urging students to cease pursuing their rights, nor is he urging administrators to cease pursuing their rights, he only urges that his perspective is a valuable one. The philosopher is on the side of man, not particular groups of men, since he assumes that truth is valuable in and of itself, which is to say that it is of value to all men. The following is an effort towards the truth about the pursuit of students' rights and student power.

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### *The Grounds of Morality*

Students' rights and student power. Rights and power. Cats and dogs. The title suggests a wide separation between 'rights' and 'power'; like 'cats' and 'dogs' we sometimes find 'rights' and 'power' together, as in this paper's title, but we could just as easily find them, and consider them, apart. I wish to show that rights and power are so locked together that rights cannot be considered apart from power — that the word 'and' in the phrase 'rights and power' is somewhat misleading.

When claiming a right, when striving for a right, we are essentially seeking a 'power to do X'. If parity on governing councils in universities is viewed by students as their right, and they pursue this right, then they are pursuing a certain 'freedom to do', a certain 'power to do'. Furthermore, they are seeking this freedom, this power, from others whose power is such that students need their assent or their removal from positions of power. That is, claiming a right assumes a prevailing power block which is preventing the claimants from doing that which they judge they have a right to do. The more helpless — powerless — the claimants feel in the face of the power they are confronting, the more strident will be their calls and the more attractive will the use of violence be since, if one cannot obtain assent to do x, then one can only wrest assent by crushing, one way or another, those whose assent was needed. The pursuit of rights, then, is a pursuit of a certain freedom-to-do, a certain power-to-do, against a prevailing power that is currently preventing that freedom, that power-to-do.

In pursuing a right we are pursuing a *certain* freedom or power-to-do, not just any old freedom or any old power. Pursuing the freedom to use Dad's car on a Saturday night or to borrow a colleague's typewriter is not normally seen as pursuing a right. The distinctive feature of a 'right' is that this freedom-to-do is backed by morality. That is, in pursuing a right, we judge ourselves to be in the right; we appeal to morality for support, we use words like 'good' and 'moral', and phrases like 'ought to be' to lend force to our cause, to lend it power. And in so appealing to morality,<sup>1</sup> assuming absolute sincerity, we prove, once again, how much power moral conceptions can have over people. People have doused themselves with gasoline and burned themselves to death in order to serve the cause of the moral; people have refrained from wealth because 'stealing is wrong', have fallen in love and refused to make love because 'disloyalty is wrong', or because 'being hurtful to another is wrong'; students, in battling administrators, have put careers on the line, have stuck their necks out, because 'these are our rights'. Some people are so driven by moral conceptions that they are virtually helpless before their power.

Furthermore, these moral conceptions were born of a relationship of power. We learn the use of moral discourse, of words like 'good', 'right',

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<sup>1</sup>By 'morality' we will always and only refer to claims of the order "X is good. All ought to do X." That is, we are talking about a language which ties 'good' with 'ought'. This is a working definition sufficient for the purposes of this paper.

and such, from others. As children we are helpless before those powerful 'significant others' who initiate us into language. Piaget maintained that children go through a stage of naive realism:<sup>2</sup> I teach my young child "That sort of thing is a tree", and I teach him "That sort of action is good, morally good" and in my child's mind the one is as incontestable as the other. If I am taught that x y z are morally good, then this forms my valuation base. My valuation base comes from without, hence the 'air' of objectivity that moral goods have, the 'I ought' as opposed to 'I want'. At a later date, whatever I sincerely declare to be morally good will have to be, or will be tied relationally to, at least one of x y z. I cannot declare and sincerely hold some non-x y z to be morally good since I have no grounds for calling it good, I could see no good in it. Max Stirner's intent was to overthrow even the very form of morality since only thus could a man free himself from the domination of others.<sup>3</sup> Because I hold, following Jean-Paul Sartre, that man is, ontologically, freedom, that the values that shape him he freely sustains,<sup>4</sup> I hold that he can cast off all moral conceptions of the order "X is good. All ought to do X". Thus he becomes immoral (violates, in his own eyes, his own moral conceptions) or amoral (rejects the very conception of morality). But if he clings to certain conceptions "X is good. All ought to do X", he cannot have wiped out, and cannot wipe out, his total valuation base since to do so, amongst other things, would be to wipe out all sense of 'ought'. If he remains moral, he either keeps all his learned moral values, jettisons some and hierarchizes others, hierarchizes one, downplays some and jettisons some. In short, he does anything but drop all learned values. The chief way the historical moral chain can be broken is for one person (or persons), who wants people to behave a certain way, to teach those people a new set of moral values and they, childlike, accept what he is saying. Since adults are not generally childlike, fear and/or faith are good strategies to 'impress' the lesson. Morality is the language of man's domination of man, of one man's power over another, of individual-social control.<sup>5</sup> It is the subtlest

<sup>2</sup>See J. Piaget, *The Moral Judgement of the Child* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932).

<sup>3</sup>See M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own* (New York: Libertarian Book Club Inc., 1963).

<sup>4</sup>See J.-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

<sup>5</sup>Cf: ". . . rules should be inculcated with the maximum impressiveness and seriousness. Then they will become not only second nature but also so respected and revered that they will be broken only with feelings of guilt." K. Baier, *The Moral Point of View* (New York: Random House, 65) p. xvii.

"Who is there that has never, more or less consciously, noticed that our whole education is calculated to produce *feelings* in us, impart them to us, instead of leaving their production to ourselves however they may turn out? If we hear the name of God, we are to feel veneration; if we hear that of the prince's majesty, it is to be received with reverence, deference, submission; if we hear that of morality, we are to think that we hear something inviolable . . ." M. Stirner, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

See also B.F. Skinner, "Some Issues Concerning the Control of Human Behaviour," Avila, Combs & Purkey (eds.), in *The Helping Relationship Sourcebook*, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 71) p. 68.

domination since the one dominating is entirely hidden behind the apparently factual “X is good. All ought to do X,” is entirely masked by “all” and “is”; inasmuch and insofar as morality presents itself in factual guise<sup>6</sup> (“X is good,” is a declarative sentence, a statement) it is deception.<sup>7</sup> Because man is, ontologically, freedom, he is not utterly helpless in the face of childhood training and can completely overthrow morality, but people who hold moral values necessarily reflect, to some degree or other, the impress of childhood/childlike training.<sup>8</sup> Our moral conceptions are born of a contingent power relationship wherein we were, at that time, overwhelmed.

Nietzsche posited a total freedom with regard to valuing: values are a creation of man, therefore I, being a man, can throw off the burden of imposed values and create a brand new set of values. Thus he talks of picking up pretty pebbles on the beach:

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<sup>6</sup>See Jean-Paul Sartre, *op. cit.*, and R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (London: Oxford University Press, 67), for arguments against the proposition that statements of the order “X is morally good” are factual, that is, essentially descriptive. The writer considers the combined positions conclusive. Because, however, this paper merely assumes that such statements are not descriptive, the basic claim of the paper is that only a thesis demonstrating that moral propositions are descriptive, and hence true or false, can seriously challenge the thesis here presented. It is the writer’s judgement that such a demonstration is not possible.

<sup>7</sup>For the force of this deception consider the words of G.E. Moore when forced to reconsider his position of ‘good’ as marking a characteristic: “What is true, I think, is that, when I wrote the *Ethics*, it simply had not occurred to me that in the case of our two men, who assert sincerely, in a ‘typically ethical’ sense of ‘right’, and both in the same sense, the one that Brutus’ action was right, the other that it was not, the disagreement between them might possibly be merely of that sort [a difference in attitude]. Now that Mr. Stevenson has suggested that it may, I do feel uncertain whether it is not merely of that sort . . . . I must say again that I am inclined to think that ‘right’, in all ethical uses, and of course, ‘wrong’, ‘ought’, ‘duty’, also, are, in this more radical sense, not the names of characteristics at all, that they have merely ‘emotive meaning’ and no ‘cognitive meaning’ at all: and if this is true of them it must also be true of ‘good’, in the sense I have been most concerned with. I am inclined to think that this is so, but I am also inclined to think that it is not so; and I do not know which way I am inclined most strongly. If these words, in their ethical uses, have only emotive meaning, or if Mr. Stevenson’s view about them is true, then it would seem that all else I am going to say about them must either be nonsense or false (I don’t know which). But it does not seem to me that what I am going to say is either nonsense or false; and this, I think, is an additional reason (though, of course, not a conclusive one) for supposing both that they have ‘cognitive’ meaning, and that Mr. Stevenson’s view as to the nature of cognitive meaning is false.” “A Reply to my Critics” *Theories of Ethics*, ed. Philippa Foot (London: Oxford University Press, 67) pp. 42, 48-49. Consider also Bertrand Russell’s remark “I cannot see how to refuse the arguments for the subjectivity of ethical values, but I find myself incapable of believing that all that is wrong with wanton cruelty is that I don’t like it.”

See also W.K. Frankena, “On Saying the Ethical Thing”, in J.Gill (ed.), *Philosophy Today*, (New York: Macmillan, 68) pp. 273-278.

<sup>8</sup>What I have in mind here is a Sartrean model of transcendence: I can only transcend my past, which is to say that my past ‘conditions’ my transcending without dictating it. See J.-P. Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Random House, 68), especially pp. 56-65, 100-111.

Alas, my friends! May *yourself* be in your deed as a mother is in her child; I would fain this were *your* definition of virtue!

Verily, perchance I have taken from you an hundred definitions and the dearest plaything of your virtue; and now are ye wroth with me as children are.

They played on the seashore - then came a wave and swept all their toys away into the deep: now they weep.

But this same wave shall bring them new playthings and cast new coloured shells at their feet.

Thus shall they be comforted; and like them ye also, my friends, shall have your comforts - and new coloured shells!<sup>9</sup>

This freedom to start a morality all over again I am precisely denying. What will make the coloured shells appeal to me, to carry on the analogy, what will make them attractive, will be a function of childhood, or childlike, learning. I am neither the total victim of childhood learning nor am I, in a sense, utterly free from it. I am not total victim since I can reject any, or all of my first-learned moral values. I am not totally free because insofar as I sincerely hold to moral values I cannot sincerely hold to a self-created, self-chosen completely new morality (i.e. to a morality totally distinct from the one first-learned). Therefore, I could only sincerely hold to a completely new morality presented by another if I became as a child before him, that is, accepted his word unquestioningly. Thus I maintain that Nietzsche was more correct when he talked of morality in terms of tyranny and childlikeness:

To create new values - even the Lion is not able to do this: but to create for himself freedom for new creation, for this the Lion's strength is sufficient.

To create for himself freedom and an holy *Nay* even to duty: therefore, my brethren, is there need of the Lion.

To take for himself the right to new values - that is the most terrible of takings for a burden-bearing and reverent spirit. Verily, for such it is a robbery and the work of a beast of prey.

Once it loved as Holiest 'Thou shalt': now must it discern illusion and tyranny even in its Holiest, that it may snatch freedom from its love: for this there is need of the Lion.

But tell me, my brethren, what can the Child do which even the Lion could not? Why must the ravaging Lion yet become a Child?

The Child is innocence and oblivion, a new beginning, a play, a self-rolling wheel, a primal motion, an holy yea-saying.<sup>10</sup>

Born of a power relationship, driven by the power of moral conceptions to seek or wrest power-to-do from those who now hold power, the pursuit of rights further demands the exercise of power in order to succeed. The pursuit of rights is not like the pursuit of wants. One cannot easily shelve 'rights' because to do so would be 'wrong', whereas one can quite easily shelve borrowing Dad's car or borrowing a colleague's typewriter. Moral values demand action on our part and if we fail to act we feel accused of evil. To say "X is right" and do nothing to establish X in the world is to be

<sup>9</sup>F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (London: Dent & Sons, 1960) p. 86.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

open to the charge of insincerity, hypocrisy, liar, or at the very least, cowardice. The accusing voice, whether from within or without, will say: "You say 'X is right, is good, it ought to be' but your lack of action on behalf of X shows you do not really accept it as such. By doing nothing, or very little, you support the present situation, which is to say that you are supporting not-X in the world, which is to say that you are working against X, hence I can accuse you of insincerity when you say 'X is good'." Moral conceptions drive us to action, drive us to use power in order to establish the right and good we are claiming. Thus it is that righteous revolutionaries are made.

Born of a power relationship, driven by the power of moral conceptions to seek or wrest to do X from those who currently hold power and are blocking X, the claiming of a right, then, involves the exercise of power since the thrust, being moral, is urgent and is serious.

There are two main ways to achieve rights from a power group. One way, a peaceful (more or less) way, is to play on the power group's values. If a minority group is pursuing a right to X, then we can assume that the prevailing power group either values not-X or does not value X. But few people, if any, hold just one value. Hence you play on other values that they hold, and show them that by refusing to value X they actually thwart, to some degree or other, at least one of their other values. This puts them in a quandry and undermines their stance. If, however, they value not-X and are not willing to compromise it to any degree, either because none of their other values impinge on it or despite the fact that other of their values impinge on it, then you must adopt the other main means of achieving your objective, you must scare them. That is, values and fear are two dominant, over-riding driving forces in man; to move a man you play on one or the other; play on both, and he will be virtually helpless before you.

### *Basis of Student Power*

In pursuing rights, students are in a unique position for they can play on both at once, on values and fear. Teachers have a goal of 'students learning and appreciating', that is, the value of helping students to learn and appreciate rules their working lives. They all know, they have all been taught by colleges of education and writers in the field of education, that student interest is the key to achieving this goal of 'students learning and appreciating'. Students, by the very simple manoeuvre of refusing to interest themselves in whatever the educational institution is trying to help them learn and appreciate, not only bring about a thwarting of the teacher's values but at the same time scare him insofar as his job is now in jeopardy. Any teacher's students could render him helpless before them any time by simply walking out on him physically or mentally. The news that no learning and/or appreciating was going on in Mr. So and So's classes could be spread abroad in appropriate places (the ears of administrators 'over' him, parents, news media) but would, in any case, soon get around. Even if the teacher could withstand the psychological pressure, he is failing as a teacher. The stark truth-cum-dilemma of teaching is that the teacher's

educational goal, his success as a teacher is dependent upon the effect he has on his students. To that extent, a teacher's success is in the hands of another.

If man is, ontologically, freedom, then there can be no guarantee of success in teaching regardless of how lucid or vital the teaching or how careful one is never to go beyond the abilities of the students. Dewey sought success in bringing about student growth by utilizing student interests. Because, then, the student values what is going on in the classroom, because it strikes him as worthwhile, and because he is able, we assume, to successfully do whatever is involved, he has no motive to challenge and defy the teacher — hence Dewey's claim that the teacher need not be an external boss.<sup>11</sup> If a student did defy such a teacher, and in so doing disrupted the class, Dewey would remove him from the class and admit failure, but Dewey found it difficult to accept that the good teacher could not tie in to the experience and interests of the student.<sup>12</sup> Illich, however, goes the whole no-boss route and hence cannot even accept compulsory schooling.<sup>13</sup> The Illich teacher teaches only by consent, only what students want or accept. So long as the teacher has the necessary knowledge and/or ability, he cannot fail since there can be no question of disinterest or value clash — to teach is essentially to serve the interests and values of others. But once a society and/or individual teacher insists on some values of their own, (e.g. a society enforces schooling, or a teacher insists that his students do so-and-so) the possibility of value clash and/or disinterest arise, and hence the possibility of student refusal, and hence the possibility of teacher failure.

If students force, as an act of freedom, a teacher's failure, it becomes virtually impossible in a society committed to democracy (the theory of which largely gives up on firm values in favour of a procedure to handle change and conflict), in a performance-or-else society and in a prevailing student-centered educational climate, to successfully justify paying such a

<sup>11</sup>"The mature person, to put it in moral terms, has no right to withhold from the young on given occasions whatever capacity for sympathetic understanding his own experience has given him.

No sooner, however, are such things said than there is a tendency to react to the other extreme and take what has been said as a plea for some sort of disguised imposition from outside. It is worthwhile, accordingly, to say something about the way in which the adult can exercise the wisdom his own wider experience gives him without imposing a merely external control." ff. J. Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 66) p. 38.

<sup>12</sup>See for example, *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>13</sup>"In fact, healthy students often redouble their resistance to teaching as they find themselves more comprehensively manipulated. This resistance is not due to the authoritarian style of a public school or the seductive style of some free schools, but to the fundamental approach common to all schools — the idea that one person's judgement should determine what and when another person must learn . . . . Deschooling is, therefore, at the root of any movement for human liberation . . . . The totally destructive and constantly progressive nature of obligatory instruction will fulfil its ultimate logic unless we begin to liberate ourselves right now from our pedagogical hubris, our belief that man can do what God cannot, namely manipulate others for their own salvation." I. Illich, "Schooling: The Ritual of Progress", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XV, no. 10 (Dec. 3rd., 70), pp. 22, 24, 26.

teacher. Thus, inasmuch as a teacher has an aim of students learning and/or appreciating, and inasmuch as that teacher needs money for bread, he is a sitting duck for students who are out to change what, and how, he is teaching. To gain their freedom-to-do, to gain power, students can play on his values as a teacher and on his fear of loss of bread, and he is very much at their mercy. Seventy years ago, they would have been very much at his mercy — the climate was all against them.

Students then, *working as a group*, can, by simply refusing to learn-appreciate, by turning themselves off, put tremendous pressure, crushing pressure, on any teacher and any educational system. The difficulty the students have is in getting together and working together as a group; students are not specifically agreed on what are their rights. Some students have other values that are violated, to some degree or other, by certain agreed upon rights and hence the force of the right is weakened and/or dissipated in their case, and their enthusiasm for action soon wanes; some students could not care less about rights or moral conceptions of any sort, they simply want the material rewards offered by the system, and hence will not fight it; some students want the rewards offered by the system and see those rewards as legitimate, as not wrong, and hence they will not fight the system; some students just are interested, just do want to learn and appreciate, and will not fight the institution which helps them, albeit in typically imperfect human fashion, in their quest.

### *Morality and Law as Power*

And so human history wends its way. It is a matrix of energies, of powers, an inter-locking, over-lapping series of pressures and pulls, with over-riding power slipping from here to there to there, ad infinitum. The contingency of human history, individual or collective, is hidden, transformed, by such shining words as 'rights'. Morality appears to inject a firm reference point, a 'this at least is important whatever else comes and goes'. But from a neutral observer point of view, from the spotter's box, morality is seen to be the chief means whereby one shapes, and is usually shaped, by an other.

But many are not neutral observers. So long as one is engaged in the game, engulfed by the game, the rules (and their development) are everything, infractions are 'wrong', and players can argue over 'oughts' and reason carry the day. So long as players have at least one common objective at the time of argument, there is possibility that reason will decide the argument since reason will be able to weigh consequences, devise strategies, etc., in the service of that end. Thus reason also appears to inject a firm reference point. But if the common objective is of the sort "X is good. All ought to do X" then it must be insisted that this was learned, it was not a product of reason unless the one citing the moral judgment clearly sees it merely as a strategy to get what he *wants*. The difficulties regarding the rational basis of ethics centre around the following facts: a) we learn a number of moral values and any one of them can provide a base for a reasonable argument and hence moral arguing is a fairly common occurrence, giving

the lie to anyone who says that one cannot argue morals. b) survival is, practically speaking, a common objective, and hence freedom from violence is, practically speaking, a common objective, and hence law is, practically speaking, a common objective, and actual bodies of law do follow the morality of the societies of which they are law and hence are heavily pervaded by that morality and are usually buttressed (which is to say that children are taught "It is immoral to break the law") by it." Thus one can always find good reasons for "X is good. All ought to do X" because either X is in line with what one holds ought, morally, to be or because it serves what you want, it will help you to survive. Insofar as morality pervades law, and insofar as law serves the very basic objective of survival, one can always argue for it, which is to say that reason will appear to be, and in a sense is, all.

But law is clearly a society's strategy designed to facilitate the objectives of some or all of those in the society, whereas morality claims, in its very language, not to be a strategy. The moral claim "Justice is good", is not a strategy, for one should be just whether or not it advances one's objectives. Morality imposes a supreme objective to which all other objectives should bow; it demands that reason provide strategies for it but it itself is not a strategy: it curbs and shapes objectives rather than services them: and it claims to be above any society. When morality says, for example, "Killing for fun is wrong" it is assumed that no society should be exempted from this judgement. Morality expects to be served, not to serve. Hence, despite all instinct to survive, people have willingly died for morality.

Thus it is that laws are criticized and disobeyed in the name of morality. Because of its claim to be above the law, morality is the enemy in the very heart of law. The deliberate strategy of using morality to ensure compliance with law bears in it the seeds of its own destruction despite its general overwhelming effectiveness — as Marx,<sup>14</sup> and Kant in his own way,<sup>15</sup> clearly saw. Law and morality, possibly man's highest achievements, are locked in uneasy dialectic, each ready to crush the authority of the other. But each is

<sup>14</sup>Cf. "That culture, the loss of which he laments, is for the enormous majority a mere training to act as a machine . . . . Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all . . . . The ruling ideas of each age have always been the ideas of the ruling class." Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" in A.P. Mandel (ed.), *Essential Works of Marxism*, (New York: Bantam Books, 65) pp. 28-31 ff.

In general, Marx asserted that any prevailing moral code reflected and served the aims and purposes of those in power. He believed that once the working masses were rid of such moral notions as 'work hard', 'be loyal', 'be peaceable', 'be respectful', 'accept your station in life', they would not allow themselves to be used, and used up, for the selfish benefit of the wealthy.

What Marx failed to realize or, better I believe, deliberately disguised and discounted in the profound hope that a more just society would actually be established, was that Marxist morality is just as vulnerable to his own attack as was Christian morality. A society can eliminate wealth disparities but no society can eliminate decision-making, nor, therefore, decision-makers, nor, therefore, a ruling group (class?). So Marxism too needs both to inculcate morality and to fear the consequences of doing so - as the present situation in the U.S.S.R. well demonstrates.

contingent. Each wields massive power over people. Each is a consequence of power. 'Right' is in the contingency, not above it; 'Good' is at the heart of the powerplay, not beyond it. History is a function of power groups, not a pure Hegelian Absolute and not a predetermined-in-aim Marxist dialectic.

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From the spotter's box the game is seen to be rough. People get hurt. Some conclude that life is absurd, which is to say that the game is contrary to the expectations of a rational being; some conclude that life is tragedy; some conclude that if this is a correct description of the game then life is despair; some conclude that there must be something or Someone not open to man's ordinary viewing, something or Someone that escapes the spotter and which in fact makes more sense of the game; some conclude that life is a marvellous free adventure; some conclude that not to look but rather to play is obviously the wise choice; some conclude that spotters, and spotting, are destructive of both individual and society and should not be permitted. Whatever the conclusion, students are, as a matter of fact, beginning to fight for their rights. The moral judgement "Obedience is good" is dead in Western society; to be obedient is, apparently, to be pathetic and an affront to human dignity. The moral judgement "Freedom ('Do your own thing', and suchlike) is good" is alive and flourishing in Western society. Remove an ethic protective of authority<sup>16</sup> and you let loose the wants, desires, interests of individuals — Marx made the obvious prediction, (and being a humanist he made the obvious prediction into a hard law, just to make sure). Compulsory education and freedom must surely collide. And the middle ground everyone seems to be seeking, must surely be a place of unease, of potential conflict.

And so human history wends its way. It is a matrix of energies . . . .

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<sup>15</sup>Kant clearly saw the grave necessity for grounding the principle of morality in the a priori, in 'pure reason'. To do less would be to completely undermine 'duty' and hence to invite a flood of unbridled inclinations. In his view, morality and the good will would be soiled and devastated if grounded in the empirical, that is, in the contingent. See Kant's *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*.

This paper is in direct conflict with Kantian moral theory. It openly accepts what Kant held to be both disastrous and, in a sense, false. It sees Kant as an intellectual giant who, unable to discard his morality, tried to ground it non-contingently (or contingent only upon the nature of man as free and rational). This paper claims both to explain why he felt impelled to write and why he was unable to succeed in his quest.

<sup>16</sup>This is not to say that the logic of "freedom is good" will not lead to the pursuit of authority, for given any ordinary definition of 'freedom' it has to. But 'freedom-is-good plus authority' will be far more unstable than the alliance 'obedience-is-good plus authority'.

