

Moral Education and Non-Utilitarian Ideals

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Perhaps particularly in the westernworld, the contents and scope of morality (and hence of moral education) are commonly conceived in Kantian and/or utilitarian terms, and restricted to the virtues of justice and benevolence. The basic idea is that there are a number of palpable and fairly obvious goods, to which all people have an equal right, and which moral principles are required to promote or maintain. Thus we desire life, liberty, the security of our persons and our property, reliable and trustworthy communication with our fellow-men, and so forth; and these goods require principles which prohibit murder or assault or kidnapping or fraud, and conversely insist on truth-telling, honesty, and respect for other people's lives and freedom and possessions. That idea, well represented by the Ten Commandments in the Bible (Exodus 20), lies at the heart of morality, as morality is construed in this tradition.

The idea may be extended in either of two directions, without losing its essential features. First, we may wish to put a particular value on benevolence or altruism or concern for other people beyond the call of duty (a commonplace of Christian doctrine, for example in Matthew 5:38); second, we may think that people have a moral duty towards themselves, so that they need some principles of health or hygiene – not to take drugs or drink too much alcohol, to eat the right foodstuffs, to take enough exercise, and so on. Both examples commonly figure in programmes of moral education; but they are still based on the idea of there being certain non-controversial goods, such as health or having enough to eat, which the morally educated person will maximize either the first for the benefit of other people, as when we praise someone who tries to combat famine or plague, or the second for his or her own benefit, as when we praise someone for taking proper care of their own body.

I want here to explore a range of phenomena which fall outside this picture of morality, but which are commonly described as *moral* in English or by parallel or equivalent terms in other natural languages. One major difficulty is to determine whether these phenomena are

sufficiently similar to merit a single title, and if so what that title might be; I have lumped them together under the heading of *non-utilitarian ideals*, but that heading can only be provisional and may be in some respects misleading (see below). Still, we have the intuition that some things, whether or not of the same kind, are radically different in kind from the sort of ideals, principles, virtues, and behaviour-patterns that I have (too briefly) described above. Thus when we consider the notions of honour and disgrace, dignity and integrity, obscenity and indecency, chastity and purity, and pollution, together with more specifically behavioural items such as cannibalism, incest, the disposal of human corpses, and the kind of injunctions about sex, food, and cleanliness that we find in (for instance) the Koran or the Book of Deuteronomy, we feel that we are in a different world from the world of justice, or kindness, or truth-telling, or respect for property. So questions arise about how we are to describe or make sense of that world, what counts as a good or successful performance in it, what criteria of reason may be applied to it, and what kind of moral education is appropriate to it.

Before going further, it is important to see that we cannot escape such questions by either one of two maneuvers. Thus if we claim (a) that these are not moral items at all but (perhaps) aesthetic ones, we not only fly in the face of common usage (for items like incest or cannibalism, together with many others, are paradigm cases of morality), but fail to distinguish judgements that have only aesthetic weight from judgements that have moral weight. I may speak clumsily or ungrammatically, but that is different from using "bad language;" I may dress in a way that is ugly or unpleasing to the eye, but that is different from dressing immodestly; and an obscene picture is not obscene because it is badly painted. And if we claim (b) that these items can always be brought within the sphere of utilitarian goods, the claim often falls to the ground. Thus it is plausible to maintain that (for instance) the ideal of heroic honour, as we find it in Homer and elsewhere, rests ultimately on the importance of having efficient warriors to defend the state; but it is not in the least plausible to maintain that our objections to incest relate to its deleterious effects on the gene-pool, or that Hindus wash five times a day purely for purposes of hygiene, or that Jewish or Islamic food-taboos are based on considerations of health or dietetics.

If we were asked to distinguish these items from utilitarian morality, we might reply in various ways. Thus we might say that the items are viewed as morally good or bad in themselves, and not in terms of their consequences; if I refrain from incest or cannibalism, or preserve

my honour as a Samurai by refusing to surrender, I do not do so as a means to any kind of end – I just keep my moral hands clean and my honour unstained as an end in itself. We might alternatively say that the items have nothing to do with justice or benevolence: I am motivated not by any idea of fair play or kindness or desire to benefit other people, but rather by the desire to keep some kind of personal ideal intact and undefiled. Or we might say that the items are uniquely connected with a certain kind of shame, or disgust, or moral repulsion, rather than with the notions of harm or benefit; if I appear naked, it is the appearance itself that makes me ashamed, not any kind of harm that the appearance may do.

Certainly that fits the way in which the items are perceived or conceived. I may object to homosexual practices on grounds of health or hygiene; but I may also see them as somehow wrong in themselves, and describe them as repulsive or disgusting or unnatural or perverse. Similarly I may think it right to fight to the death without thought of surrender, like the Spartans at Thermopylae, on the grounds that the safety of my country depends on my doing so; but I may also think that my honour as a Spartan warrior requires me to fight to the death under any circumstances, whether or not anybody profits by it. In utilitarian morality I can offer reasons for what I do or think it right for other people to do: I can say for instance “If people didn’t keep their word and repay their debts we couldn’t do business with each other,” or “If there wasn’t a rule against stealing none of us could feel secure in the enjoyment of our own possessions.” But with these items I may find it difficult or impossible to say anything but “Honour forbids it,” or “It’s just obscene,” or “Think of the disgrace.” Here I give reasons only in the sense that I explain the mode or genre in which I take the items to be good or bad – we might say, not *why* they are good or bad but *how* they are good or bad: *qua* being disgraceful or dishonourable, indecent or defiling or repulsive, not *qua* being unjust or unkind or inexpedient or even aesthetically unpleasing.

The term *ideal* does not fit all these cases, unless that term is extended to cover any kind of picture, or idea, or set of feelings, or reactions to which I attach some weight and which may govern my behaviour. I may have a conscious and clearly-formulated ideal of chastity, and live as a nun in accordance with that ideal: as a Samurai or a Homeric hero I may have a reasonably well-articulated ideal of honour, perhaps as defined in the code of *bushido*: like the male heroes of Trollope's novels, or Darcy in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, I

may have an ideal of “being a gentleman” or “gentlemanly behaviour” which I try to live up to, though that ideal may not be so clearly defined. But if I refrain from incest or cannibalism, if I avoid eating pork or beef, if I see homosexuality or nakedness as indecent, it is not clear that I have in mind anything that we should naturally call an ideal. What I have is rather some set of feelings, perhaps not woven into any coherent or organized picture, in accordance with which I see these items as outrageous or repulsive.

Sometimes these feelings are hard to pin down. Consider the case of Shakespeare’s Cordelia (*King Lear*, I, I). At their father’s request her sisters make fulsome and extravagant declarations of their love for him; but Cordelia refuses to say anything but

*I love your majesty
According to my bond:
Nor more nor less.*

That is not even true (she loves him very much); and she is well aware that her refusal may have disastrous consequences both for herself and for other people (it generates the whole tragedy). She is quite capable of expressing her love, but unwilling to do so: she fears perhaps that in the context it would sound fulsome or dishonest, that it is not consistent with her integrity or her self-image to make such declarations. After her sisters have spoken, she says to herself

*What shall Cordelia do?
Love, and be silent.*

We should perhaps say here, not that she has some articulated ideal of honesty or plain speaking, but that she simply cannot bring herself to show her love in that sort of way, that it goes against the grain of her character.

That might suggest another logical maneuver. It might be claimed that we are not dealing here with moral *judgements* at all, but only with moral feelings or reactions. Certainly this distinction is important. If I judge something to be morally right or wrong, good or bad, I do not just evince or express my own feelings but make some kind of objective claim. I may be strongly drawn towards homosexual practices but still think them morally wrong; or conversely I may be strongly repelled by them but still think them morally acceptable. That holds even in simple cases: certain foodstuffs may disgust me, but that is not enough for me to judge them to be disgusting – perhaps my tastes are abnormal, or I have some kind of allergy. But the trouble is that people do, very obviously, make

moral judgements about such items: they judge them in the light of some kind of picture, or ideal, or at least some set of criteria, according to which they are seen as dishonourable or disgraceful, polluting or defiling, or indecent. They claim that there is, objectively or *in rerum natura*, something about the items which makes them so and hence makes their own reactions to the items correct or justifiable or appropriate.

Nor are such judgements relative in the way that judgements about etiquette, or protocol, or even good manners are usually relative to particular social groups at particular times. What counts as etiquette or good manners at a Roman banquet or an Oxford tea-party, in Victorian England or contemporary Los Angeles, depends simply on what conventions are there in force: that is a matter of fact, and need not involve any judgement of value. By contrast, we judge things to be obscene or dishonourable irrespective of any social norms: the fact that Athenians in the 6th century B.C. thought homosexual practices acceptable, or that the ancient Romans regarded suicide as honourable, goes no way to persuade us that they were right to think so. We cannot say "In Italy having bare arms in church is indecent," only "It is thought to be indecent;" or "In the Homeric Age it was honourable for heroes to possess slave-girls," only "it was thought honourable." There are indeed some expressions, perhaps including appropriate, fitting, decorous, in good taste, which may be used in either way – that is, either just to say that some item is in line with some set of norms or conventions, or else to endorse those norms or conventions and hence make some kind of objective value-judgement about the item. But the distinction itself is clear.

The temptation to describe all such judgements as *aesthetic* suggests that, despite their variety, they have one common feature. Briefly and roughly, we may say that the judgements are made in the light of some image, or picture, or ideal: the item judged is acceptable if it is consonant with that image or helps to maintain it, and unacceptable if it mars or spoils the image, or stains or pollutes or defiles it. The material which is judged is not neutral, but already charged with some kind of moral weight: it speaks to us directly, in something like the way in which a work of art speaks to us directly. That is why in making such judgements we do not normally consider consequences or calculate results, or weigh various harms or benefits in some utilitarian balance, or work out what would make for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or anything like that. It is as if we immediately perceived or

intuited some property or quality in the item, referred it to our preferred picture or image or ideal, and pronounced judgement accordingly. The images may have different contents, but in all cases the central notion is that they have to be kept pure and undefiled. almost as if they were some kind of internal object that we had to preserve intact.

That holds, I think, for all non-utilitarian moral judgements, and may even be taken as a defining characteristic of them. Thus suppose that we have a pacifist or a conscientious objector who thinks it wrong for him to fight in the front line because that would involve his killing people. Then we say perhaps "But surely you want to prevent the enemy from overrunning your country and slaughtering the inhabitants – that would involve even more killing," or "If you don't fight yourself but just drive an ambulance or work on the land, that will release someone else to fight in the front line instead of you, it won't lessen the amount of killing," or "You must realize that the example you set by refusing to fight will have no effect," or something of that kind. If the person is moved by such considerations, he is already considering consequences and trying to promote some one state of affairs as more desirable than some other state. But he may not be moved: the only "state of affairs" he thinks relevant is the existence of his own ideal, which would be defiled or destroyed if he were to kill, and that is not a state of affairs in the same sense. What is at stake for him, we might say, is the internal ecology of his own psyche, his moral or psychological integrity.

More than that: for he does not see the preservation of his integrity as just one factor amongst many, to be weighed in some utilitarian balance. He does not say "Well, if I were to kill I should be very distressed or guilty or ashamed, and find it hard to live with myself afterwards. now, how important is that when compared with other consequences?" He takes his ideal as overridingly important; or rather, it has a kind of importance that other factors do not have at all. Thus someone who thinks it wrong to assist the suicide of a suffering and terminally ill friend who asks him to do so may genuinely regret his suffering, feel sad that he cannot in this case meet the demands of friendship, and in general agonize about the situation, but he does not compare his friend's distress with the distress he himself would feel if he were to assist the suicide: he simply sees the action as wrong, or forbidden, or beyond the moral pale, however regrettable the consequences may be.

As we can see from these examples, what characterizes this style of thought is not or not only that it addresses different moral questions or

ascribes a different (non-utilitarian) content to morality. That may often be the case: a person who thinks in this way may consider that whether or not he eats pork or indulges in this or that sexual practice is a moral question, whilst another person may regard such items as a matter of taste or a matter of indifference. But the pacifist and the non-pacifist both face the same question, "Should I fight in the front line and kill people?" – it is just that they think about that question and answer it in different ways. Similarly I may refrain from lying or stealing or cruelty, or other forms of injustice or malevolence, either because I think they lead to undesirable consequences, or because I have some kind of image or ideal or ego-ideal which these actions spoil or defile – like George Washington I say "Father, I cannot tell a lie," or "As an English gentleman I can't do that sort of thing," or "Doing this would shatter my integrity," or "the idea of doing that is so repugnant that I couldn't even contemplate it."

Typologies and taxonomies of moral thinking, as created or used by psychologists and moral educators (for references see Wilson et al., 1965), are characteristically concerned to classify not the questions or items which various individuals count as morally significant, but rather the different reasons which individuals give for their judgements about a predetermined set of moral items. In this respect, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Wilson, 1972), they jump the gun. Thus Piaget's or Kohlberg's "stages of moral development" are based, unsurprisingly, on a particular conception of morality which is essentially the one I have described earlier: that is, a Kantian utilitarian picture conceived in terms of justice and benevolence. Thus the researchers do not normally canvas the respondent's feelings or judgements about (for instance) nakedness or homosexuality, about, whether it is right or wrong (honourable or dishonourable) to accept or back down from duels or dares or other challenges, about preserving dignity or "saving face," about eating this or that kind of foodstuff, and so forth. Yet such items, and the whole style of thought and feeling which they typify, obviously govern a great deal of the actual behaviour of many (perhaps all) individuals. That may be more apparent in some societies than in others, *for instance* in oriental or Islamic cultures than in London or New York or Paris; but in more or less any society the contents which individuals ascribe to morality remains an open (and largely unresearched) question. Answering the question depends, of course, on reaching some agreement about what we are to mean by *moral* or *morality* (or equivalent expressions in other natural languages); but I hope already to have said

enough to show that items to do with honour, dignity, decency, purity, and so forth would have to be included.

The result is that we have very little detailed empirical data about this style of thinking; so that, unsurprisingly, programmes of moral education fail to deal with it at all. What happens in practice is that, in any society, child-rearers simply pass on their own feelings about what is honourable or disgraceful, decent or indecent, pure or defiling, to their children, without any accompanying rationale. And it is very striking that most western philosophers have little or nothing to say about any such rationale, or even by way of describing (rather than trying to justify) the images or ideals or sets of reactions which attract or incorporate such judgements. Occasionally, as with Aristotle's "great-souled man" (*megalopsychosaner*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV, iii ff), we are asked to admire a particular type of person on non-utilitarian or quasi-aesthetic grounds; but we search the pages of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Kant, Mill, and others in vain for any serious attempt to justify or condemn certain items as obscene or dishonourable, legitimate or taboo, morally acceptable or morally defiling. One might almost think that such items were regarded as so basic, so firmly inscribed on the individual psyche or the collective social culture, as to be taken for granted even by the most contra-suggestible or free-thinking of these philosophers: perhaps somewhat in the way that, for the ancient Greeks and Romans, the institution of slavery was not often seriously questioned.

From the viewpoint of child-rearing and child-development, it is not hard to see why this style of thought is basic or fundamental or deep-rooted. Well before the child learns about utilitarian moral principles and their rationale – principles about respect for property, or truth-telling, or not cheating, or helping other people in need – he or she picks up and internalizes a whole set of images and reactions in a more direct and unmediated way. The child learns to be clean and not to make a mess, to handle his or her body in some ways but not in others, to eat and drink certain things in a certain manner, to see himself or herself as acting disgracefully or decently. These and similar images are the roots or embryos of their later ideas or ideals of honour and purity, moral propriety and moral defilement; and unsurprisingly many of them are connected with his or her own body and other physical objects, particularly with sex and food and excretion, since that forms the furniture of the world within which they live in the first few years. And of course psychiatrists will have stories, more or less plausible, to tell

about these primal scenarios; whatever their truth, the scenarios themselves will evidently be of great importance to the child's development. It is here, rather than in any utilitarian direction, that we should look for explanations about our feelings in relation to incest, or cannibalism, or nakedness, or other items which otherwise seem to have no rationale in utilitarian terms.

This may also help to account for another curious feature of this style of thought: the fact that it seems more concerned with avoiding the bad rather than promoting the good. Thus to live honourably or purely seems to be essentially a matter of steering clear of defilement rather than of positive action. I can set out to avoid obscenity or indecency or bad language, but there are no positive concepts which correspond to these, in the way that justice or benevolence correspond to injustice or malevolence: I cannot set out to be very non-obscene, or to dress with very great decency, or to use very good language. "Good language," from the moral viewpoint, is any language that is not "bad language," any representation is morally legitimate so long as it is not obscene, and any dress decent so long as it is not indecent. Similarly I am morally in the clear so long as my honour or integrity is not smirched or defiled: the opposite of disgraceful is not graceful (that is a purely aesthetic concept), as if I could live up to some positive ideal and thus be more and more honourable. We might say that all I have to do is to steer clear of certain bad objects or behaviour-patterns: not to touch pitch so that I may not be defiled.

The idea of steering clear of bad objects also accounts for the fact that this aspect of morality is not connected, or not so closely connected, with the will or with conscious choice, in the way that justice and benevolence are. Arguably Oedipus did not knowingly do anything wrong, because he acted in ignorance, but he was still polluted by living incestuously with his mother; Orestes may have acted rightly in avenging his father's murder by killing his mother, but was pursued by the Furies because what he did was in some other sense wrong or defiling or morally outrageous. Thyestes was polluted by eating the flesh of his own children, even though he did so unknowingly; and Lucretia was polluted by Tarquin's rape even though it was in no sense her fault. In the same way I may feel shamed or dishonoured if as a Samurai I am disarmed and forced to surrender, without even the chance of committing *hara-kiri*, even though I could have done nothing to avoid it; if as a Jehovah's Witness I am given a blood transfusion while I am asleep; if as a Brahman Hindu I am showered with excrement or other

polluting substances against my will. I may run up against bad objects, as the Titanic ran up against an iceberg, through no fault of her own, but they still have a moral effect upon me: we might say that they affect my moral status willy-nilly. I may not be liable to blame, but I am still liable to pollution or dishonour. By contrast, if there is nothing I can do by way of justice or benevolence, I am not thought to be in any way morally defective or disgraced.

I have so far said nothing about any rationale or justification for this style of thought; and perhaps the temptation should be resisted, on the grounds that it needs to be understood much more fully before making any attempt to assess it in the light of pure reason. Nevertheless it is possible to see that we might adopt radically different attitudes to it, roughly as follows:

1. We might be content simply to do what we now do, and pass on our feelings and intuitions to our children uncritically. But that is to throw in the towel; shortage of time, or mere inertia, may cause us to continue to lead our own moral lives on the basis of these feelings and intuitions without questioning their rationale (though that is bad enough), but we can hardly be complacent enough to engender them in our children just because they are ours. Any positive programme of moral education requires some kind of rationale. Nor is it at all plausible to derive this rationale from some supposed consensus of moral opinion. The principles of justice and benevolence are common ground, in some form or other, to most or all societies; indeed it is hard to imagine any society doing without them. But the variety of images and ideals about honour and purity is very much wider (even prohibitions against incest and cannibalism are not universal), and often change rapidly over time.
2. We might regard this style of thought as valuable or useful, not because it offered reasons or justifications for moral behaviour, or enabled us to identify what we ought or ought not to do, but just because it helped to motivate such behaviour and encouraged us to do or avoid what (on other grounds) we ought to do or avoid. Our images and ideals would then be, as it were, in line or coextensive with what was morally right or wrong, and act as an incentive for doing that. Thus there might be reasons – perhaps fairly obvious utilitarian reasons – why we ought to fight bravely for our country, or behave with courtesy and generosity towards other people, or avoid certain kinds of sexual

practices; and we might be able to ensure that our children did such things by engendering in them some ideal of honour (of being an honourable warrior, or a real 'gentleman') or sexual purity ("No sex before marriage," or whatever). The children would be taught to see themselves and their behaviour in this (quasi-aesthetic) light, so that they wished to avoid disgrace or dishonour or impurity and hence acted rightly.

The relevant thought would then be soothing like "I mustn't do X because it would be disgraceful/defiling;" and that could indeed be a motivating thought, analogous to (but still distinguishable from) other motivating thoughts, like "Because the law would punish me," or "Because other people would despise me," or "Because it is forbidden by authority" (the Bible, the Koran, the Fuhrer, etc.). How effective this particular kind of thought could be, how easy it is to engender it in this or that individual, and how it may best be (as it were) hooked onto good or bad behaviour-patterns are largely empirical questions, which I shall not pursue here. But the trouble with all such styles of thought is that they come to lead a life of their own; because they are not logically connected, but only (if we can make them so) coextensive, with the real reasons for good moral behaviour, they become also psychologically disconnected: so that the individual inevitably comes to believe that punishment, or other people's scorn, or the pronouncements of some supposed authority are themselves good reasons for acting in one way rather than another.

It is in any case a mistake to suppose that good moral behaviour consists only in acting correctly, so that any kind of motivation will suffice. The point is not just that, as Aristotle puts it, we want people to act "with knowledge" and to "choose the act for its own sake" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II, iii) – rather than for fear of punishment, or in obedience to authority or other people's opinions, or because it is consonant with some ego-ideal: it is not just that the motivation has to be pure if the action is to count as truly virtuous. The point is rather that there are some kinds of moral behaviour and forms of life which are only possible if the motivation is of a certain kind. I cannot love or forgive or sympathize with my wife, or relate properly to my friend, or even play happily with my children in the way that I ought, with just any kind of motivation. I have to do these things

for their own sake, and take pleasure in doing them; any thought of honour or disgrace, duty or obligation, will be to some extent corrupting. The kind of motivation produced by images of honour or purity may save me from acting wrongly – for instance, from beating my wife or letting down my friend or neglecting my children; but they cannot, even in principle, generate the state of mind required for positive personal relationships.

3. Both (1) and (2) above focus on the individual as a moral agent, as somebody who chooses what to do and what to avoid. The suggestion is either (1) that this style of thought enables the agent to identify right action, or (2) that it motivates him to engage in it. Neither of these suggestions is plausible. Much more plausible is the idea that when he thinks in this way the individual does not take on the role of a choice-making agent at all, but rather the role of a spectator or a kind of aesthetic critic. My judgements of honour and purity are, as it were, judgements of good or bad objects as they appear within my field of experience: I do not (a) *work out* whether they are good or bad, but respond to them directly as such, in the way that I respond directly to art-objects; nor do I (b) *make use of* my perceptions as a way of keeping myself up to some behavioural mark – there may be no question of my behaving or choosing at all.

Any state of affairs may be viewed in this way: that is, primarily in terms of its appearance. Thus in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (Act 5, Scene 2) the Duke of Burgundy, in his role as a spectator and mediator between the warring French and English, asks

*Why that the naked, poor and mangled Peace,
Dear nurse of arts, plenties and joyful births,
Should not in this best garden of the world,
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?*

and goes on to describe the aesthetic effects of war:

*Alas, she hath from France too long been chased,
And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,
Corrupting in its own fertility,
Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
Unpruned dies; her hedges even-pleached
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair
Put forth disordered twigs ...*

and so forth. That is not what France ought to *look like*, it is a disgrace or shameful in itself: the Duke is not thinking primarily in terms of human welfare but in aesthetic terms which also have moral weight.

Nothing is to be gained by asking what the point or purpose of such judgements is: that already reduces them to utilitarian terms, as if they were supposed to be means to some kind of end. Nevertheless, like judgements about works of art, they can be more or less reasonable or insightful or well-informed. Whether something is disgraceful or honourable, decent or obscene, is not just a matter of taste: or, if we allow ourselves to say this, we must also grant that there is such a thing as good and bad taste. We may ask whether it is really indecent to appear naked, or really dishonourable to surrender rather than fight to the death; and such questions come within the scope of reason and reflection, though not of utilitarian calculation. They thus also come within the scope of education.

Presumably this will be some kind of education of the emotions or perceptions; and the difficulty with it, as we have seen, is that the contents of this style of thought are given to us very early in our lives, so that we find it very hard to be objective. In the case of pure aesthetic education, we have the benefit of art-objects to which we introduce our children and which we explore with them, when they are of an age to do so; they can, as it were, stand outside them and are not already psychologically involved with them, in the way that they are involved with notions of honour and purity almost from birth onwards. Works of art are optional: they need not address them at all, as they cannot avoid addressing and adopting some attitude to their own bodies, or what they eat, or the way in which they appear to other people. By the time that they can reflect at all seriously on such matters, they are already equipped with a whole set of images and reactions from which it is very hard to escape, and which can only be modified with great difficulty.

Hard, but not impossible: given certain kinds of experience, practice and reflection, I can come to change my images and reactions. I may come to see homosexuality or nakedness, some

code of heroic honour, or any other contents in a different light. But it is only in a broad sense of *reason* that this style of thought is within the scope of reason: the truth or appropriateness of these judgements cannot be demonstrated by any kind of deductive or inductive argument, any more than the merits of Bach or Botticelli can be proved by some chain of logical reasoning. Nevertheless they can be shown or made apparent; and moral educators need to examine the processes by which this comes about much more closely.

4. There remains finally the question of what sort of moral weight (if I may so put it) children should be encouraged to give to this style of thought: how far they should see their intuitions about honour and purity as action-guiding, as supplying them with either reasons or motivation for their choices and behaviour. Following from what I have said earlier, the most plausible suggestion seems to be that in this respect they should have no moral weight at all. That is not their point or purpose: indeed, as we have seen, they do not in that sense have any point or purpose, any more than our strictly aesthetic judgements do. It is not just that our intuitions of honour and purity are peculiarly mutable and unreliable as guides to action; it is rather that they should not be seen as action-guiding at all.

Whether or not it is regrettable, it is certainly inconceivable that human beings should not have feelings and make judgements based on this style of thought, just as they will inevitably have feelings and make judgements based on what some authority enjoins, or what the neighbours think of them, or their own personal gain. And some philosophers (for instance, Williams, 1993) have argued that certain kinds of feelings and judgements, connected with the notion of shame or personal integrity, may incorporate or sustain desirable moral behaviour. But that seems misconceived: good reasons for behaving in one way rather than another must at some point connect with what is harmful or beneficial for oneself and for other people. Children need to learn that whether or not they ought to do X is not logically connected with the dictates of authority or the opinions of their fellow-men nor with their intuitions of honour or purity,

however strong a psychological connection there may be: it is connected only with whether X does good or harm. That is a hard lesson to learn: if I see something as dishonourable or defiling or as threatening my integrity, I shall naturally feel inclined (or even compelled) to avoid it. But the logic of morality requires me to step back from these intuitions, and judge on quite different grounds. I must not yield to my intuitions, however strong, about miscegenation, or homosexuality, or fighting to the death, or not fighting at all, or anything of the kind.

I am aware that what I have said above is highly generalized. We need a much more detailed account (a) of the basic emotions involved in this style of thought (and here both psychologists and philosophers have made useful contributions, see for instance Morris, 1992 and Taylor, 1985), (b) of the way in which these emotions express themselves in particular ideals of honour and purity: and above all, (c) of how, in educational practice, they may be modified and brought within the scope of reason. But there is no doubt that this style of thought does in fact affect a very large part of our own and our children's behaviour; and I hope at least to have shown the need for further enquiry.

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At the age of 13, John Wilson won a scholarship to Winchester College, from where he proceeded also on a scholarship to New College, Oxford where he achieved a double first in Greats. He subsequently taught at the King's School Canterbury, where he rose to the position of deputy head before turning to Higher Education. He was Professor of religion

in Ontario, Canada and then returned to the United Kingdom to join the philosophy faculty at the newly established University of Sussex. He was then appointed director of the Farmington Trust where, alongside a psychologist and sociologist, he engaged in innovative work in moral education. He ended his career at the University of Oxford, Department of Educational Studies, where he remained a research fellow until his death in 2003. He published over 50 books and numerous articles in a range of disciplines and on varied topics.