THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF LORD KAMES

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Michigan
1957

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There are two aims to this study. One is a delineation of the moral philosophy of Henry Home, Lord Kames; and the other, a comparison of this view with recent moral philosophies.

The moral philosophy of Lord Kames is based on a realist epistemology. In Chapter I, I discuss his defense of the view that what we perceive are actual things and objects, not merely sense impressions or phenomena. In Chapter II, I discuss the deterministic psychology that Kames develops, and its application to his discussion of egoism and hedonism; and his doctrine that every voluntary human action must have a motive.

In Chapter III, I begin the analysis of Kames' account of moral behavior. Kames applies his realist epistemology to moral perception and says that the moral sense perceives the moral qualities of actions. How the moral sense may be said to perceive, and the extent to which the moral sense is based on the esthetic analogy are the first two topics of this chapter. Then I present Kames' analysis of the moral necessity of certain actions, and the interrelationship between remorse, blame and the freedom of action. To clarify further what Kames had in mind as the function of the moral sense, I compare his view of moral behavior with that of Joseph Butler, from whom he seems to have borrowed much. A presentation of Kames' view of the relationship between duty and motivation closes the formal discussion of Kames' account of the moral sense; but since certain features of Kames' moral philosophy are brought out most clearly by his criticism of Hutcheson and Hume, (that they are too reductionistic in explaining

the morality of actions), Chapter IV is devoted to this topic.

In the final chapter, Kames' moral philosophy is compared with recent ethics. As a preliminary, I show that his view of moral perception is not that of the twentieth century intuitionists. The main body of the chapter, however, is a comparison of Kames' view with that of the Oxford analysts. Here, my thesis is that there is a close parallel between Kames' moral philosophy, developed in opposition to the ethics of Hutcheson and Hume, and the ethics of the Oxford analysts (like those of Toulmin, Hare and Falk, etc.), developed in opposition to the reductionist account of moral language as given by the emotivists. The Oxford analysts are discussed as a group to clarify their method of analysis, and to show that their analyses can have different directions depending on the individual interest of the analyst. Then, I take as a case study the view of the language of morals as given by one of their representatives, D. W. Falk. His view was chosen because of his primary interest in moral phenomenology, especially the relationship of duty and motives to moral conduct.

My conclusion is that in the structure of their theories, Kames and Falk are alike, and as a result, they have the same difficulties in explaining the nature of moral cognition and the relationship of duty to motivation. This completes the demonstration of the parallels between post-Humean ethics in the eighteenth century and post-emotivist ethics in the twentieth century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure indeed to be able to thank, for once, the many persons to whom I have gone for help and solace while engaged in the preparation of this dissertation.

The four members of the dissertation committee have given me aid in numerous ways: by suggesting books to consult, by discussing ways to interpret the texts, as well as by reading the finished product at the end of the summer holidays when pleasanter pursuits might have been more welcome.

I am particularly grateful to Professor Paul Henle for directing the writing of the dissertation, and for reading through the countless pages of the preliminary drafts. I must also thank Associate Professor William Alston for carefully going through the final draft. Professor Louis I. Bredvold has taken time out from the first few weeks of his retirement furlough to read this study, and to attend the final examination. I consider it a great privilege to have had his assistance.

I do not think that I could have survived the period of the manuscript preparation without the spiritual and material support given me by Mr. Stanford Tsugawa and Mr. Peter Stettenheim. I also suspect that the patience and resources

of Mr. William Morgan of the University of Michigan General Library were taxed by my constant request for aid and attention in a way that few librarians would have endured. His sympathetic, generous and ingenious help have been those of a valuable friend as well as a fellow scholar. Mr. and Mrs. Brendan Liddell relieved me of the agony and eyestrain involved in the typing and proofreading of the final version. I am greatly indebted to them.

I have been guided as well as goaded by all the persons I have mentioned above.

I dedicate what substance this study contains to my parents and to my guardians.

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INTRODUCTION

What I attempt in the following study is an examination of the moral philosophy held by Lord Kames in his mature period, preceded by a statement of his epistemology. It is the view that he seems to have held around 1770. While Kames began to write fairly early in his career and quite actively, his philosophical publication did not appear until 1751 when he was 55 years of age. In that year, the Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion[1] was published anonymously. This is late for a man to start out in a new field, although the essays included in this book seem to have been circulated in manuscript form as early as 1746.[2]

Naturally enough, we find his view quite settled, and there are few changes in his subsequent writings. The main exception is his view regarding the freedom of the will.

> I must acknowledge it to have been once my opinion, that there is in man a sense of being able to act against motives, or against our inclination and choice, commonly termed liberty of indifference. I was carried along in

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[1](Edinburgh, 1751). Cited hereafter as M, followed by the page reference to the third edition, 1779.

[2]Kames' essay on personal identity which Hume had seen, probably in manuscript form, is mentioned by Hume in the fragment of a letter reproduced as "Letter 52, to Henry Home, [Portsmouth, May or June,] 1746" in The Letters of David Hume, ed. J. Y. T. Grieg, (2 Vols. Oxford, 1932), I, 94. The complete letter is given as "Letter 8", dated conjectually as that of 24 July 1746, in New Letters of David Hume, ed. R. Klibansky and E. K. Mossner, (Oxford, 1954), 20-21.

> the current of popular opinion; and could not dream but that this sense really existed, when I found it vouched by so many grave writers. I had at the same time the clearest conviction that man is a necessary agent; and therefore justly concluded that this sense must be delusive. I yielded to another popular opinion, that not only praise and blame, merit and demerit, as attributed to human actions, but also contrition and remorse, are inconsistent with necessity; and must be founded on the same delusive sense of liberty of indifference. From these premises, I was led though reluctantly to admit, that some of our moral feeling and emotions must be founded on a delusion. . . . Before a second edition[3] was called for, I discovered fortunately that the feelings and emotions of the moral sense are perfectly consistent with moral necessity; and I gladly laid hold of that opportunity to acknowledge my error. Having so far rescued the moral system from this pretended delusive sense, I was strongly inclined to think, that we had no notion of being able to act against motives; and in the second edition I ventured to say so. But upon reviewing the subject for the present edition,[4] I clearly saw that we really have a notion of being able to act against motives; which renewed my perplexity, till it occurred to me, that the notion is suggested by the irregular influence of passion, and that we never have it in our cool moments; consequently, that it is not a delusion of nature, but of passion only. . . . and now I am happy in thinking that morality rests on a foundation that has no delusion in it. (M,v-vii)

But these stages in the development of Kames' opinions are not my main concern. What I attempt is an examination of Kames' system of ethics, wherein, all the constituent requirements for the possibility of moral behavior are systematically delineated from a certain point of view. What this point of view was, and how successful Kames was in illuminating the whole field of moral behavior from this viewpoint, is the task of this thesis.

One of the interests of this study, thus, will be historical. In a view, however, as eclectic as Kames', the

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[3](Edinburgh, 1758).

[4]This quotation is from the preface to the third edition.

sources of borrowings are varied and far reaching. I have indicated the sources of borrowings only where this has seemed significant, and I do not intend this dissertation to be a study in the history of ideas. It is rather a case study of one view which was held in an especially rich period in English moral philosophy. It is the study of a view in morals which most closely resembles that of Joseph Butler, and is consciously opposed to that of Hume. As a type of ethical theory, I think it has a clinical interest of its own, especially in contrast with his contemporaries.

About 1940, there came about a realization that the course of 20th century moral philosophy has repeated, in general outline, the development of 18th century ethics;[5] that in the 18th century, there were representatives holding each of the various viewpoints of the modern period: intuitionism, non-cognitivism, etc. If this is the case, then, Kames comes closest to representing, in certain general features of his moral philosophy, the viewpoint which we have come to call Oxford Analysis, although this label may group together men who differ in significant ways. This parallelism, wherever

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[5]The principle steps in the discovery of these parallels are the following books: D. D. Raphael, The Moral Sense (Oxford, 1947); A. N. Prior, Logic and the Basis of Ethics (Oxford, 1949). The following articles are also important: C. D. Broad, "Some Reflections on Moral Sense Theories in Ethics," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XLV, 131-66; reprinted in W. Sellars and J. Hospers, Readings in Ethical Theory (New York, 1952), pp. 363-88. William Frankena, "Moral Philosophy at Mid-Century," Philosophical Review, LX, 44-55. A. N. Prior, "18th Century Writers on 20th Century Subjects," Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy, XXIV, 168-82.

possible, will be indicated in what follows. This will be the second sort of interest Kames' moral philosophy will have for contemporary readers.

The position from which Kames writes, is, to label it briefly, anti-Humean; particularly the view of Hume as expounded in the Treatise on Human Nature.[6] Kames correctly fixes the center of Humes' philosophy in his epistemology. Thus, he begins by arguing against Hume's account of perception in the non-ethical portion of the Essays. The epistemology which follows has been called Realism in the 20th century;[7] the view that when we perceive, we see things without the mediation of sense impressions or phenomena, or, in modern terminology, sense data. We directly perceive things, and it is only after a process of analysis that we discover sense impressions. Phenomena and sense impressions are the discovery of philosophers, not ordinary men. The development of this epistemology is the topic of the first chapter of this dissertation.

The moral philosophy which is subsequently developed, closely parallels this epistemology in its structure. Just as physical objects are not merely a synthesis of free-floating sense impressions, but are directly perceived, so also are

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[6](3 vols., London, 1739-40).

[7]The new realists' theory relies on that "primordial common sense which believes in a world that exists independently of the knowing of it, but believes also that that same independent world can be directly presented in consciousness and not merely represented or copied by 'ideas'." Edwin Holt, et al, The New Realism. Cooperative Studies in Philosophy (New York, 1912), p. 10.

moral duties -- they are not to be reduced in analysis merely into utility, approbation and benevolence. Moral obligation differs from all of these things, though these may have a prominent part in moral experience. But obligation is a perception of the moral sense.

What is it then that the moral sense perceives? The view held by Kames was criticized by some commentators as being an attempt to reinstate the doctrine of innate ideas.[8] Is this the case? How does Kames explain the function of the moral sense? The answer consists of a discussion of how the moral sense may be said to perceive, and whether it is based on an esthetic analogy or not. Then I present Kames' analysis of the moral necessity of certain actions; and the interrelationships between remorse, blame and freedom of action. To clarify further what Kames had in mind as being the moral sense, I compare his view of moral behavior with that of Butler, in detail, since Kames seems to have borrowed much from him. Kames' view of the relationship of duty to motivation closes the formal discussion of Kames' moral philosophy, but since certain features of Kames' moral philosophy is brought out clearly by his criticism of Hutcheson and Hume, a chapter is devoted to this discussion.

In the conclusion, Kames' moral philosophy is compared with certain recent views in ethics. As a preliminary,

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[8]Particularly the biographer of Kames in Robert Chambers, ed., Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen, rev. Thomas Thomson (3 vols., London, 1869), II, 275.

I show that his view of moral perception is not that of the twentieth century intuitionists. The main body of the chapter, however, is a comparison of Kames' view with that of the Oxford analysts. Here, my thesis is that there is a close parallel between Kames' moral philosophy, developed in opposition to Hume; and the moral philosophy of the Oxford analysts, developed in opposition to the reductive analysis of moral language by the emotivists. The Oxford analysts are discussed as a group to clarify their method of analysis and to show that depending on their individual interests, their analysis has different contexts and directions. Then I take as a case study, the account of moral language given by one of their representatives, D. W. Falk. His ethics was chosen because him primary interest lies in moral phenomenology -- especially the relationship of duty, motives, and moral action. The net result of this discussion is that in the structure of their theories, Kames and Falk are alike, and are faced with identical difficulties in explaining the nature of moral cognition, and the relationship of duty to motivation. This completes the demonstration of the parallel in post-Humean and post-emotivist ethics in eighteenth and twentieth century moral philosophy.

A Note on Texts Used

The most important piece of writing by Kames for this thesis has been the third edition of the Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion. This edition is the final version prepared by the author, and contains a long

chapter on "Various Opinions Concerning the Foundation of Morality,"[9] which does not appear in the first two editions. While it adds valuable details on Kames' view, it does not materially change it.

The essays are divided into two groups: the first dealing with ethics, and the second with natural religion. The core of Kames' anti-Humean epistemology is contained in the second group, introducing his discussion of theology; but I have supplemented it with details from the more complete delineation of psychology included in the Elements of Criticism, a work on esthetics and the principles of taste.[10] The section of psychology makes up the appendix of the seventh edition (1788) which is the one used throughout this thesis. It is a reprinting of the sixth edition (1774) whose preparation was the final one supervised by the author. The Sketches of the History of Man[11] contains sections on the early development of man, morally, as well as socially. It does not add anything new to Kames' philosophy as contained in the above three works. But the Sketches of the History of Man was widely read in the eighteenth and into the twentieth century; and for this reason, I have included citations to sections of it which treat of topics relevant to the subject of this study.

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[9] Chapter IX of Essay II; (M,102-150)

[10] (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1762). Cited henceforth as C, followed by the page reference to the seventh edition, 1788.

[11] (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1774). Cited henceforth as S, followed by the page reference to the three volume edition printed (Edinburgh, 1813).

CHAPTER I

Kames' Epistemology

1. Kames appears to be an empiricist: but in eighteenth century England and Scotland, few could avoid being one. Empiricism is the position which holds that all ideas, including moral ideas, derive from the impressions of sensation or feeling, either as direct copies or indirect constructs of simple ideas. In the British tradition, the empiricist position was expressed in the language of ideas, which of itself, tends to certain conclusions. Ideas were thought of as particular impressions; they are the simple units out of which more complex ideas may be constructed; and being sense impressions, they were neither true nor false, but simply were.[1] All errors were therefore errors of inference from some impressions which alone existed.[2] To speak of things, matter

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[1] George Berkeley, Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous (London, 1713). Cited henceforth as Three Dialogues with references to the Works of George Berkeley, ed. T. E. Jessop and A. A. Luce, (8 vols., London, 1949-); II, 180, 175. Cf., also William James' description of neutral entities: "The 'facts' themselves meanwhile are not true. They simply are." "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," Pragmatism (New York, 1907), 225.

[2] Rene Descartes, "Meditation IV" of Meditations on First Philosophy (Paris, 1641). Cited henceforth as Meditations, with references to the Philosophical Works of Rene Descartes, ed. E. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, (2 vols., Cambridge, 1911), I, 175f. Berkeley, "Third Dialogue" of Three Dialogues, Works, II, 238.

or substances, was, thus, to speak of something about which nothing was known.[3]

Empiricism could have been stated in terms of perceptions of things and not in terms of particles of impressions, and not have led to phenomenalism. This is Kames' contention. According to him, the trend toward phenomenalism, beginning with Locke (if not with Hobbes), got its impetus with the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities.[4] (M,239) As a conjecture he adds that perhaps the trend began earlier, when philosophers began to talk of qualities rather than things, beginning to take qualities and relations as being somehow epistemologically prior to things.[5] This, he said, had become possible only because somehow the associationist psychology had gained such prestige and familiarity, that simple ideas were thought to be prior, not only in the logical order of simple to complex things, but also in psychological origin. (M,240; C,ii,517) This is to think that in our experiences, we know the qualities of things first, not the object, and we

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[3]John Locke, Essays Concerning Human Understanding (London, 1690). Cited henceforth as Essay, with references to the edition by Pringle-Pattison (Oxford, 1924). (II,xxiii,4), 157.

George Berkeley, Principles of Human Knowledge, Para.7; Works, II, 43f. Cited henceforth as Principles.

[4]Locke, Essay, (II, viii, 9-25), 66-73.

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (London, 1651). References will be to The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, ed. William Molesworth, (11 vols., London, 1839), III, 1-3. Cited henceforth as English Works.

[5]Berkeley, Principles, Para. 25-27; Works, II, 51ff. Also, Para. 38-39; II, 56-57.

infer the existence of the object from the qualities that are presented to us.[6]

This being the case, Kames first of all argues against associationist psychology. In experience, we are presented with things and not a flux of simple impressions which we put together afterwards; and terms like "simple ideas" and "qualities" in this context, are the invention of philosophers. (M,239,263) Nature presents to us only complexes, and far from associationism being the key mechanism of the human mind, it is analysis and abstraction that gives us simple entities as we try to come to grips with our experiences and attempt to understand them. (C,517ff)

In the present chapter, this anti-Humean bent in the philosophy of Kames will be examined fully. Kames' program for arguing against Humean phenomenalism has the following steps. (1) We perceive things, not phenomena. (2) To defend this he shows that (a) we perceive things as complex wholes; and thus, (b) associationism is not the most important mechanism of the human mind; and (c) that the usual distinction between primary and secondary qualities is not satisfactory.

2. I begin with an explanation of what Kames means by the internal and external senses before going on to discuss his theory of perception.

At first glance, what anyone might mean by internal and external sense is clear enough. The internal sense

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[6] Ibid., Para. 25; II, 51.

informs a man of the things passing within the mind, such as inclining, resolving, willing and reflecting. (M,235; C,ii,505) The external sense assists in the discovery of things external through acts of the mind called "perception." The similar process of the internal sense is called "consciousness," by Kames.

But on closer examination, this terminology is not wholly satisfactory. First of all, the word "sense" as used in these two applications covers two very widely different processes. The internal sense and its self-consciousness is a nebulous ebb and flow of awareness of the various acts of the mind. But we have specific organs to serve as the channels of perception of the external senses. The faculties themselves differ: while there is a retina for the seeing of things, there is nothing like it for the perception of greed. Kames explains that the object of consciousness and perception are lumped together because "everything we perceive or are conscious of, whether a being or a quality, a passion or an action, is with respect to the percipient termed an object." (C,ii,505) The internal and the external senses were differentiated by whether the object was inside or outside the human body. "The distinction refers to the objects of our knowledge; for the senses, whether external or internal, are all of them powers or faculties of the mind." (C,ii,505) So to use my own example, would a pain from a nail in the foot be the object of the external sense?[7] The

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[7]Cf., Thomas Reid's example of a pin prick in Essay II, chapter xi, in his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of

awareness of the nail through seeing it and touching it, and the sensation of the nail pushing through the skin would be objects of the external sense. But the throbbing pain is a sensation, which if bad enough may be fairly wide-spread; and if the case were serious enough, one would feel, I suppose, a swelling and pulling in the muscle. How all of these would be distributed among the internal and external senses is not easily decided. We realize, of course, that the faculty of self-awareness decides, and this is where the difficulty resides. "The faculty by which I have knowledge of myself, is a sense that cannot properly be termed either internal or external." (C,ii,506) Something as basic as the self (or raw pain and pleasure) cannot be called internal or external, being as it were the arbiter that decides the difference between the two.

The application of the term "sense" to these very different phenomena is by virtue of an analogy. The point of the similarity is not, as Kames says, that there are objects falling under their scrutiny, or in their being faculties of the mind. The positive analogy lies in the direct apprehension and awareness with which they both operate. This will become increasingly clear in the following three sections where the external sense is examined in detail.

Man (Edinburgh, 1785). Cited henceforth as Intellectual Powers with references to the Works of Thomas Reid, ed. William Hamilton, (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1846-63), reprinted in 1872; I, 290.

3. "One thing only is certain, that our perception is not of the pictures, but of the object itself." (M,282)[8]

> What we really perceive, is a tree of a certain figure, size and colour. When I see motion, my perception is not of motion separately, but of a body moving. . . . In short, the sense of seeing is given us to perceive things as they really exist; and did it not make us acquainted with things as they exist, we would be ill qualified to live in this world. Now, when we abstract from particulars, and reason in general, the things that have not a separate existence are termed <u>qualities</u>, and the things they belong to, <u>body</u> or <u>substance</u>. Thus, the idea of substance, as well as of qualities is derived from sight. And the object so qualified, is at the same time <u>perceived</u> as really existing, independent altogether of the percipient. (M,237f)

When we see an oak tree, the perception is of a tree of a certain shape, color, etc.; and these separate aspects of a tree do not raise different perceptions. "A quality is never perceived separately from the subject; not a part from the whole. There is a mental power of abstraction . . . but the eye never abstracts, nor any other external sense." (C,ii,517) The objects themselves can be distinguished into those that are simple or complex. But perceptions are not; and in perceptions, one cannot make these distinctions. We cannot reason in perceiving, for perception works by "intuitive conviction, which admits not the slightest doubt of the veracity of our senses." (M,260f)

While perception and sensation are both acts by which external objects are made known to us, Kames would still distinguish between the two -- using perception generally to apply to the process of hearing, seeing, etc., acts

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[8]Cf., Reid on ideas and pictures; <u>Ibid</u>., 277.

by which we are made aware of external objects. (C,ii,508)[9] These may be called, specifically, primary perception, since an idea, the "indistinct secondary perception of an object" is defined as "that perception of a real object which is raised in the mind by the power of memory." (C,ii,713f) Sensation Kames reserves for the feeling of pleasure and pain at the organ of sense.

All that Kames says about substance and quality is orthodox. Quality means that which cannot subsist alone. This is the minimal requirement. Substance and qualities are "relative ideas and imply each other." (M,239f) Kames might have reinforced his point of view if he had coined such a word as suprastance as against substance to show the correlative nature of these concepts.

> For what other reason do we call a figure a quality, but that we perceive it, not as a separate existence, but as belonging to something that is figured; and which thing . . . subsists by itself or hath an independent existence . . . In a word, a quality is not intelligible, unless upon supposition of some other thing, of which it is the quality. (M,239)[10]

Locke observed that we have no clear or distinct idea of substance.[11] Kames thinks this was no wonder. Locke could only have meant that we can have neither a clear nor a distinct idea of substance abstracted from properties. (M,242)

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[9] For an identical explanation of sensation, see Reid, Ibid., 312.

[10] ". . . Because, as I have said, not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum . . ." Locke, Essay, (II, xxiii, 1), 155.

[11] Ibid., 155.

And this is indeed the case. But Kames would insist that the reverse is also true. The term quality (or suprastance) ought to be used (and so is used in common speech) so that there can be no quality without substance. (M,242)

In this manner, Kames endeavors to preserve the idea of substance, taking the meaning of the words to be relational. Thus, in a reconstruction of the universe, although it is true that all that we know comes from experience, and experience consists of perceptions, we can never properly speak of qualities or appearances per se, but only of qualities of something, which make up the universe. These phrases make sense only if one were to convert them into prepositional, relational phrases.

4. Kames gives two sorts of consideration to support his analysis of the direct perception of things. They are closely intertwined and it is difficult to separate out the two strands. What he wishes to argue is that we see things, not qualities as abstracted from particular existences. In order to establish this, he contends that (1) perceptions are always simple. They are acts of sense and an action (including that of sensing) is dynamic, not resolvable into parts when actually perceived. (C,ii,517) (2) And all of our perceptions are of particular existent things. Both of these propositions bear on Kames' doctrine on the possibility of abstract ideas.

Perception includes "a conviction of the reality of its object," while conception need not. (C,ii,509) By the

power of fancy, one could imagine a rust-colored rhinoceros. When this animal is described, the idea formed by the hearer is called a conception, and in this case, conception is passive. The imagination is active, it being "a power of fabricating images without any foundation in reality." (C,ii,520)[12] But Kames, continuing, says that we can never form a conception of qualities, independent of the things that own them. (M,240) Even in the imagination, color, shape, etc., cannot be disjoined from the body to which they inhere. This is offered as a psychological fact, but it is so also because of a linguistic consideration, since Kames had already explicated quality in a particular manner. Kames' defence can only be that human perception (in itself defined rather narrowly) justifies his original definition. And in fact, this is what he does, in his discussion of our knowledge of things.

All of our perceptions are of particular, existent things, (C,ii,534): then, trying to conceive a shape without a body, or a color without the thing it inheres in, is to conceive, he says, a figure (or a color) having a separate existence from the body, at the same time that we conceive it as having no existence (for to exist is to have a body).[13] (M,240) This is to conceive it as being both a quality and not a quality at the same time. This is a contradiction. "Thus it comes out, that substance makes a part, not only of

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[12] Cf., Reid, Ibid., 222f.

[13] Matter is defined by Kames as that which has length, breadth, and thickness -- that which occupies space and excludes every other particle. (M,285)

every perception of sight and touch, but of every conception we can form of color, figure, extension and motion." (M,240)

Since everything has several parts, it can be divided and distinguished "in the mind as well as in reality," (C,ii,531) and we can separate out parts and confine our attention to just those facets. But this process of abstraction can also work on things that are not as easily distinguished as the individual leaves on a bush.

> The size, the figure, the color, of a tree, are as inseparably connected and have no independent existence; the same of length, breadth and thickness: and yet we can mentally confine our observation to one of these, abstracting from the rest. (C,ii,532)

Space and time are two of these abstractions, says Kames; in reality a part-and-parcel of every perception. So also with existence: (C,ii,533) it is always actual things that exist and can have place and time assignments.

Thus we have the power to abstract: but Kames is careful to insist that there are only abstract <u>terms</u>, not abstract ideas. (C,ii,534) Brute animals do not have this power of abstraction because they are not capable of speech. (C,ii,533) There cannot be any general ideas, nor <u>mutatis mutandis</u>, any abstract ideas; for any idea, evoked by the memory or actually being perceived at the moment, is a particular perception of a particular thing. (C,ii,534f) But we have the power of reasoning abstractly, and this is made possible by letting words signify "the thing to which the reasoning is confined; and such words are denominated <u>abstract</u>

terms." (C,ii,534)[14] When we use an abstract term, its "meaning and use . . . are well understood, though of itself, unless other particulars be taken in, it raises no image nor idea in the mind" (C,ii,534). At this point, Kames shows himself to be a nominalist. Abstract terms are words. We are familiar with their use, for reasoning is possible only because we have abstract terms to use as tokens to stand for particulars, all of which cannot be kept in the mind when we manipulate ideas. The power of abstraction is bestowed on man for the purpose solely of reasoning (C,ii,535), and without language, man will scarcely be a rational animal (C,ii,537).

These arguments are difficult to evaluate. Kames is guilty of imagism, the notion that there must be an image before us whenever we universalize, and he is rejecting conceptualism since he is saying that abstract terms do not have concepts to which they refer, but must refer to particulars. It is true that we cannot conceive a body that is not figured, but the assertion of the converse, that "we can as little conceive a figure without a body" seems overhasty. He says: "let us try ever so often, our attempts will be in vain, to form an idea of a triangle independent of a body which has that figure." (M,240) If this is a psychological statement about the possibility of forming images -- that images will have, upon close scrutiny, a certain particular

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[14] Berkeley, "First Dialogue" of Three Dialogues, Works, II, 192f. Also Principles, Introduction, Para. 16, Works, II, 34f.

assortment of angles, and inevitably, will be of a certain size and configuration -- then, any image, if this is the case, will be a particular image; and to that extent, a purely general, abstract image is impossible. But what Kames then has been talking about is mental pictures that rely on vision. Geometrical figures need not have a body, as the method and maneuvers of geometry show. (C,ii,533) Kames' own definition of "conception" also supports this. What Kames means to say, thus, is that in our perceptual experiences, we never find qualities floating about to be perceived without a body.

In conclusion, it can be seen that Kames' nominalism is closely allied with his theory of perception and his insistence on the correlative nature of "qualities" and "substances." We perceive things which are particular existences. Abstract terms are words, which act as tokens for particulars. Otherwise, they raise no ideas. Images (mental pictures) and concepts, if they involve qualities, also involve bodies. Kames' use of the term "quality" is a very strong one. While Kames mentions the geometrician who confines his "reasoning to the figure, the length, breadth and thickness" of things (C,ii,533), he does not discuss such geometrical (or mathematical) concepts except to say that they are abstract terms which are merely noises unless they have attached to them particular ideas.

5. A problem that arises for a theory of direct perception such as Kames' is that it is difficult to maintain

a theory of primary and secondary qualities as traditionally explicated. If what we perceive is the actual object, and what we mean by "qualities" are the perpetual data that are felt to inhere in the object experienced, can we make sense of the difference between the various classes of qualities? In the discussion that follows, Kames does not question the mathematical properties of things -- extension, size, divisibility, etc., -- which are usually the paradigm primary qualities.

Particular existences alone may be experienced. The qualities that these objects "own" are felt to be in the body or substance that give rise to them, and they are not felt to have separate existences. At least this is what we believe in ordinary moments. (M,238) But there is one fact to notice about certain of the qualities. We do not perceive an external object until we have received some kind of impression: but it is not at all necessary that the percipient be aware of this impression. In touching, in tasting, and in smelling, we are sensible of the impression, but not in seeing and in hearing. (M,235f; C,ii,510)

> We know indeed, from experiments, that before we perceive a visible object, its image is spread upon the retina tunica; and that before we perceive a sound, an impression is made upon the drum of the ear; but we are not conscious either of the organic image or of the organic impression; nor are we conscious of any other operation preparatory to the act of perception; all we can say, is, that we see that river, or hear that trumpet. (C,ii,510)

The important thing to notice in examining the workings of the senses, thus, is to notice that they all function in different ways. Sight and hearing are the simplest, for

these senses function immediately, without the percipient being aware of an intervening impression. The objects of the senses of hearing, smelling, and tasting differ radically from the above senses, for they "make their appearance in the mind as simple existences; and [they] do not suggest any perception of independence, nor permanent existence." (M,239) These sensible qualities have no resemblance to the cause that produced them. Nor do they correspond to anything existing independent of me, or my perception. A sound wave, emitted from a trumpet, is neither the sound as experienced, nor is it the trumpet that we can see. Neither are the "effluvia of smell" that particular putrid smell as sensed, nor is it in the rotting animal carcass, for these are not "qualities of matter, but the effects produced in the percipient." (M,236f)

On the other hand, the senses of sight and touch have the unique status of being able to inform us of things as "they really exist". (M,236) By this, I take Kames to mean that we give the senses of sight and touch a privileged status among the five senses. If we can touch an object, and see it, we give more credence to the results of these tests. The idea of substance, says Kames, is one that we derive from the senses of sight and touch and no others.

Since this is the case, says Kames, if we are to take the notion of primary quality seriously, as that which is experienced to inhere in the body, then the primary qualities (aside from figure, size, solidity and divisibility without end) are the qualities discovered by the sense of

sight and touch. (M,238f) We can then conclude that the secondary qualities are the objects of the other three senses. (M,239)

Color and touch seem at first to be primary qualities -- for they are immediately experienced as inhering in the object. But upon "search we find nothing on the surface of a body but particles variously figured and combined, which have not the most distant resemblance to colour. These particles indeed, by reflecting rays of light on the eye, may produce a perception of colour in the beholder; but that perception cannot be a quality of the object, primary or secondary." (M,244) Since we have the disposition to receive these color sensations, the object, we may say, has the power to raise these perceptions in favorable conditions. This power "may indeed be classed among the primary qualities," but these are causes, not the effects, (which are the sensed qualities in the percipient), and to say that the disposition of raising color in the object is a quality, is to confuse the cause with the effect. (M,245)

This, says Kames, is in effect what Locke did in saying that the secondary qualities are powers.[15] "But a mental perception . . . can in no proper sense be held a quality of the object perceived." "And could this perception be converted into a power inherent in the object perceived, it would be a primary quality, not a secondary [quality]." (M,245) Thus, Kames finally seems to be saying

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[15]Locke, Essay, (II, viii, 19), 71.

that the notion of quality means primary quality, and to speak of the secondary qualities makes no sense.[16]

6. To sum up what Kames has said in the preceding two sections: first of all, (1) qualities inhere in substances and are thus objectively there. But (2) not all the objects of the five senses can be called qualities, for some are felt to be inherent in the objects but others are not. Some, in other words, are felt to be impressions, while in others, we experience a part of the thing itself. (3) Kames then suggests that the objects of the sense of sight and touch are primary qualities because they are usually sensed as belonging to the object without mediation of any impressions. (4) An act of perception is dynamic. It is a whole; so that several of the senses unite to tell us of the existence of an object. (5) On philosophical examination, all the sensible qualities have the same status. In the case of smells and taste, we are aware of sensing the impressions as separate existences even in our common experience. In the other cases, upon scientific examination, we discover that the object itself does not possess the felt quality of touch, or the sensed color (or, one might add, the sound as heard).

7. If the act of perception is a dynamic whole in which not only several qualities but several of the senses

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[16] In (S,iii,110) the primary and secondary qualities are listed traditionally.

unite to tell us about the existence of something, are some of the impressions felt to be in us, and others, at the same time, felt to be in the subject? When we see and touch a red rose, the smell is in us, the visual experience is seen to be out there, and the pain from the thorns sensed in our finger. Despite the diversity of locations, we are seldom confused about the location of the rose. How did we ever come to believe that the sensible qualities belong to the object, as the use of the term "qualities" (according to Kames' usage) requires?

Kames' answer is a very characteristic one. The link is formed by habit, in virtue of which, what are not even qualities are thought to be so. This is an illusion of nature, which nevertheless, has a basis. It is "contrived for some valuable purpose that cannot be obtained in the direct road." (M,246) Except for this illusion, the world might be a mosaic of mere appearances -- much like the surface appearances of a painting -- an analogy that Kames is quick to make use of. (M,249)[17] This illusion definitely aids in human survival; and also gives warmth, familiarity and amenability to life.

> How little attractive would a beautiful woman be, were the pure red and white of her skin and her melodious accents, perceived to be no where but in the mind of her lover! Upon that supposition, how slight would be the influence of an orator or of a general haranguing his army! Conversations would be much less entertaining, were we conscious that the sounds we hear proceed not from the speaker. . . (M,246f)

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[17] Cf., George Santayana on the objectification of the secondary qualities. The Sense of Beauty (New York, 1896), 45-51.

So the voice, the smell, color, sight, all when examined philosophically are impression in the mind of the admirer; but such is the way of human habit that the listener, by a kind of unconscious leap attributes these impressions to the person he thinks is before him. This is done so often that we always act as if all the objects of the five senses are qualities of the object. That experience and habit can account for this identification, is shown by the fact, says Kames, that when we experience a new smell, we are usually at a loss to know how to explain it. "When a child feels a smell, it is not led to ascribe it to any cause whatever." (M,257)[18]

We are, in ordinary moments, not aware of the illusion. So these qualities are experienced as inhering in the object, except in special cases. We say, thus, when not being philosophical, that a perfumed letter on pink paper crinkles and smells; and never, that I have a collection of pink spread on my retina, a crackling sensation, a sting in my nose, and certain thin, dry, tactile sensations in my hands. We can trust the information that we get from our senses when we are in a sound state. (M,249)

As further instances of such illusion, Kames cites certain relations that things have to each other. Equality, uniformity, resemblance, proximity, are relations that depend not on us, but exist whether perceived by us or not,

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[18]And yet, when we encounter a new smell, we (and children too) sniff and try to locate its sources.

and on this account qualify as primary qualities. But the so-called value relations, propriety, impropriety, congruity and incongruity are "perceptions of an internal sense, having no existence in the objects perceived. But as these perceptions are, by an illusion of nature, placed in the objects and conceived as belonging to them, they may therefore be termed secondary relations." (M,248)[19] They are perceived to be inherently in the objects so related.

Are these experiences illusions, and thus really a lie? To what extent is his theory of illusion consonant with common sense? Or his Realist position? Kames remains silent on these points.

8. We must not make the mistake of applying to the mind, axioms peculiar to matter. Of material objects, it is held that one body cannot act upon another at a distance, nor be acted upon by what is not in contact with it. "Extension in length, breadth, and thickness enters into every idea we can form of matter; and everything that is so extended, is in our conception of matter." (M,264f) It would thus follow analytically, that if mind or spirit be different from matter, (admitted by all), it cannot be so extended. Consequently, they cannot occupy space, nor have any relation to place. A commitment to a maxim such as this, ultimately, lies at the base of phenomenalism; namely, that "no being can act but where it is; and consequently, that it cannot act upon any

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[19] Cf., Santayana, The Sense of Beauty, 46f.

subject at a distance," (C,ii,515) for this casts doubt on the possibility of trustworthy perceptions.[20] Holding it, we begin to think that if we can perceive, what we perceive are just those data that we sense in our minds. To assert just this much, however, is obscure or misleading, says Kames, because the statement is elliptical. A full restatement would read:

> No subject can be perceived unless it act upon the mind, but no distant thing can act upon the mind because no being can act but where it is: and therefore, the immediate object of perception must be something united to the mind, and so as to be able to act upon it. (C,ii,514,footnote)

The second clause, "that no distant subject can act upon the mind" is not intuitively certain, and requires evidence. Until this is given, it will remain undecided. To further clinch the argument, Kames argues that from this doctrine, people have concluded that the only objects of perception are the phantasms or ideas united to the mind. But how can phantasms or ideas be raised in the mind by things at a distance, if things at a distance cannot act upon the mind? How can, for example, books be read? The argument itself makes implausible what it sets out to prove. The blunt fact of the matter is that we can and do trust our sense of sight in normal circumstances. "The perception of objects at a distance by intervention of rays of light, involves no inconsistency nor impossibility: and unless that could be asserted, we have no reason to call in question the evidence of

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[20] "That nothing can act immediately where it is not, I think must be admitted." Reid, Intellectual Powers, 311.

perception." (M,260) And the evidence of perception is that we see things out there in space, solidly.

9. The whole of Kames' epistemology which I have been describing so far may be summarized in the following statements.

(1) What is known or experienced, and therefore that which is real -- alone can be meaningfully discussed and manipulated. The idea of substance had been rejected by previous philosophers as unreal or unwarranted because when we examine something of which we can say we have experience or actual acquaintance, all we ever have are sensations of qualities, and nothing that we could ever call substance. To this, Kames has a number of comments:

(2) We see things, not qualities as abstracted from particular existences. The notion of substance and its correlative, quality, both make sense only when taken together. There is an analogy in the use of these terms -- that substance is something that underlies qualities like the floor under a mat -- and qualities are only that which lines the surface of the substance. Taken separately, they are, of course, meaningless.

(3) Furthermore, we see things as wholes. The epistemological order that had been traditionally accepted should be scrapped. Things are neither complex nor simple. As we experience them, our acts of perception are unified and dynamic. What we perceive are the actual objects or the sweep of movement that we think we see. It is only the workings of

reason -- abstraction, analysis, etc. -- that separate out the various parts, qualities, relations of things. These simple ideas are posterior to the act of cognition. They are never prior and put together later by association.

(4) Any kind of incorrigible doubts that we might have about the existence of objects, etc., are due to giving some one favorite maxim (like applying to the mind axioms peculiar to matter) a privileged status that leads to conclusions insupportable, both factually and psychologically. (M,258,264) All we ever need to do when we get into these states of ultimate doubt is to look at things (common ordinary things) again. (M,41) And it is a hand, or a table that we see, not a surface collocation of qualities which now have this configuration, but may, the next moment, separate and float away to recombine, accidentally, into another collection, even though momentarily. (M,270ff)

10. All the above points show the anti-Humean temper of Kames' philosophy. From this, what consequences can we expect to find in his moral philosophy? The most important thing therein is that Kames will resist reductionism. He will not try to reduce all of moral experience to a few ingredients. Just as he tried to make sense of the perception of external objects exactly as we experienced it, so he will try to make sense of moral experience as it is given to us. He may, eventually, decide (as he did in certain parts of his epistemology) that certain aspects are delusions.

But at least he will have resisted the initial temptation of simplifying the whole problem, when in reality, the problem is complex to begin with. His professed criterion for philosophizing is common sense -- or common sense codified and justified. He will try to stick to his criterion, although he deviates from it on occasion.

CHAPTER II

Kames' Psychology

11. In this chapter, I investigate Kames' account of human nature as it bears on his ethics. As a preliminary, there is a discussion of Kames' views on determinism of external nature. The first section of this chapter, thus, is concerned with the logical status of the proposition, "All events have a cause," in the philosophy of Kames.

This account of determinism as applied to human nature is the topic of the remaining sections. Particularly, it is concerned with these two propositions: (1) that every human act has a cause; and (2) that every human act is moved by a concern for personal advantage. Kames is in agreement with the first, but not with the second proposition.

12. Kames would be suspicious of anyone who could deny that things were related causally in external nature. For we have the idea (the perception), and the problem for him is to explain it, not reduce it to something else, like invariable connection. (M,299ff) It is in explaining the origin of the idea that Kames says some very interesting things.

First of all, he says that the causal proposition itself would be difficult to derive from any premiss by a chain of reasoning. Suppose we wanted to argue that the

proposition, "All events have a cause," is empirically true: that it is inductively proven. How would we do so? Do we experience all events? Or suppose the argument was about the chain of events in time; that the maxim we wanted to prove was that, "Nothing can fall out, nothing begin to exist, without a cause;" that is, that everything which begins to exist must have a cause. (M,303) This maxim cannot be the result of experience. We would be at a loss to deduce this proposition from any premiss which is empirically founded. (M,152, 102,304) But we everyday experience causal phenomena, thus, when an event occurs for which we can locate no cause, rather than assign none, we "recur to the operation of invisible powers," God, in the case of miracles. (M,152) This testifies to the strength of our reliance on the causal maxim in the conduct of our lives. We relish order in a remarkable way, and like to have our universe as neat as possible.

> We are framed by nature to relish order and connection . . . we require a certain order. (C,i,25)
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> The principle of order is conspicuous with respect to natural operations; for it always directs our ideas in the order of nature: . . . to proceed along the chain of causes and effects. (C,i,23)

The second quotation is interesting, since Kames (and the eighteenth century) frequently used the word "principle" to mean a faculty of the mind, as well as a general rule or pattern of behavior in human nature.[1] Kames eventually

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[1]One of the definitions of the word "principle" listed in the Oxford English Dictionary (13 vols., Oxford, 1933) reads: "An original or native tendency or faculty or innate disposition . . ." Compare also: "Two principles in human nature reign; / Self-love, to urge, and Reason, to restore." Alexander Pope, Essay on Man, II, 53. Poems of Alexander

says that the maxim must be founded upon conviction derived from the light of nature. (M,304) The argument seems to be shifting towards something constitutive of human cognition. The words "light of nature" as an epistemological term appear among the Stoics and in Descartes.[2] Kames does not explain the phrase, but if we are to take historical use as a precedent, then the causal maxim, that "nothing can fall out, nothing begin to exist without a cause," is true because reason, the light of nature, or something in the human constitution (a principle of human nature) imposes it. Is it then an innate idea -- as Descartes might have said?[3] Is that why we relish order? Because it is second nature to us? The clearest answer that we get is that "the maxim cannot be the result of experience, for it is applied to unknown objects and singular events as readily as to the more familiar." (M,303) If we are able to take this final statement seriously, then here is a belief which is not based on experience. Whether it is reason that supplies it, or the human constitution, or a "schema or cognition," this is a chink in the armor of empiricism.

Pope, ed. John Butt, (London, 1950), III, pt. 1, 62.

[2]"For the light of nature teaches us that the knowledge of the understanding should always precede the determination of the will." Descartes, Meditations, "Meditation IV"; Works, I, 176. See also references to the "law of nature," "right reason" and "natural law" in Diogenes Laertius' account of Zeno, vii, 53, 86-92, in Lives of Eminent Philosophers, trans. R.D.Hicks, (Loeb's Classical Library; London, 1925). Cf., Cicero, De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum, trans. H.Rackham, (Loeb's Classical Library; Cambridge, Mass., 1914), iv, 8-15.

[3]Descartes, "Meditation III"; Works, I, 176.

That the causal maxim functions as a regulatory principle is suggested by Kames in his discussion of events which seem not to have any causes. We still keep insisting that there must be one, and keep looking for one. If the event is unusual enough, we attribute the cause to divine powers. (M,152) We do this because we refuse to give up the belief that "all events have causes." This is known by reason, and does not proceed from experience by an induction, for such arguments are usually circular. (M,303) This rule holds for the future also, and any future event is expected to conform to it. (M,305ff)

While the proposition that all events in nature have a cause is non-empirical, Kames says that we do actually see causal connection in natural events.[4] He did not classify causal connections among the relations that are illusory.

On what grounds does Hume argue against the objectivity of power and causal necessity? Because, says Kames, it is not apparent to the senses. From this, Hume concluded that necessity is a "propensity which custom produces to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant." (M,297) Kames quotes Hume as saying that

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[4]Cf., "But for instance, where causation is really observed, we need not go outside common experience. I submit that, when Charles I lost his head, it would have been mere ill perversity on the part of the executioner or of other close spectators to maintain that the blow of the axe was not certainly but only probably what caused the head to come off." C.J.Ducasse, Nature, Mind and Death, (Paul Carus Lectures 8) (Lasalle, Illinois, 1951), 120.

> upon the whole, necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in object; nor is it, possible for us even to form the most distant idea of it, considered as a quality in bodies. The efficacy or energy in causes, is neither placed in the causes themselves, nor in the Deity, nor in the concurrence of the two principles; but belongs entirely to the soul, which considers the union of two or more objects in all past instances. It is here that the real power of causes is placed, along with their connection and necessity. (M,297f)[5]

"But where does the idea come from then?" asks Kames. How can we have gotten the very notion of power to begin with? Hume himself must have known what the term cause meant, for he uses the word to discuss the question of necessity. And "no person could have given a description of power, considered as a quality in bodies, in more apt or clearer terms." That is how difficult it is to stifle or to disguise natural perception and sentiments. Kames in this manner quickly shifts the question into one about word usage and meaning.

> What leads us to the knowledge of this secret power, is not at present the question. But there is the author's own acknowledgement, that he then has an idea of a power in one object to produce another; for he certainly will not say that he is here making use of words without having an idea annexed to them. (M,302)

From all this, it would appear that all Kames wants Hume to do is to admit the concept of connection whether it be a habit or a disposition. Hume does not deny this.

> Every idea is copied from some preceding impression, or sentiment; and where we cannot find any impression, we may be certain that there is no idea. In all single instances of the operation of bodies or minds, there is nothing that produces any impression, nor consequently

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[5] Kames' quotation from Hume is inexact, but the substance of what he relates may be found in A Treatise on Human Nature (London, 1739-40). Cited henceforth as Treatise, with references to the edition by Selby-Bigge, (Oxford, 1888), 400-408.

> can suggest any idea of power or necessary connection. But when many uniform instances appear, and the same object is always followed by the same event; we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connection. We then <u>feel</u> a new sentiment or impression, to wit, a customary connection in the thought or imagination between one object and its usual attendant; and this sentiment is the original of that idea which we seek for.[6]

So Hume could have added: "Of course I can use the words 'causal connection'; but that phrase is only the token for a specific sort of relation that we <u>feel</u> among the particular sense impressions. If I can find some that <u>are</u> connected by <u>power</u>, then that would be fine. But I can't. So all I can have this term stand for is invariable connection."

Kames would insist again that we do perceive causal connections, not merely simple, invariable connections. That is what he means when he says that he <u>perceives</u> natural connections.

The conclusion of this section is that Kames contends that we see things in causal connection in nature. The causal maxim, that all events in nature have causes, is, however, not empirically certified. It is a truth known to reason. Kames is a determinist.

13. This determinism of nature Kames applied to human nature. His contention is that every human action has a cause. Kames' discussion of this determinism in human nature begins with a consideration of a special form as developed by Hobbes. Two doctrines from Hobbes in particular

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[6] David Hume, <u>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</u> (London, 1748). Cited henceforth as <u>Enquiries</u> with references to the edition by Selby-Bigge, (Oxford, 1902), 78.

are important in respect.

One is the famous formulation of psychological and ethical egoism. The account is that every human act is always accompanied by motives.[7] (This is a variant of the causal maxim: the motive acting as cause of the act which is the effect.) With this no one disagreed. What made Hobbes a psychological egoist was the added assertion that these motives are all of a certain kind; namely those which solely regard the advantage of the agent acting.[8]

The second doctrine of importance is immediately related to this conative account of motivation. Having said that selfish motives always lie behind or activate human actions, Hobbes reinforces his account of human desires by adding that if there is any meaning to the word "good," it can only mean the object of desire.[9] There is no such thing (or action) which may properly be called good except what a man desires at a particular time. From this, it would follow that the good is relative from man to man, and for one man, from moment to moment, depending on his whims.[10] Dramatically Hobbes emphasizes this point by adding that the one central

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[7]That is, we never do what we do not want to do (in some sense); or we must have wanted to do any act that we actually do perform.

[8]Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Pt.I, Chap. 6; English Works, III, 41.

[9]Thomas Hobbes, "Of Sense and Animal Motion", Physics, of Elements of Philosophy, Pt. IV, 11-14; English Works, I, 406FF. Also Leviathan, Pt.I, Chap.6; English Works, III, 38.

[10]Hobbes, Leviathan, Pt. I, Chap. 6, Chap. 10; English Works, III, 41, 76.

natural right[11] of all men is to do all he can to achieve or obtain the object of his desire. This leads, of course, in the Leviathan to the famous description of the state of nature, for it would follow from what Hobbes has said that there is little possibility of a natural agreement among men about the aims of conduct.[12] Ethical egoism is this assertion on the part of Hobbes that men have the natural right and ought to do all he can to achieve the object of his desire.

Are men always motivated by self interest? If, in the state of nature, every man had the right to do whatever he wished, how could society have been formed so that men could trust each other? Is morality artificial and only an outgrowth of social life after each man had come to see that living in the state of nature is unbearable? Then even moral life is calculated to a greater advantage. By the egoistic controversy is meant the argument that subsequently developed over the "selfish principle" in man.

14. Kames' method of answering Hobbes is to first insist on a close scrutiny of human nature to see whether there might not be modes of behavior which are not purely motivated by self interest. Kames finds that there are other-regarding sentiments in man. A second answer is that men sometimes act out of a sense of duty. Details of this second answer are included in the discussion of the moral sense.

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[11] Ibid., Pt. I, chap. 14; Pt. I, Chap. 15; III, 117, 141.

[12] Ibid., Pt. I, chap. 6, 13, 14; III, 41, 114f, 117.

Man is a social animal. He feels natural sympathies towards other creatures. He is also a talking animal and communicates with other men almost out of necessity. (M,118) Any account of human nature must incorporate the fact that men are gregarious. "That there is in man an appetite for society, never was called in question." (S,ii,3) But to ascertain whether the appetite is possessed by the whole species of men, Kames examines the lower animals, and discovers that among the lower animals, the appetite for society involves only groups of moderate size. The natural family is sometimes the limit; the colony (as in bees and ants) in some other circumstances. (S,ii,20-23) But even more confusing, Kames discovers strong evidence for anti-social passions in men.

> The following instance, solemnly ludicrous, is of parties formed merely from an inclination to differ, without any cause, real or verbal. No people were less interested in the late war between the Queen of Hungary and the King of Prussia, than the citizens of Ravenna. They, however, split into two parties, which abjured all society with each other. After the battle of Rosbach, a leading partyman withdrew for a month, without once shewing his face in public. (S,ii,40)

Kames is at a loss to explain such a contradiction of the social appetite except to say that "man . . . is a compound of principles and passions, some social, some dissocial." (S,ii,40)

Dissatisfied with this state of affairs, Kames examines the history of man again. He discovers that the presence of such divergent passions gives man the opportunity to exercise his reason (S,ii,51); and prevents men from dropping off into lethargy by forcing on him a variety in life.

(S,ii,46) But both principles are appetites, and can vie against each other. And it is up to mankind to decide which of the appetites is to rule. Whichever happens, however, Kames can say that it is natural.

There is no denying that men are sometimes selfish; and occasionally he may, with justice, prefer his own interest before that of others. (M,120)

Having said so much in general, Kames goes into a fairly detailed psychology to try to defend the position that a calculated prospect of advantage is not always the sole motive for human actions.

15. "As against the profusion of words relative to the external sense, the imperfection of language, almost in every particular that falls outside of it, is lamentable." (C,i,90) The quality of an external sense impression is hard to describe. But it is more difficult to describe the objects of the internal sense. The most fundamental units are the feelings of pleasure and pain, or affection and aversion; and "no object can move our affection but what is agreeable, nor our aversions but what is disagreeable." (C,ii, 521) The agreeableness of something is closely connected to the interest we take in it; how we see and experience things greatly influences how things affect us. (S,iii,116f) The intentions we might have, influenced by interest, qualify our actions, but not the event, "for an action well intended gives pleasure, whatever the event be." (C,i,38)

Of the feelings raised by external objects, only those

accompanying vision and audition are dignified by the name of "passion" or "emotion". (C,i,33) If this is so, a passion or emotion, as well as being felt, can become an object of contemplation -- we examine it, savour it, inquire into its cause and effects. Then, like anything else, we see that the nature of an emotion or passion, as pleasant or painful, depends entirely on its causes; the emotion produced by an agreeable object being invariably pleasant, no matter what the subsequent examination or effects may reveal. Further, however, depending on the person who contemplates it, a passion which is pleasant may be disagreeable. (C,i,106f) A note of warning is given by Kames at this point. The terms agreeable and pleasant have sometimes been used as if they were synonymous. But this is an error that ought to be avoided. For there are instances of "painful passions that are agreeable, and of pleasant passions that are disagreeable."

> In a word, agreeable and disagreeable are qualities of the objects we <u>perceive</u>; pleasant and painful are qualities of emotions we <u>feel</u>: and the former qualities are perceived as adhering to objects; the latter as existing in us. (C,i,106)

Some of our internal emotions are followed by desire and others are not. (Desire is used in its "proper sense, namely, that internal act, which, by influencing the will, makes us proceed to action." (C,i,42) As a definition at this point, Kames offers the following: "an internal motion or agitation of the mind, when it passeth away without desire, is denominated an emotion: when desire follows, the emotion or agitation is denominated a passion." (C,i,41f) This is

supported by common experience:

> A fine face, for example, raiseth in me a pleasant feeling: if that feeling vanish without producing any effect, it is in proper language an emotion; but if the feeling, by reiterated view of the object, become sufficiently strong to occasion desire, it loses its name of emotion, and acquires that of passion. (C,i,42)

On the authority of constant experience, we know that no man ever proceeds to action but by means of some antecedent desire or impulse. (C,i,43; S,iii,177) Then, where there is no desire, there cannot be an action. This shows us other differences between a passion and an emotion: the emotions being without desire, are in their nature quiescent; the desire which is included in the meaning of "passion" allows us to conclude in the presence of a passion, that a man will try to gratify the passion, other conditions not intervening. (C,i,43)

The objects of passion can be divided into two groups: the general and the particular. A man, a house, a garden, a certain painting, the admiration of a certain person, are particular objects; fame, esteem, opulence, honor, love of good houses, love of theatrical events, etc., are "general objects." (C,i,44) We usually call the passions directed to general objects appetites, and only those directed to particulars are properly called passions. (C,i,44) A passion does not exist until a proper object is found, and then is directed toward the object; but an appetite goes before the object, "which is obvious in the appetites of hunger, thirst, and animal love." We are hungry or thirsty, usually, and then look about to satisfy ourselves.

The instincts of animals are blind impulses or desires without any view to consequences, but submitting to the blind need of the moment. "A passion when it inflames so high as to impel us to act blindly without any view to consequences, good or ill," is an instinctive act. (S,iii,176)

On the basis of what has preceded, Kames explains a "motive" to be the desire to bring about an end, in actions exerted as means to an end.

> Thus the same mental act that is termed <u>desire</u> with respect to an end in view, is termed a <u>motive</u> with respect to its power to determine one to act. Instinctive actions have a cause, namely, the impulse of the passion; but they cannot be said to have a motive, because they are not done with any view to consequences. (C,i,46)

Though this is not the complete report of Kames' discussion of the phenomenology of motives, it is enough to allow Kames to show that egoism is false.

16. Kames states the thesis of egoism as the view "that self love [is] the only motive to action; and that the prospect of gratification is the only motive one can have for voluntary deeds of benevolence." (M,125)

When a man does a benevolent deed, Kames says, the prospect of gratification arises from the man's desire to perform the benevolent deed, since, if he did not have such a desire, the performance would not gratify him, nor give him the antecedent prospect of gratification. The desire to do a benevolent deed must always precede the prospect of gratification, and the latter can never be the sole motive. Such a prospect of gratification, thus, can be an additional

motive to act, but can never stand singly. (M,125) On introspection, one finds the prime motive to be the accomplishment of the purpose in view which can be anything. The anticipation of pleasure and satisfaction is only a "consequent view," by which is meant an accidental quality that follows the act.

As an added consideration, Kames suggests that it is by experience only that we discover that pleasure attends benevolent acts. "Thus, such an action done by one who has no experience, must proceed from some motive independent of the consequent pleasure. Children have had no experience, nor are they capable of foreseeing distant consequences; yet children express good will to others by kindly acts. From what motive that benevolence?" (M,122)

From what has been said, it would also follow that an instinctive act is neither social, nor a-social, nor selfish, because there is not the accompaniment of a motive. Although the gratification of a desire is pleasant and thus the foresight, the expectation of this pleasure will become, eventually, an additional motive for acting, it is properly only an added motive, if at all. (C,i,45f)

In his own crabbed way, this is Kames' retelling of Butler's story.[13] He lists further points from Butler, that

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[13] For Butler's ethics, see the first three sermons of the Fifteen Sermons Preached at Rolls Chapel (London, 1726); and "Dissertation of the Nature of Virtue" which is Appendix II of The Analogy of Religion (London, 1736). Both are contained in The Complete Works of Joseph Butler, ed. W.S.Gladstone, (2 vols., Oxford, 1896); the sermons in II, 1-76; the "Dissertation" in I, 397-411. Henceforth all references will be to the Gladstone edition, cited as Works.

men frequently act for others against their own interest; that we do instinctive acts, say in ship-wrecks, to save the lives of others at the peril of our own. There are also dis-social acts which are still non-selfish, like an act of revenge instigated by an atrocious injury, where we have no thought but injuring the offender, even forgetting ourselves.

I list these commonplaces of moral psychology to point out that Kames insists that any explanation be based on common sense, and that it coincide with experience as presented to us. Kames is willing to accept as a maxim that "everything I do for the sake of another, is a pleasure for myself." (M,120ff)

> The pleasure a man feels in doing acts of benevolence, has misled selfish writers to think that pleasure is the only motive we have for doing good to others. . . . And they obstinately deny, that there is in nature such a thing as serving those we love for their sake, independent of our own. But a simple denial cannot be thought sufficient against numberless instances of serving those we love, without the least appearance of self-interest. Such instances must be decisive, unless these writers be able to prove, that to serve others without regard to ourselves, is inconsistent with the nature of man.(M,121ff)

Kames assumes that since the nature of man is so various, it is silly to talk of only one motive. Also there is a limit to the reclassification or renaming of the passions.

> Instances are not extremely rare of persons, strong with remorse for secret crimes, delivering themselves up to justice, in order to suffer . . . punishment. Nor shall my opponents escape here under their favorite pretext of gratification; malevolent passions directed against self, being in every stage of their progress, unpleasant. Such passions, inveterate foes to self-love, admit not of any selfish motive. (M,127)

Pain, in other words, is not pleasure; nor is hate love, unless we have cause to show that it is. Otherwise,

any such assertion is prima facie suspect of playing with words.

The emphasis in Kames' psychology is on the diversity of human experiences and responses.

> Human nature is a complicated machine, and is unavoidably so in order to answer its various purposes. The public indeed have been entertained with many systems of human nature that flatter the mind by their simplicity: according to some writers, man is entirely a selfish being; according to others, universal benevolence is his duty; one founds morality upon sympathy solely, and one upon utility. If any of these systems were copied from nature, the present subject might be soon discussed. But the variety of nature is not so easily reached. . . (C,i,34f)

Any philosophy must come to grips with the facts of variety, and explain them, not by reducing them to some one factor.

17. To sum up, what in Kames' psychology is relevant to his ethics? Kames is a determinist, both about external nature and human nature. In his account of causation in human nature, he rejects Hobbian egoism and hedonism as being incompatible with the variety of principles and motives in human nature. He is, however, insistent that every human act is caused; and that every voluntary human act must have a motive.

CHAPTER III

The Moral Sense

18. How is the nature of man fitted for moral behavior? Kames' answer comes in two parts: (1) men are suited for moral behavior by their inclination and sympathies; and also (2) by a special moral sense. The first point about the natural inclinations and sympathies was covered in the preceding chapter.

The moral sense is an internal sense by which we discover our duties; and we are bound by this perception to submit ourselves to our duties. In the present chapter I discuss why the moral sense may be called a "sense" at all, and what it is to be bound to perform our duties by the moral sense. The material on moral <u>perception</u> relates to the epistemology discussed in the first chapter. The questions about the connection between the sense of duty and its subsequent action relates to the material about motives discussed in the second chapter.

19. To introduce the discussion of the moral sense in general, here is a sketch of the phenomenology of moral perception according to Kames.

We do not know the laws of nature and of natural things by "direct acquaintance." We must <u>infer</u> them by studying their frame, constitution and behavior. But of

human nature, we have an intimate acquaintance, directly. (M,36) What facts do we know about human actions? Voluntary human acts, those that are accompanied by intentions, deliberations or choice, are (1) like all other acts, either agreeable or disagreeable; (2) we disapprove of some and approve of others and they are viewed as either being fit or unfit. (M,35) The moral sense, says Kames, perceives the morality or immorality of human actions. And this consists in whether they are seen by the moral sense to be fitting or unfitting. (3) Mere approval or disapproval however is not enough, (M,34f) for there is a strong "sense of law" that accompanies certain moral perceptions which overrides the consideration that an act is to our interest. Acting against interest may be foolish but not vicious or wicked. (M,37) The fact that some actions are accompanied by this sense of duty which guides and directs us <u>as by law</u> is the unique function of the moral sense. Duty is in the "strictest sense a law," (M,36) which "implies somewhat indispensable in our conduct, what we ought to do, what we ought to submit to." (M,37) The "laws that are fitted to [man's] external circumstances, are the same that we approve by the moral sense." (M,36)

This is the outline of the workings of the moral sense. I first discuss what it means for the moral sense to <u>perceive</u>, and then the similarities between the esthetic and moral senses, before going into an examination of the necessity or lawfulness which the moral sense communicates.

20. The responses of approval and disapproval are of two kinds, esthetic and moral. The moral responses are those feelings of approval that are accompanied by the moral sense. In explicating the moral sense, Kames wishes to use the sense of beauty as being, to some extent, analogous to the moral sense. The esthetic analogy is, therefore, of considerable importance.

The moral sense arises from a direct perception which we have upon being presented with the object, without the intervention of any sort of reflection. (M,43) Thus, reflection will not account for the workings of the moral sense. The term used for moral perception by Kames is "intuition." It is a perception, an awareness, and it is unmediated. But it is not only the perception of goodness or of desirability, for Kames goes on to add that the authority of the perception "lies in this circumstance, that we perceive the action to be our duty which we are indispensably bound to perform."[1]

> It is in this manner that the moral sense, with regard to some actions, plainly bears upon it the marks of authority over all our appetites and passions. It is the voice of God within us, which commands our strictest obedience, just as much as when his will is declared by express revelation. (M,43f)

The moral sense specifically makes us aware of our duty. It obligates us or binds us. But the perception is our guide only, not a mover (for only motives can move.) (M,43) All that can result from the moral sense is "approbation or disapprobation of these perceived actions, to

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[1] Cf., Joseph Butler on the authority of the conscience, in "Sermon II", Works, II, 63f.

which, by some natural principle, we are antecedently directed." (M,43) No action is a duty, "to the performance of which we are not prompted by some natural motive or principle." (M,54; 81f)

Kames insists on applying the word "perception" to the function of the moral sense. There is prima facie an appropriateness to this use, for we do say in non-philosophical discourse that "Jones' moral perception is dull," where we would never substitute for "perception" a phrase such as "moral sensation." By insisting on the use of the word "perception" Kames means to say that in moral perception as in any perception, the attention "is directed to the external object: in sensation, it is directed to the pleasure or pain" that is subjectively felt. (C,ii,508f)

The moral perception then must be something like the following:

(1) We are aware of a situation. (This is a case of a straight-forward perception of people in certain relations.)

(2) We sense a pleasure or displeasure on seeing what the facts are.

(3) The relations holding are seen to be fitting or unfitting.

(4) Related to the above two, we have the feeling of approval or disapproval.

(5) We become aware that there is a duty involved -- a moral necessity. This is the particular fumction of the moral sense; and a necessary condition for saying it is functioning.

The characteristic of the situation by virtue of which the perception language is felt to apply are the following: (1) the perception is a simple one. (M,34) This is one of Kames' conditions for perception. (C,ii,517) (2) The perception is direct -- it is unmediated. (3) It would follow from the fact that it is simple, that the awareness itself would be sui generis, and unresolvable into anything else -- though the action perceived, itself may be analyzable into parts. This is characteristic of any perception of anything: its perceptual parts are colors, smells, shapes -- but the thing itself is none of these alone, and the experience of perception is dynamic and indescribable. (C,ii,517) Thus, to show some one that there is something objective involved, one can only make an added appeal to every man's perception,

> to lay prejudice aside, and give fair play to what passes in the mind: I ask no other concession. There is no man, however irregular in his life and manners, however poisoned by a wrong education, but must be sensible of these perceptions. And indeed the words which are to be found in all languages, and which are perfectly understood in the communication of sentiments, are an evident demonstration of it. Duty, obligation, ought and should would be empty sounds unless upon the supposition of such perception. . . . We have the consciousness of necessity and of being bound and tied to performance, as if under some external complusion. (M,41)

21. On what is the esthetic analogy based? The term beauty, says Kames, can apply to human actions as to everything else. (M,33) Regularity and fitness to an end makes a house beautiful. In such cases, the perception of beauty includes (i.e., has in it as a part) "what is termed approbation: for approbation, when applied to works of art, means our being pleased with them or conceiving them beautiful, in the view of being fitted to their end." (M,313)

Things in themselves, without any relation to anything else would be neither beautiful nor ugly. Kames is careful to add that strictly, this approbation regards the success with which the end is reached, independent of the end itself, viewed whether good or bad, beneficial or hurtful. So that a skillfully performed robbery, minutely planned, with all the contingencies carefully accounted for, and the feat bravely carried out, would be a beautiful job. But, of course, wrong. (M,32f) Along with its beauty, some human actions are "further distinguished in our perception of them as fit and meet to be done or unfit and unmeet." Acts will be agreeable or disagreeable, beautiful or ugly, and also meet or unmeet to be done.

> This distinguishing circumstance intitles the beauty and deformity of human actions to peculiar names: they are termed moral beauty and moral deformity. Hence the morality and immorality of human actions; founded in a faculty termed the moral sense. (M,34)

This passage taken in itself, seems to apply equally to works of art and human acts, the language of pleasure-pain, agreeableness-disagreeableness and beauty and deformity, as well as fitness and its converse.

The term fitting in this context is difficult to clarify. Kames says that an act is found to be pleasant; we approve it; and we see it to be fitting. In one passage he says that the fitness of an act does not entail its being a duty. (M,41) In this context, it would appear that the word "fitting" is synonymous with "appropriate" or "right", and can best be explained in its esthetic context. We might

say that it was fitting that the cadence at the end of the "Willow Song" should resolve itself on a falling note; that is, that it was appropriate. But of course, it was not a duty on the part of the song writer to end it on such a cadence, and we would not punish him for not doing so. Many acts of benevolence, Kames says, are of this sort: it is right to do them, but not duties. (M,38) So it would appear that seeing some action as "fit to be done" is not quite to see it as a duty, which is a further function of the moral sense, beyond feeling the reflex approval which arises on seeing virtuous acts which we wish to encourage. Thus, the way in which the moral sense reacts with approbation to our loving our own parents and taking care of them, is different from its response to our loving our elderly neighbor and helping him in his need. Both are worthy acts and fit to be done; but loving our parents and supporting them is a duty in a way that helping our neighbor is not.

22. Kames does not estheticize the sense of duty. But he does explain moral approval on the model of esthetic approval, taking virtue and vice (i.e., moral goodness and badness) to be conterparts of beauty and ugliness. Does virtue or vice then become a matter of taste? If so, we may not be able to blame or punish people for certain vices (like being slothful) just as we cannot blame or punish people for liking Italian opera or for disliking oysters because they are slimy. And this is a consideration which Kames recognizes and capitalizes on.

Relativity in esthetic taste is not hard to stomach; it does not lead to social disaster. If there is such a thing as principles of taste (in the form of a set of criteria) it has yet to be agreed upon. Kames does not specifically discuss relativity in morals, but he touches on it in the following passage.

> That every individual is endued with a sense of right and wrong, more or less distinct, will probably be granted; but whether there be among men what may be termed a common sense of right and wrong, is not so evident. There is no absurdity in supposing the opinions of men about right and wrong, to be various as about beauty and deformity. And that the supposition is not destitute of foundation, we are led to suspect, upon discovering that in different countries, and even in the same country at different times, the opinions publicly espoused with regard to right and wrong are extremely various . . . and that among the most enlightened nations, there are at this day considerable differences with respect to the rules of morality.
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> These facts tend not to disprove the reality of a common sense in morals: they only prove, that the moral sense has not been equally perfect at all times, nor in all countries. (S,iii,115f)

Kames suggests two things in the above passage: that many different things have been the object of approval; and that men's moral sense is something that can undergo development and evolution. (S,iii,202) Unfortunately, Kames does not further discuss the degrees of perfection of the moral sense.

23. What has Kames accomplished so far in his explication of the moral sense? In using the term "sense," and insisting that its function is to perceive, he has incorporated an objective element into its workings. The moral sense, that is, perceives something real and objective. And being a case of perception, it is immediate, underivative and non-reflective.

By further explicating the moral sense in terms of the sense of beauty, and stressing the emotional response of approval, Kames has suggested its relation to the sentiments and to the passions. Further, he suggests that just as there are varieties in human sentiment and sensibility, so there may be a variety in the human sense of right and wrong. The analogy at the same time, transfers an element of expertise into the moral sense. In the musical sense (and taste) there are degrees of keenness, sensitivity and expertness. In like manner, there will be varieties of responsiveness to the morality of actions, and perhaps there will be even moral experts.

But Kames is still left with the sense of duty. How will he explain it? In what lies the moral necessity that the moral sense communicates? This will be the topic of the next sections of this chapter. We will begin with the notion of necessity first.

The discussion follows these steps: first Kames discusses the compatibility of praise, blame and remorse with the determinism that he had discovered in human nature. Secondly he investigates the notion of contingency to see if he can account for the fact that we frequently feel free when we act. Then I attempt to come to some conclusion about the compatibility of what Kames says about motives, praise and blame with his discussion of the sense of duty and the authority of the moral sense.

24. Because we have the moral sentiments, we praise and blame people. But this presupposes that when they act wrongly, they might have acted otherwise, and they chose to do what they actually did. They were free to do so. At the same time, we believe that everything that happens has causes, including human behavior. Are these two consistent? Ought we to blame people in failing to do what they ought to do? (M,179)

There is a uniformity to our inward constitutions. The invariable connection between a voluntary act and a motive forms a tightly knit fabric of interconnections. The passions, for example, demand satisfaction. (S,iii,176) This demand is a physical necessity which if we were brutes, we could not ignore. But this sort of physical necessity need not apply to man: for he need not be subject to all the desires that come along. Reason, says Kames, can restrain a man: he can choose his course of action, after reason has examined the alternatives and seen to the consequences. This presupposes that motives do influence the mind, but this is granted by Kames. (M,159; S,iii,182f)

But consider at the same time, a man presented with two incompatible courses of action: whether to pay back a debt or not. His moral sense approves of paying back his debt; he feels duty-bound to do so. Pride, sense of honor, etc., prompt him to do so too, and raise a desire to comply. He may also want to ask future favors from his benefactors: then private interest also supports this course of

action. The net result is that this course of action, of paying his debt, has become as necessary as compulsion, for everything in the constitution of this man moves him to do so. (M,158) It is the application of very strong motives to the mind: duty, as well as interest; even the expectation of remorse if the deed goes unperformed. This extreme case exemplifies moral necessity.

For all actions that we choose to perform after deliberation, there is a reason to support the decision. If there is no reason, then we can be sure that the strongest motive is the one that decided. It would be "a mark of idiocy, to say that one has come to a resolution and cannot say why." (M,159)

Motives are under the power of our direction. (M,160) Otherwise, we would be necessary agents. (S,iii,182ff) "In acting by blind impulse" (a clear case of actions that are unmotivated)

> or instinct, we are obviously necessary agents: and with regard to matters that admit deliberation and choice, such is our constitution, that we cannot exert a single action, but with some view, aim or purpose. (M,160)

When motives are full, cogent and clear, we do not have a sense of being free. (M,161) When we are undecided, eventualy the strongest motive prevails. There is thus, a close parallel between moral and physical necessity. The term "physical necessity" is applied where the force on matter has full effect. But even in nature, there is a balance of forces, as there are in the motives and desires of men.

Acts which are physically necessary may be divided into voluntary and involuntary acts. Voluntary physical necessity (admittedly rare) is exemplified in those human acts that are accompanied by motive, like being pushed along by a wind in the direction one wanted to go anyway. These are pleasant. Involuntary physical necessity (the usual meaning of the words "physical necessity") we see in acts which are genuinely constrained; the constraint is fully felt by the man who is subjected to it, and it is unpleasant.

All we mean by moral necessity, says Kames, is that our actions must be guided by a motive. Thus, moral necessity is always voluntary. It is seldom felt. It is, as a matter of fact, an idea that is not present in common discourse, for it is a notion that is the result of philosophical analysis. (M,168) The notion of moral necessity always causes alarm in ordinary persons, for the idea is unfamiliar, and the listener immediately assumes it to be a matter of physical necessity or compulsion.

There is, however, no opposition between moral necessity and liberty. We apply the word liberty to acts performed according to our will: our reason acting as a guide and choosing our motives. "Reason hath a power of restraint. It suggests motives from the cool views of good and evil. He deliberates on these. In consequence of his deliberation he chooseth." (M,156f) The word liberty in relation to human action has no meaning except in the sense of being morally free -- i.e., being able to choose. Other-

wise, it means acting against motive -- to act against any "view, purpose, or design, we can have in acting." (M,164)[2] And there never are such things as unmotivated, arbitrary actions. (M,165)

The above problem has been solved philosophically. But when we return to the actual experience that we have when we go through moral action, there is something confusing about it, and the source of the confusion must be found. The fact is that we praise and blame people for what they do, and this implies that somehow the agent was free and was responsible for the act. (M,153f) But not only do we praise other persons, but we also judge ourselves (or convince ourselves that we have a duty, in the first person). (M,175) We feel a remorse, a regret in not having chosen otherwise; in not having restrained our passion at the critical moment. When we are under the influence of our passions, we are not aware of the feeling of being able to resist. After the event, and when remorse has appeared, we find it accompanied by a notion of our having had the power to restrain ourselves. (M,176) Our notion of the ability to restrain ourselves and our feeling of remorse are connected. Consider crimes of passion: there never is any remorse present in the protagonist, nor the feeling of blame in the spectators, because the criminal is thought, under the pressure of circumstances and the influence of the passions,

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[2] Cf., Hume: "By liberty then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determination of the will." Enquiries, 95.

to be unable to control himself. He was not free. Nor would any normal man be able to help himself under like circumstances.

But actually, of course, on scientific or philosophical grounds, we know that there is a rigorous connection between desire and an act. Then how can there be any contingency? Having such-and-such a desire (or a motive), how can a man feel that he might have escaped the connection between that desire and the act which followed from it? Remorse, says Kames, is a delusion to make it appear that there is a contingency at the moment of action. This delusion is due to the influence of the irregular passions.[3] (M,177; C,i,153) When a crime has been committed, it is found to be hideous even in the eyes of the criminal. If he does not find it hideous, then no remorse will arise (the case of remorseless psychopaths). But if the criminal is a normal human being, he will feel remorseful, and his remorse is "gratified" by finding himself guilty (M,176); and to leave him without excuse, the passion (which always seeks gratification) forces upon him the conviction that he might, and ought, to have acted otherwise. This is the case in serious crimes. If the case is not quite so grave, less remorse arises. In indifferent acts, "the disguise of the passions" does not arise. (M,178)

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[3] Cf., Descartes: ". . . the nature of man, in as much as it is composed of mind and body, cannot be otherwise than sometimes a source of deception." "Meditation VI," Works, I, 198.

What then is remorse? Is it internalized social pressure? One discription that Kames gives is that it is just a reflex emotion (approval or disapproval) on seeing what it is that has happened. (M,178) Take the example of the man who aims at a dog who is biting at his horse's heel. Due to the motion of the horse (perhaps in trying to prevent the dog from biting him), the man is jolted, and accidently kills a little girl at the side of the road with his pistol. The sight of the dead girl raises in him a reflex disapproval and displeasure. The influence of this passion, if strong enough, will raise a sort of conviction of guilt, even where, as in this case, it was accidental (and does not admit any notion of restraint). The result is that the man feels remorseful, and wishes he had been more careful. (M,178) An observer, on seeing such an act, will feel a like reflex disapprobation, but rather than feel a remorse, will blame the man for carelessness. And to be able to blame a man for such an act means not only that the man somehow had caused the event to happen (i.e., was the agent, in the event), but also that he could have helped prevent the event from happening (i.e., he was responsible for the event). Does this mean that there is a contingency in nature?

25. Contingency is most conspicuously present when we search further into our human nature. Especially in regards to future events, "many things appear to us loose, fortuitous, uncertain; uncertain not only with respect to us

on account of our ignorance of the cause; but uncertain in themselves, or not tied down and predetermined to fall out by any invariable law. We naturally make a distinction betwixt things that must be, and things that may be, or may not be." (M,153)

Human behavior has in it something unpredictable: because if we predict, then "the humor or showing that he can act against motives" intervenes and becomes "the very motive of the whimsical preference." (M,160f) In such a case, a man can be influenced to prefer the obviously bad to a greater good. In this manner, any thought that an agent has, including the thought that he is bound to do an act, can influence an agent. All human actions, therefore, have causes, and are predictable but only if the agent is unaware of the prediction.

Natural events that happen with regularity -- like the seasons, and the daily rising and setting of the sun -- are felt with certainty. A sense of contingency is felt only of irregular events: like the death of persons, human actions, the course of national politics, etc. This contingency, however, is not felt due to a fundamental uncertainty in these events. For, if this were the case, it would merely lead us to realize that we did not know what was going to happen, an ignorance rather than a positive feeling of uncertainty. To feel in everyday life a sense of necessity in all that we do, would no doubt be

> directly contradictory to the sense of contingency; and both could not subsist together. To make way for the

> sense of contingency, the necessary connection betwixt desire and will are kept out of sight; and by this contrivance, it is, that we are not sensible of being necessary agents. The discovery that we are so, proceeds from a long train of reasoning; and the conviction that arises from a process of reasoning, is too faint to counter balance an intuitive perception or original sense of contingency. (M,191f)

This sense of contingency, Kames adds, is a law of our nature: it is a secondary quality which we sense internally, but which we also attribute to nature (M,190f), and to human actions.

In a postscript (M,194ff), Kames adds that the foregoing had been his position as put forth in the second edition of the Essays on the Principles of Morality (1758). But in 1779, he had come to the conclusion that there is not such a thing as a sense of contingency or chance. (M,194) He had thought that such a sense existed because his use of the words chance and contingency had been too loose. Chance is ordinarily applied to past events. Contingency to future events. But chance does not mean that it did not happen without any cause; nor contingency that it would happen without cause: but only that they cannot be foreseen. (M,195; S,iii,198)

26. How consistent is Kames' doctrine of the determinism in human actions, with our moral sentiments? The first thing to note is that in either case -- whether we were free or not -- we would praise people for their disposition to do certain kinds of acts.[4] Habits of actions,

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[4]Cf., Hume, Treatise, 272.

however, presuppose a degree of uniformity in nature and causal regularity. What would be the case if causal regularity in human actions did not hold? Kames envisions such a situation to be of the sort where a desire to act in a certain way, or the motive to do so, and the choice of a person to act in certain ways has no connection.

> Imagine a person constantly at my elbow, who contradicts me in everything -- would not I be a miserable being? Instead of such a person, imagine a power within the breast of every man, ready to cross all his inclinations, his most innocent desires, his firmest resolves, would anything be wanting to render him the most unhappy of all beings? (M,169)

Kames decides that such a situation would resemble "physical necessity or compulsion."

But can we have it otherwise? Kames admits that the thought of being so law-bound is unpleasant. And would it not be useful to have an independent power to go against motives suggested by vice and folly? The difficulty with this would be that such a power could go against our <u>good</u> motives too, Would not such a power make character formation and disposition impossible? "For a person cannot have a character who hath no fixed nor uniform principle of action." (M,170) Such a person would not be under rational or moral government; his actions would be independent of motives and his will would be capricious and arbitrary. "To exhort, to instruct, to promise, to threaten, would be to no purpose." (M,170) And, of course, our purposes in moral instructions, when accompanied with threats, are successful to a high degree.

When we praise or blame, what we evaluate is the disposition of the person. (M,183) "A man who is necessarily good or bad by the constitution of his nature, deserves more to be praised or blamed, than if he had a power of resisting all motives, and acting against them." (M,186) Kames forgets to mention that all of praise and blame presupposes, of course, that some portion of a man's motive is amenable to change and control so that a man could improve himself or recondition himself.[5] Otherwise, there would be no point to praising or blaming him. But the fact that he has something like this in mind is evident from all that he says here.

27. We may say that we are under no constraint (that is, that we are free) when "we act according to our inclination and choice." (M,163) But at the same time, these choices and inclinations are invariably caused by the prevailing motive. In this sense, we are necessary agents. This doctrine of necessity Kames proceeds to apply to the moral sense.

> Were we so constituted as always to be determined by the moral sense, even against the strongest counter motives; this would be consistent with human nature, because it would preserve entire the connection established betwixt the will and the prevailing motive. (M,171)

So it seems that the moral sense (or the recognition of duty) too, can act as a motive of a sort. How does it do so? Can it act as a motive in itself, or by prodding one of

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[5] Cf., Hume, Enquiries, 89f.

the desires into action?

Has the account gotten very confused? Has Kames contradicted himself in making the moral sense not only a guide but a faculty that can influence a man to act "against the strongest counter motive"? Can the good motive that a man ought to be moved by be the moral sense? Then what constituted the goodness of the motive? To realize the difficult position that Kames is in, we need only recall that he had described the function of the moral sense in the following manner: (1) the moral sense makes us aware of our duty; (2) that all that results from the moral sense is an approbation of an action, "to which by some natural principle, we are antecedently directed;" (M,43) and (3) no action is a duty or anything else, if we "are not prompted by some natural motive or principle." (M,54,81f)

The question that naturally arises is: can the moral sense (the awareness of duty) act as a motive and move a man to act? What happens when the moral sense and our natural inclinations contradict each other? Can we go against our natural inclinations or motives? Kames has already told us that there is a necessary causal connection between the will and the natural motives. Is it possible to break this connection? If it is nonsense to wish to go against a natural motive (if the notion is somehow contradictory), then to expect to follow the moral sense, when the natural inclinations oppose it, is nonsense too, unless the moral sense has a special status among motives. Motives, Kames had said,

are under the power of our direction. (M,160) And reason can restrain a man, for he can choose his course of actions after reason had examined the consequences of the alternatives open to him. But the moral sense is not reason, for it is not reflective.

Kames has claimed that (a) the moral sense has an authority over the passions and the appetites; and (b) going against its dictates, is followed by remorse. How will Kames explain this sense of authority?

28. What is the authority of the moral sense? To put the question in another way, what is it to be under a moral obligation? This question was also the one that Joseph Butler posed himself in his moral philosophy. Kames had read Butler and frequently mentions him in his writings.[6] In order to ferret out Kames' answer, if he has one, to the above question, I propose to compare the views of Kames and Butler in detail, pointing out similarities and differences.

29. What is it, then, to be under a moral obligation? Butler's first comment is that sometimes we have an obligation to seek or avoid something ultimately. That is, that there are intrinsic ends that we seek, and in such cases, pointing out the intrinsic nature of such ends

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[6] Kames, (M,42ff)

is enough to explain or justify our actions.[7] We commonly say in explaining the nature of such obligations, that we are bound or constrained by them. We are under some kind of restriction. But what is it that restricts us, and imposes this necessity?

Butler's answer is that we are restricted by our sense of reflex approbation or disapprobation.[8] To put it in another way, to say that we are under a moral obligation is to say that the following all enter into the sense of obligation: (a) the nature of what I must do; (b) my very response to what it is I must do (the nature of the act on which I have reflected); as well as (c) my nature as a human being.[9] It is for this purpose that Butler had described human nature as "reflective."[10] A human being is functioning fully (and properly) only when the appetites and the passions, and the principles of self love and benevolence are controlled and modulated by reason and the principle of conscience.[11] This description of human nature immediately leads us to the further clue that Butler includes one thing more in his analysis of moral obligation. It is not merely responding to our reflex responses (of approval or disapproval) on con-

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[7] Butler, "Sermon 2," Works, 60.

[8] Butler, "Sermon 2," Works, 41ff; I, 399f.

[9] Butler, Works, I, 402f.

[10] Ibid., 397f.

[11] "Sermon 1," Works, II, passim.

sidering the nature of the act that constitutes moral obligation. What we have is a special kind of response -- one with an authority,[12] an authority both to command and to rule the other faculties of human nature (namely the principles of self love and benevolence as well as the appetites and the passions).

Kames is in agreement with all of this: and for this reason both of their moral philosophies may be called "internalist" -- that is, moral obligation is essentially something to which we submit ourselves, because something inside us demands it, not something external.[13] Butler is emphatic on this point. And Butler, (as does Kames, as we have already seen,) de-emphasizes the notion of moral good or right or wrong, and restricts their analysis to the sense of duty. Moral righteousness does not stand for any property. To be morally wrong is to have done something contrary to what we ought to have done (according to our inner sense of moral obligation). There is a non-conformity of our action to our inner sense of duty.[14]

We have already seen that Kames (as does Butler) claims that there is an immediate knowledge of this moral obligation. It is not derivable from something else. We cannot intelligibly ask why of a moral obligation, when it

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[12] "Sermon 2," Works, II, 64.

[13] "Sermon 2," Works, II, passim.

[14] Ibid., 60f.

is approved by the moral sense, for if we do, all we can do is resort to our moral approval again, and scrutinize the situation we are in. Kames' way of putting this is that we know that we have a duty by a "direct perception." And what happens when we perceive? All we do is examine that situation as it actually confronts us, use our intelligence and imagination, and then see what sort of response we have. Do we reject it, or approve it? This is a very plain account of how we gain moral knowledge.

30. So far, Butler has been represented as saying that what imposes an obligation on us is that we approve or disapprove on considering the nature of the action. There is more detail in what Butler says on what it is to approve and disapprove.

When we reflect on actions, we find ourselves accepting some of them and not others. The terms "love" or "affection" are sometimes used in these contexts. But, of course, it is not enough to say this much, for then it would be to admit that on reflecting, we are moved to act by an impulse of some sort. Butler thus considers what it is that goes on when we morally approve and act on this approval. There is something special about it; special enough so that we say "our conscience tells us to do it, or not to do it . . . " In using the word "conscience", we think of authority, and forcibleness. There is also the sense of guilt in not acting accordingly. This impulse is what we call moral impulse.

Butler's main description of this phenomenon is that we do not merely want to do an act on reflection. More, there is something authoritative about it. The principle of conscience mysteriously asserts itself. In a crucial passage in Sermon II, he considers whether this special forcibleness can be understood properly as strength alone -- as a psychological compulsiveness.

> This gives us a further view of the nature of man; . . . not only that our real nature leads us to be influenced in some degree by reflection and conscience; but likewise in what degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the constitution of our nature: that this faculty was placed within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of actions. This is its right and office: thus sacred is its authority. And how often so ever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no alteration as to the <u>natural right and office</u> of conscience.[15]

It is evident in this passage that authority is being used in the sense of "right." This is what gives the dictates of conscience its authority. At this point, Butler is aware that more needs to be said. "I ought to" is more than "I would or would not on reflection." Butler's main problem lies in trying to clarify this sense of "authority."

What Butler says specifically is that the dictates of conscience carry with it an authority. This authority, first of all contains the notion of legitimacy.[16] It does not consist in strength alone, because if it has as much

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[15]"Sermon 2," <u>Works</u>, II, 64.

[16]"Sermon 2," <u>Works</u>, II, 64f.

power as right, it would govern the world. It means, rather, what one would rightly or deservedly favor on proper reflection. Thus Butler might have made explicit the ambiguity in the notion of "power"; for it could either mean "strength" or "to be empowered" (or "rightly exercise control"). But how, then, can Butler explain the meaning of rightly or deservedly in this second context?

The very premisses on which Butler argued forbids him to explain this second sense of "right". For what he had done was to explain "right conduct" into "conduct in accordance with what our nature would rightly endorse" -- those impulses which are legitimate under reflection. But what is it to say that moral rightness consists in acting in accordance with our nature? This second sense of right cannot be another psychological term.

At this point, Butler's analysis is stalled. What is specifically right about moral impulses? To explain this, Butler must assume a rightness which is not psychological, for in this sort of attitude theory, he cannot say again that rightness consists in further attitudes. Of course, he might have answered that moral attitudes are those in accordance with an irreducible quality, thus assimilating his answer to those given by the intuitionists. Then he would be saying that rightness in relation to attitudes is irreducible, and about them, we cannot say anything more.

There are other contexts in which Butler relates this

forcible sense of authority with the sense of guilt, and its accompanying moral approval and disapproval -- those special contexts in which we approve of actions as of good desert and disapprove as of ill desert.

> . . . Our sense or discernment of actions as morally good or evil, implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill desert. It may be difficult to explain this perception, so as to answer all the questions which may be asked concerning it: but everybody speaks of such and such actions as deserving punishment; and it is not, I suppose, pretended that they have absolutely no meaning at all to the expression. Now the meaning plainly is not, that we conceive it for the good of society, that the doer of such actions should be made to suffer. . . But when we are informed that the sufferer is a villain, and is punished only for his treachery or cruelty; our compassion exceedingly lessens, and in many instances our indignation wholly subsides. Now what produces this effect is the conception of that in the the sufferer, which we call ill-desert. Upon considering then, or viewing together, our notion of vice and that of misery, there results a third, that of ill-desert. And thus there is in human creatures an association of the two ideas, natural and moral evil, wickedness and punishment.[17]

Thus, when I approve of well-doing in reflection, this is like realizing that if I were to do good to others, not only would I approve of myself for having done so, but would approve of myself as deserving acclaim (or the reverse, of having guilty feelings). This is the specific characteristic of moral sense -- to feel guilt or of being worthy of acclaim.

But how can what is right be explained by our feeling of remorse on omitting to do the act? The case is that we feel guilty <u>because</u> we have done the wrong thing, the

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[17]Butler, <u>Works</u>, I, 401-412.

notion of guilt already presupposes the notion of moral rectitude. Butler fell into this difficulty because he failed to see clearly that "conscience" can function in two different ways. On this point, at least, Kames differs from Butler, and perhaps has improved Butler's analysis of the function of the moral sense.

31. What then, is the function of the conscience according to Kames? He describes the conscience as the first mover. The second mover is the moral sense which governs; that is, which makes duty evident. Kames' discussion at this point is altogether unsatisfactory for he does not explain what he means by the first and second mover. It is clear that, at this point, however, he does not want to identify the moral sense and conscience. Taking this to be his central contention, in the following discussion, I bring together things that Kames says about the moral sense and conscience in different contexts, to make a fairly complete explanation of how these two differ.

The use of the word "govern" to describe the workings of the moral sense emphasizes its legislative, authoritative aspect. Since the moral sense is the final resort of duties and obligations, the conscience would seem to be superfluous, for that was one of the chief functions that the conscience performed in Butler's account. Kames, however, gives the conscience the special function of feeling remorse, leaving the perception of duty to the moral sense.

That there are two sorts of things that can be said of conscience is reflected in common speech. I can say "my conscience hurts me," to mean that "I am remorseful." But should I say, "my conscience tells me to do so," I could either mean that "I recognize it to be my duty," or, strongly, (in conjunction with "it is my duty"), "If I fail to do so, I will be sorry."

The word "conscience," thus, can be used in two kinds of sentences:

(1) My conscience tells me I ought (i.e., it is my duty).

(2) I have a bad conscience (i.e., I feel remorseful).

According to Kames, what is contained in the first sentence, that some act or other is a duty, is something that the moral sense tells me. The conscience, on the other hand, performs the function of making me remorseful, and only after the deed. (M,178) We can feel remorseful about many things; not merely on having gone against a sense of duty. Of course, whenever we perform an act by going against our sense of duty we would feel remorseful. In many instances, however, as in the example given by Kames of the man on a horse who by mishap kills the little girl, even accidents (where, upon reflection, we realize the man could not have prevented it) can raise a sense of remorse. The point is that there are many instances where remorse arises and a sense of duty was not involved at all. So conscience seems to have a wider area of function than the moral sense.

Conscience makes us feel remorseful on having done

something wrong. This same conscience acquires a strange status on the basis of what Kames says about remorse.

Suppose I knew before the act that if I were to do it, I would feel remorseful. According to Kames, the power of being able to restrain myself from acting is not anything that I can feel when I am doing the act. If, as it is frequently asserted, the power to restrain oneself and remorse are present together, (that is, I am remorseful only because I could have restrained myself from acting,) the connection is illusory, for it is remorse itself that produces the notion of restraint (i.e., the possibility of having restrained myself). The connection itself is delusive, because the conscience is not capable of initiating any act. (M,176f) That is, "remorse is gratified in the criminal by a conviction that it was in his power to have restrained his passion." (M,179) That this is impossible is related to Kames' psychological determinism.

Conscience itself is responsible for this illusion, because it makes us feel remorseful. But according to this account, feeling the sentiment of remorse, further raises in us the feeling that we could have restrained ourselves before the evil act, which is an illusion.

32. The following summary points out the similarities and differences between Kames and Butler in their account of moral behavior.

The similarities are all-pervasive. Kames recognizes

this, for he says that of all the moral philosophies that have been developed, Butler's account has come closest to the truth. (M,42ff) But it was too bad that Butler, having given the hint of a proper account made the following errors.

(1) First of all, says Kames, it is not enough to explain duty on the basis of the disapprobation of reflection. For it is not always the case that this disapproval "as a principle is superior to a mere propension." (M,43) This criticism is not clear: but Kames probably meant that the conscience (or reflection) does not have any more strength than the other propensities. It is as a matter of fact, weaker on many occasions. But on this point, however, Butler was insistent, and if this is what Kames meant, he is off the mark.

(2) Secondly, conscience is not a principle of action, but a guide or director. Conscience is described correctly not as an act of reflection but a direct perception which we have, upon being confronted with a situation, without the intervention of any reflection. (M,43) The authority of the conscience lies in this, that we perceive our acts to be a duty, and thus, that we are indispensably bound to perform them. The language used here by Kames sounds like the objectivism of the intuitionists. But we must remember that according to Kames, duty (like many other secondary relations), while seen to be a property of external objects or actions, is in reality merely subjective, and the result of an illusion. It is based wholly on the feelings and responses of

the percipients.

33. What then, is Kames account of the motive power of the moral sense?

(1) Reason can trace out the course of events in nature and these facts, of course, depending on how we look at them and how we respond to them, can influence our affections.

(2) But these same facts which we cognize by reason, can also bring the moral sense into action. The response of the moral sense, however, is not, according to Kames, the workings of the reason itself. If the moral sense reacts favorably, it can be a guide -- a director with an authority.

(3) A man then can choose to act in a certain way -- i.e., make a decision. A motive, of course, must be present to initiate action.

Kames describes the above process in a number of ways:

that the moral sense is a "director" (M,43);

that no action is a duty to the "performance of which we are not prompted by some natural motive;" (M,54)

that when we deliberate and choose, "we cannot exert a single action but with some view," or aim. (M,160)

In another passage, Kames uses the following locution: that the motives are under the power of our direction (M,160); and since the moral sense is a director (or a guide), the moral sense can "indirectly move the man to action. On Kames' view, however, only the desires (as motives) can directly move a man to act. The connection between the reason and

action, and the moral sense and action are thus indirect links.

Kames has another way of describing this same process. If we can say that a man has acted on due deliberation -- i.e., he has not acted impulsively or instinctively -- he must, if asked, be able to give a reason or reasons for his decision. Not to be able to do so, and still claim that he has acted on a decision is "sheer idiocy." (M,159)

Jones reasons out the consequences of his not turning over a certain sum of money to Smith. If Jones does so, he will have less money for his own use. But not to do so will inconvenience Smith. Then he remembers that he had promised to lend Smith the money; that in the past Smith had shown him great kindness. The thought, then, of the ill repute that he will incur if he fails to lend the money on the one hand, and the inconvenience that he will cause Smith, on the other, raises in Jones a number of sentiments. At the same time, when he recalled that he had promised to lend the money, the moral sense intuits directly a duty to keep his promise. Jones decides to lend the money. The motive, Kames would say, was the <u>desire</u> to lend the money, and to relieve Smith in his need. If on deliberation, Jones was indifferent to the facts that reason presented to him, and he did not want to lend Smith the money (i.e., he felt no motive for so doing), then no amount of activity on the part of the moral sense will move Jones to lend the money. Kames goes a step further and says that if in this exact situation, Jones does

not have any of the proper emotional responses, it cannot be a duty on his part to lend the money.

But this statement raises a difficulty. Does Kames mean that the only duties we have are to do acts which we also want to do? This is obviously false, for many of our every-day problems with duties concern acts which we know we ought to do, but somehow, we do not want to do them, or have difficulty bringing ourselves to do them. And in this example, the situation is that Jones realizes that he did make a promise and that Smith had been his benefactor in the past, and is still not moved to keep his promise. Such a situation is common enough. Jones realizes that he has a duty. So he ought to submit himself. But at the same time, he does not want to do so. He feels no motives. This is not the case of the robot-like-man who feels no sentiments or desires, but also does not have a moral sense and thus cannot recognize any duties. Nor is it the case of the man who does not want to lend the money because somehow, he does not realize (or perhaps because he forgot) that he had promised; for in this case, an onlooker, reminding him about the facts, can make him see that he was under an obligation.

Kames did not see the difficulty. If the case is that of a man who is endowed with a moral sense and sees that he has an obligation but does not want to fulfill it, then from other contexts, it is clear what Kames would say. This is the morally weak man, or the un-virtuous man with morally

weak dispositions who has not trained himself to be "directed" by the moral sense.

34. The conclusion to this discussion is that a moral act must be a relatively dispassionate one, though not an unmotivated one. Just as reason can bring forth facts relevant to the case which would motivate a man by arousing one of the desires, so reason can activate the moral sense which can guide, like a traffic light, the direction of the action. The virtuous man is then, sufficiently "under control" so that he has the disposition to follow the direction of the moral sense. The disposition, of course, is that of being able to respond with a certain sort of sentiment, emotion, and desire, under appropriate circumstances. For without them, we cannot act.

CHAPTER IV

Kames' Criticisms of Hutcheson and Hume

35. The exposition of Kames' moral philosophy was completed in the last chapter. But certain features of the account he gives can be brought into focus by considering how he came to develop his view. In this chapter, I consider Kames' criticisms of Hutcheson and Hume, to show that his theory of the moral sense was developed in opposition to the views of these two philosophers. In discussing the criticisms by Kames, I begin in each instance, by giving a brief description of the moral philosophy of the man in question, before elaborating Kames' criticisms.

36. Hutcheson's early ethics is constructed on non-cognitivistic lines. Recent writings have established this sufficiently so that a brief recapitulation of the main outline of the ethics of Hutcheson should suffice here.[1]

To cope with the assertion from Hobbes and others who argued that "natural good" (and happiness) can account for our notions of moral good and bad, right and wrong, Hutcheson develops the notion of internal sense, explicated

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[1] W. A. Frankena, "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," Journal of the History of Ideas, XVI, 356-375. Henceforth cited as "Hutcheson's . . . Theory." See also Raphael, The Moral Sense, 15-45.

primarily by the "sense of beauty" and then extended to cover the moral perceptions.[2] Some actions "have to men an immediate goodness," and "by a superior sense [the Moral Sense] . . . we perceive Pleasure in the Contemplation of such actions in others." These "Perceptions of moral Good and evil, are perfectly different from those of natural Good, or Advantage."[3] The faculty of this perception may still be reason, but at least, moral good is distinct and not to be explicated in terms of consequences.

This is all that Hutcheson developed in his first book, An Enquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. He appears to have been concerned primarily with refuting Hobbian egoism.[4] At this stage, he makes no clear distinction between benevolence and the moral sense.[5] In his second book, An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, he began to sharpen the difference between his account of morals and that of the rationalists

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[2]Francis Hutcheson, An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (London, 1725), viii, and passim. Henceforth cited as Inquiry with references to the third, corrected edition of 1729.

[3]Hutcheson, Inquiry, 109.

[4]Cf., Ibid., 211, where what is said can apply as easily to Hobbes as to Epicurus. Hobbes' view is identified as a modification of Epicurus' view by Hutcheson in The Illustrations on the Moral Sense, which was printed along with The Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions (Glasgow, 1728), 187. Cited henceforth as Illustrations, with references to the third edition (1742), reprinted (Glasgow, 1769).

[5]Raphael, The Moral Sense, 30.

who criticized the Inquiry.[6] In this process, the non-cognitivist aspects of his theory became clearer.

As an empiricist, Hutcheson denied that there were innate ideas,[7] and he claimed that the function of reason was the discovery of empirical truths. Thus, there were no self-evident truths possible. Reason in this context of moral discourse does not discover any new idea of "moral Goodness," nor can it point out any new ends to be sought.

If we scrutinize a moral enunciation, what elements are involved there? Judging an act to have moral goodness is to feel a pleasure in the contemplation of this act.

> . . . The Author of Nature has determined us to receive by our external senses, pleasant or disagreeable Ideas of Objects, according as they are useful or hurtful to our Bodys; and to receive from uniform Objects, the Pleasures of Beauty and Harmony. . . . in the same manner he has given us a Moral Sense, to direct our Actions, and to give us still Nobler Pleasures . . .
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> We are not to imagine, that this moral Sense, more the other senses, supposes any innate Ideas, Knowledge, or practical Propositions: We mean by it only a Determination of our Minds to receive the simple Ideas of Approbation or Condemnation, from Actions observed, antecedent to any Opinions of Advantages or Loss to redound to ourselves from them; even as we are pleas'd with a regular Form, or an harmonious Composition, without having any Knowledge of Mathematics, or seeing any Advantage in that Form, or Composition, different from the immediate Pleasure.[8]

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[6]Hutcheson's primary critic was Gilbert Burnett, who criticized him from a rationalist viewpoint in a number of letters in the London Journal under the pseudonym of Philastus, in 1728. Another critic was John Balguy who wrote the Foundation of Moral Goodness (London, 1728). Selections from Balguy may be found in Selby-Bigge, British Moralists, (2 Vols., Oxford, 1897), II, 59-101.

[7]Hutcheson, Inquiry, 128.

[8]Ibid., 127f.

Though he does not specifically say so, Hutcheson assumed that moral idea <u>are</u> a "new Species of Ideas," so that a separate internal sense is required for their perception. Hutcheson further claimed that "Approval and condemnation are probably simple Ideas, which cannot be farther explained . . . [or] which can only be explained by synonymous words, or by concomitant or consequent circumstances."[9] While Hutcheson is speaking of moral approval and moral ideas, he did identify the perceiving of moral goodness with the feeling of approbation. His main doctrine, thus, is that moral distinctions are not received by reason, but by a sense. That this is an emotive theory of ethics is made clear by the following passage:

> There are three things . . . to be distinguished, 1. The idea of the external motion, known first by sense, and its tendency to the happiness or misery of some sensitive nature, often inferred by argument or reason, which on these subjects, suggest as invariable eternal or necessary truths as any whatsoever. 2. Apprehension or opinion of the affections in the agent, inferred by our reason: so far the idea of an action represents something external to the observer, really existing whether he had perceived it or not, and having a real tendency to certain ends. 3. The perception of approbation or disapprobation arising in the observer, according as the affections of the agent are apprehended kind in their just degree, or deficient or malicious. This approbation cannot be supposed an image of any thing external, more than pleasures of harmony, of taste, or smell.[10]

Moral distinctions are not to be taken as empirical propositions. We perceive people in action, reason variously

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[9] Hutcheson, <u>Illustrations</u>, 186f.

[10] <u>Ibid</u>., 256f.

about the circumstances, motivations and intentions of the persons (especially whether they were benevolent or not), but none of these are especially moral. The moral experience is the reaction of the moral sense with a feeling of pleasure and approval. This response of the moral sense is an <u>emotional response</u>.

37. Further details of Hutcheson's theory can best be examined in relation to Kames' criticism of it, which is that Hutcheson cannot account for a sense of duty.

Benevolence is entitled to a decisive vote in every action that is left to our own choice. But where right and wrong are concerned, benevolence has no authority. "It would be iniquity in a judge to make benevolence his rule in any decision." (M,147) Acts of kindness are "fit and meet," but are not the objects of the moral sense -- and hence they are not duties. (M,41)

> . . . Not being so necessary to the support of society, they are left upon the general footing of approbatory pleasure, while justice, faith, truth without which society cannot subsist are objects of the foregoing peculiar sense, to take away all shadow of liberty, and to put us under the necessity of performance. (M,41)

But benevolence was thought to be the whole of morality by Hutcheson because he had failed to scrutinize the notions of obligation, duty, ought and should. (M,38) Hutcheson

> founds the morality of action on a certain quality of actions, that procures approbation and love to the agent. But this account of morality is . . . imperfect, as it makes no distinction between duty and simple benevolence. It is scarce applicable to justice; for the man who, confining himself strictly to

> it, is true to his word and avoids harming others, is a just and moral man, is entitled to some share of esteem, but will never be the object of love or friendship. He must show a disposition to the good of mankind, of his friends at least and neighbors, he must exert acts of humanity and benevolence; before he can hope to procure the affection of others. (M,38)

In this manner, says Kames, Hutcheson has overstated his case for benevolence by "basing all morality on benevolence." (M,147)[11] As a result, in his account of moral sense, Hutcheson cannot satisfactorily explain acts of duty, or moral obligation. And this result is not "altogether harmless because it converts benevolence into indispensable duty, contrary to the system of nature." (M,38)

To be fair to Hutcheson, however, Kames is willing to grant that Hutcheson does attempt to explain obligation as either "a motive from self interest, sufficient to determine those who duly consider it to a certain course of action, which [surely] is not moral obligation; or a determination without regard to our interest, to approve actions, and to perform them; which determination shall also make us displeased with ourselves, and uneasy upon having acted contrary to it," (M,38) in which case, he says, "there is naturally an obligation upon all men to benevolence." (M,39) But this, unfortunately, makes no distinction between the intuition of a moral duty from that simply reflex approbation of the moral sense towards acts of heroism, magnanimity, etc., (M,39) which are not duties.

These considerations lead Kames to conclude that it does not do full justice to the complexity of moral behavior to explain it by the response of simple approbation. We

approve many things; works of art, of craftsmanship, and acts cunningly worked out with finesse. But these sorts of approbation are far from "being the same with that which is occasioned by human actions deliberately done . . . to some end. If the end be beneficial, the action is approved as right and fit to have been done: if hurtful, it is disapproved as wrong and unfit. . . . None of these qualities are applicable to the instances given." (M,35)

35. Kames has a further criticism of Hutcheson's account. This criticism hinges on the distinction between "justifying" and "exciting" reasons, a distinction made by Hutcheson himself.

Hutcheson's moral theory is an interjectional theory.[12] Purely moral assertions do not contain any matters of fact. They are expressions of feeling. On this view also, the meaning of ethical terms are to be decided on the basis of the responses which they are calculated to evoke, because the "meaning" of ethical terms over and beyond the mere expression of emotion, consists in the actual responses that were intended to be elicited. Hutcheson, however, made one important qualification. He was aware that there was a difference between moving (or exciting) reasons and justifying reasons. He took the faculty of reason to be the power of finding out true propositions. Reasonableness must "denote . . . conformity to true propositions or to truth."[13]

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[12]Frankena, "Hutcheson's . . . Theory;" 366.

[13]Hutcheson, Illustrations, 193f.

If reasonableness were the character of virtue, denoting some sort of conformity to truth, Hutcheson demands that he must be shown, without assuming any affection or any moral sense, "how it determined us antecedently . . . either to election or approbation."

> They tell us, "we must have some standard antecedently to all sense or affection, since we judge even of our senses and affections . . . and approve or disapprove them. . . . But what is this conformity of an action to reason? When we ask the reason of an action we sometimes mean "what truth shews a quality in the actions, exciting the agent to do it?" Thus, why does a luxurious man persue wealth? The reason is given by this truth, "wealth is useful to purchase pleasures." Sometimes for a reason of actions we shew the truth expressing a quality, engaging our approbation. Thus the reason of hazarding life in just war, is that "it tends to preserve . . . "; the reason for temperance and against luxery is given thus, "luxery evidences a selfish bad temper . . . " The former sort of reason we will call exciting and the latter justifying. [14]

Hutcheson's claim was that the moral sense specifically justified. The role that cognition plays in moral discourse is just that it examines and selects the relevant facts of the case -- facts that are relevant in justification and not in excitement. And what <u>is</u> specifically relevant is the presence or absence of benevolence. This alone, it would appear, brings forth the approval of the moral sense. (Perhaps this distinguishes "moral attitudes" from non-moral attitudes). Cognition precedes the approval of the moral sense; and no action is to be called "virtuous unless we have some reason to conclude it to be virtuous." [15] Almost anything

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[14] <u>Ibid</u>., 194f.

[15] <u>Ibid</u>., 209.

can move a man to act; but justifying reasons consist of statements about the intention of the actor as regard benevolence and malevolence. An action is good, or ought to be done because it is intended to lead to the general good or is believed to do so; these are the actions that are benevolent in motive. And these alone are justified.

39. Having explained Hutcheson's view on the justifying function of the moral sense, I now summarize Kames' criticism.

The moral sense approves of all actions with benevolent motives. If this is the case, Kames asks, are we duty-bound to do all acts that are justified by the moral sense? (M,38) Does the sense of "ought" accompany all of these? Are there not some actions that are benevolent and which we would approve, but which are not necessary duties? It seemed to Kames that too many actions are made into duties in Hutcheson's system, even against our ordinary moral experiences. And this is a mistake.

On Kames' own account: (1) many sorts of actions may be the object of benevolence. (2) But some of these actions are such that they cannot be left unperformed. (M,41f) These necessary duties are specifically perceived by the moral sense. But it is obvious that not all objects (either things or actions) that are approved by the moral sense (if the criterion is benevolence) can be duties -- though it <u>may</u> be the case that all duties are motivated by benevolence. (3) See-

ing that some acts are obligatory binds a person to act. (Perhaps all this merely means that the omission of acts of duty are punishable or accompanied by a sense of remorse. In either case, he is to be held accountable.) As far as Kames could see, Hutcheson made this sense of duty impossible. (4) At the same time, Kames was aware of the fact that justifying an action is not equivalent to asserting that it is a duty, for many acts are justifiable (or permissable), without quite being an indispensable duty. (M,52) But it is the case that to truthfully assert that an act is a duty, would thereby justify that act, so that showing that a certain act is a duty, is one of the best ways of justifying it.

40. We can conclude the discussion of Hutcheson's moral philosophy by summarizing Kames' two criticisms.

(1) It is a mistake to explain the workings of the moral sense by its approval alone, because there are various kinds of approval; the way in which we approve of beautiful things, of acts of generosity and kindness, as well as acts of duty, like supporting one's children.

(2) But if we wished to characterize all moral acts by the approval of the moral sense, and further wished to claim that acts approved by the moral sense are always characterized by the benevolent intentions of such acts, (and any action approved by the moral sense is thereby justified,) then this description does not do justice to those acts which are done from a sense of duty, for we are not obligated to perform <u>all</u>

acts of benevolence.

41. In their general outline of a moral philosophy, Hume and Hutcheson are in agreement. According to Hutcheson, moral qualities are not perceived by reason, but by an internal sense. Thus, they are not the result of an inference. Of the two kinds of moral reasoning, exciting (or motivating) reasons presuppose instincts and affections, while the justifying reasons presuppose the moral sense. Hume too says that Reason is inactive in moral matters, since it is not the source of moral principles or conscience.[16] Moral justification for him is no more than a particular kind of excitement, for nothing but desire or aversion can move us to action.

The contrast between virtue and vice is only a difference in the emotions with which one regards them.[17] What action will fit into what situation will depend on the desires alone, and will thus vary. An appeal to the natural propensities alone, for Hume, cannot possibly explain the obligation which we think we feel, to be just or to keep promises. For the usual force of our natural inclination and passion is partial and interested, and no trace of a sense of duty is to be found among them.

Can Hume make sense of obligation? Hume's first analysis is in the non-societal context of moral actions. In this case, the natural inclinations rule; a person would be

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[16]Hume, Treatise, 457ff; Enquiries, 286, 293.

[17]Hume, Treatise, 462-69.

influenced by motives appropriate to the situation.[18] In the state of nature, there is no disinterested sympathy.[19] "Duty" in such a situation can only be the appropriateness of certain actions. As a result, the motives that prompt such actions, the appropriateness of such motives, is gauged in terms of their natural and usual force.

> . . . the first virtuous motive, which bestrows merit on any action, can never be a regard to the virtue of that action, but must be some other natural motive or principle. To suppose, that the mere regard to the virtue of the action, may be the first motive, which produc'd the action, and render'd it virtuous is to reason in a circle. Before we can have such a regard, the action must be really virtuous; and this virtue must be deriv'd from some virtuous motive: and consequently the virtuous motive must be different from the regard to the virtue of the action. A virtuous motive is requisite to render an action virtuous. An action must be virtuous, before we can have a regard to its virtue. Some virtuous motive, therefore, must be antecedent to that regard.[20]

These considerations lead Hume to assert that it is impossible that a sense of duty should function as a natural motive to action. For an action prompted by a virtuous motive is itself virtuous before any moral judgement can be passed on it.[21] A regard for the moral worth of an action can only be a secondary consideration, and actions that are prompted by a natural, moral motive (like a sense of duty) are impossible.[22]

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[18] Ibid., 477.

[19] Ibid., 481.

[20] Ibid., 478. Cf., 493.

[21] Ibid., 478, 518.

[22] Ibid., 478.

All this however, does not lead to a denial of the possibility of acting out of a sense of duty. But such acts of duty must be explained in terms of what natural inclination we have and their modification by reason and custom. Hume does not deny that we act disinterestedly from a sense of duty. How then are acts of duty possible? He initially gives his answer in the form of a genetic account of a small society. In little groups (the most familiar being the family), justice as well as promise-keeping are interested acts because they are readily seen to be advantageous. In the establishment of justice, for example, moral considerations do not enter. The ends of such conventions (the satisfaction of certain societal desires in the large) alone can account for the generation of justice. It is the work of reason and the consideration of folly.[23] In large societies, it is more difficult to see clearly, the disadvantages that follow when someone is unjust or breaks a promise. But even then, when there is a case of mistreatment, we quickly disapprove and condemn. We also approve acts of promise-keeping as being useful.[24] This is so because by the application of a general rule (obtained by studying the little groups), we recognize that justice is the sort of act which, if done, would constitute an act of virtue (i.e., those acts which we find useful and approve). This is how we learn to approve

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[23] Ibid., 484; Enquiries, 306ff.

[24] Treatise, 521f.

and disapprove of whole classes of acts.

Hume's account is enriched by a further explanation of our sense of duty (and disinterested moral actions) by the workings of sympathy (or extensive benevolence). But, of course, sympathy could always be challenged by self-interest, or the interest of close kin or friendship. This is overcome, says Hume, by societal influences; repetition, habit, the artifice of politicians and education, all of which reinforces the usefulness of honest men.[25] Moral obligation is natural for Hume to the extent that it depends on natural emotions; i.e., the original distinction between what we approve and find pleasant (which constitutes what is right) and what we disapprove (what is wrong). But it is also artificial in that these original emotions had to be reconditioned into a set of attitudes on the basis of utility to a society.

42. In his criticism of Hume, Kames seems not to know where to begin. His critical comments are directed in several directions at once. This, one would suppose, indirectly attests to the subtle and tightly knit complexity of the ethics of Hume. But beneath the many-sided comments, there is a direction in what Kames has to say.

Kames understood Hume to be giving an account of the origin of moral behavior, a generic and psychological account

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[25] Cf., Ibid., 546f.

of how it is that we have the idea of good, bad, and duty. To this extent, Kames was reading Hume as a naturalist who gave an explanation of moral concepts in terms of their origins; either their actual psychological causes or their logical presuppositions.

There never is any difficulty in getting people to do what they want to do. Any account of morality that stresses human approval and its system of desires, will easily explain the virtues. But how can we, from the fact that people approve of certain states or acts, deduce that they ought to do them?

Hume is not successful, says Kames, "when he endeavors to resolve the moral sense into pure sympathy. . . . that there is no more in morality but approving or disapproving an action, after we discover by reflection that it tends to the good or hurt of society. This would be too faint a principle to control our irregular appetites and passions." (M,39f)

So Kames correctly understood Hume at this point. He reads Hume to be saying that the function of moral words is to express an attitude of approval. "This is good," uttered after the reason has established its utility advances no new cognitive facts. Whatever we approve as useful in a person's character or conduct is called virtue and is entitled to moral approbation. (M,140) Why do we approve some things and not others? Because those things we approve are pleasant or are useful to society. All but benevolence, that is, which also has the concurrence of sympathy. But we would never

approve of anything if we knew it not to be in accord with utility. Then Kames advances the crux of his objection. His criticism is that

> if utility be the sole foundation of morality, it is to me evident, that duty and obligation have no meaning that can distinguish them from benevolence, generosity, or friendly affection. [By Hume,] duty is resolved into a motive from interest, directing us to acquire these laudable qualities which experience points out to be useful. This confounds all, since no perception differs more from another than that of duty from that of interest. That they often appear in opposition is severely felt by the interested, when barred [by] duty [from doing] what would redound much to their profit. From the beginning to the end of the Enquiry, Mr Hume appears to have totally overlooked that innate sense of duty, that authority of conscience which is law to man, regulating his conduct in society. (M,145)

In Hume's system, all the virtues are derived from utility, "so as to rank in the same class with the primary virtues, almost anything that is useful." This, says Kames, is to pervert the meaning of the word "virtue" to include some very silly things, like intellectual ability, secrecy, courage, industry, etc. (M,140)

43. The whole analysis of Hume's seems, in the end, topsy-turvy to Kames. This can be shown best by the example of benevolence. This sentiment "in some measure is the object of immediate approbation." (M,146) It is also partly based on utility, according to Hume. But, says Kames, Hume must have meant that not only part, but all of its merit arises from that tendency, and the same goes for all societal virtues. But the whole merit of utility itself must arise from benevolence, for it seems evident to Kames that bene-

volence alone, makes people interested in social utility. (M,146) Is it not stretching the point a bit to base all virtue on utility? Is female chastity based on utility? Could Hume

> hope to escape a sneer in contending [this]? That it is a virtue highly beneficial to society, will be readily admitted. But when the chastity of a virtuous woman is attacked, did he seriously think, that there is nothing to protect her innocence, but regard to public utility? Is there no such thing as a principle of chastity, of honour, of pride, to guard her in the critical minute? (M,144f)[26]

> But virtue will maintain its dignity in spite of all the arguments that can be levelled against it. The sense of right and wrong in voluntary actions, is what eminently distinguishes virtue from the many trifling qualities confounded with it. (M,141)

Hume's general mistake is that of jumbling "all of [morality] into one mass by the test of approbation." (M,141) But there is nothing clear and precise about the use of the word approbation. We approve everything that is either agreeable or useful. But there is another kind which we bestow on virtuous acts only. The approbation of a lovely view is different from that of a comfortable house -- but are these virtuous?

> Our author admits that it is not . . . "For, says he, though a species of approbation attends inanimate objects when beneficial, it is so weak and so different from the approbation bestowed on beneficial magistrates or statesmen that they ought not to be ranked under the same class or apellation." This is [a] most unwary concession, for it overturns at one stroke his darling system of utility. (M,142)[27]

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[26] Ibid., 570.

[27] The quotation within the quotation is from Hume, Enquiries, 213, footnote. It is not exact, but accurate as regards the meaning of the passage.

The objectionable overturning is due to the fact that the criterion of virtue is now not utility, but a "strong approbation." Since Hume cannot talk about moral approval as distinct from any other kind, the result, says Kames, would be that to a person of lively imagination, something would be virtuous, but not to "one with a small share of that faculty." (M,142) In fact, to the same person it might seem virtuous or not, as his spirits were high or low. A second objection occurs to Kames. If the approval of wealth and the approval of a benevolent magistrate be the same, the disapproval of their contraries must be the same. A man betrays his trust. Another person is slovenly; he is well-meaning, but frequently blunders, and is awkward in his address. Are the disapprovals of these two the same? (M,144) Is it only a difference in degree? We also approve or disapprove brutes and inanimate objects. So these must be objects of moral approval as well. We cannot exclude them on the count of lack of utility, since many of them <u>are</u> highly useful, "by their labour and by affording food and raiment." (M,141f)

44. According to Hume (says Kames) "public utility is the <u>sole</u> origin of justice, and . . . reflection on the beneficial consequences of this virtue are the <u>sole</u> foundation of its merit." (M,128f) But (1) in no case is it our <u>duty</u> to act for the public good; "we are left at liberty by the moral sense to act for the public good if we incline;" but we are under no obligation to do so. (M,136) In any case,

(2) the public good is so complex and influenced by so many factors, that it is too much to expect a man to be able to conjecture accurately what the public good might be. So justice must have some other, simpler basis, since our duties are simple, direct ones. The consequences of our actions are left to Providence. (M,137)

All of this Hume could grant easily. All he had claimed was that justice itself must serve (i.e., be justified) by public utility. Any act dictated by a sense of justice, which as a matter of fact (especially in a small society) went counter to the public good would quickly cease to be a duty. All duties are "interested" in this way, and justice is no exception. In larger communities (or in a societal state) we cannot gauge or foresee the consequences of our acts, but here we can easily see that artificial causes, like habit and social compulsion, account for our code of justice.

Indeed, Hume can concur with Kames when the latter says that if public good were a duty, this would leave a wide door open to partiality and passion, and as to what the public good is, "the opinion of men would be as various as their faces." (M,137) Hume would insist that this is the case. What he wanted to emphasize was that justice is not a primary virtue (in Kames' terms) nor a natural virtue. It is established in society by a sort of tacit convention, and is founded on a notion of public interest.[28] Kames, of course, wanted to have

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[28] Hume, Treatise, 534ff.

it that justice is a primary virtue, "which guards the persons, the property, and the reputation of individuals, and gives authority to promises and covenants." (M,65)

Justice has two parts according to Kames: (a) to abstain from harming others; and (b) to perform our positive engagements. (M,82) With respect to both, we have no liberty. If justice were based on utility alone, it would meet with greater approbation than patriotism or generosity, because "justice undoubtedly is more essential to the public than any of these." (M,138f) But Kames points out that the reverse is true. Acts of injustice meet with severe punishment. But exercises of justice receive little approbation compared to what is bestowed on the exercise of the various secondary virtues. The explanation lies in the distinction between the primary and secondary virtues. People are not bound to do acts of generosity or gratitude (which are examples of secondary virtues), and are thus accorded extra praise when they perform such acts. But justice being obligatory, requires no further inducement for its fulfillment, except blame for its omission. (The virtues of veracity, fidelity and other examples of primary virtues are enforced in a like manner.)(M,82)

45. Hume, according to Kames, confused a number of questions. It can be easily granted that the <u>end</u> of justice is public utility, and its <u>merit</u> consists in contributing to that end. But it cannot be granted that the <u>sole origin</u> of

justice is public utility. This is to confuse the question of means and ends, cause and effect, origin and end. Hume seems to think that "to show that the public utility of justice as its end shows it also to be its origin." (M,134f) But there are cases where they differ greatly.

> Take the following example. A large sum of money is deposited privately in my hand by an intimate friend. He dies suddenly, leaving an overgrown fortune to his heir, who is ignorant of the deposit. Every argument from utility would justify me in retaining this sum, as the only fund I have for educating and providing [for] a numerous family of children. But if even in this trying case I stand bound in conscience to restore, of which no honest man can doubt, it follows necessarily that justice must have a foundation independent of utility. The only answer that can be given is, that justice is founded on public utility, what concerns the whole society, without regarding the interest of one or other individual. With respect to this case, I cannot enter into the distinction. Robbery, it is true, or murder may benefit me; and yet upon the whole may be detrimental to the public. But in the example given, as no person is hurt, the public suffers no prejudice. But letting it pass that my retaining this sum is hurtful to the public, I am greatly mistaken if our author's theory can stand upon that foundation. To complete that theory, it was incumbent on him to show, that there can exist a public, a regular government, independent of an original sense of justice. This however he has not made out, nor attempted to make out. (M,135f)

Hume's account is mistaken, says Kames, "because that would be to grant that there is no such thing as the moral sense, or a <u>natural faculty</u> to distinguish right from wrong, just from unjust." But since this natural faculty was just what Hume wanted to deny, Kames' counter-assertion does not constitute an argument at all. Apparently, for Kames, it was not enough to explain the society of men, to point out how the self-interested aspects of men and sympathy could explain its origin. Man was irreducibly social and gregarious, and

some principle of society-making (apart from sympathy and self-interest) or justice is presupposed by any society.

> To me, it is evident, that without an original sense of justice, there could never have existed any public, any society under government; far less a government with authority sufficient to subdue the rapacity of men, his love of power and his other selfish and unruly passions. Were there no law antecedent to society but major vis, every man would shun those of his kind, as he would a savage tiger; war would be perpetual of all against all, as happily expressed by Mr. Hobbes. There is, in man, true an appetite for society, but that appetite would be blasted in the end by the selfish and dissocial passions. (M,135f)

46. Thus, Kames' criticism of Hume comes down to his criticism of the doctrine of the original social convention. Kames describes the law of nations as a law established among nations by common consent, for regulating their conduct with regard to each other; but this foundation, says Kames, is chimerical. For when was the covenant made and by whom? If the state of nature is a state of war, how could society have been formed? (M,70) The social revolution, the formation of society itself, could not have been formed by natural means alone. It cannot have been the sense of "common good" which gradually brought this law into force. For such a sense of common good "is too complex and too remote an object to be a solid foundation for any positive law, if it have no other foundation." There is no need to postulate a state of nature, or a signing of the compact. (M,80-82) The law of nature is woven into the basic fabric of human nature. "The law of nature, which is the law of our own nature," at the same time, is not static. It may be modified, and is con-

sequently amenable to refinement and development. (M,99)

The rest of the discussion deals with the sense of property which, according to Hume, can be accounted for by the original convention, and the sense of justice which resulted from it. Kames, however, wants the situation to be reversed. Society owes its existence to a sense of property, since without this sense, no society could ever have been formed. With the sense of property already there (as a part of human constitution), men united, a few at a time, and found the benefits agreeable and gradually formed larger and larger societies. (M,70)

Kames specifically considers the case of the golden age, which Hume discusses. The

> political fiction of the golden age is, in some respects, of a piece with the philosophical fiction of the state of nature . . .
>
> Let us suppose that nature has bestowed on the human race such profuse abundance of external conveniences, that, without any uncertainty in the event, without any care or industry on our part, every individual finds himself fully provided . . .
>
> It seems evident that, in such a happy state, every other social virtue would flourish, and receive tenfold increase, but the caution, jealous virtue of justice would never have been dreamed of. For what purpose make a partition of good, where everyone has already more than enough? Why give rise to property, where there cannot possibly be any injury? . . . Justice in that case, being totally useless, would be an idle ceremonial, and could never possibly have place in the catalogue of virtues.[29]

What this example shows, to Kames, is just that there may be circumstances in which there would be no occasion to enforce justice by courts of law, nor for having private pro-

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[29] Hume, Enquiries, 183f.

perty. But this in no way shows that men would not have a sense of justice; or any sense of right or wrong. The reverse is most likely. These people obviously have a most lively sense of right and wrong to which they adhere. Because in one state there is no property (i.e., it is not necessary), is it a proper inference that it is not necessary in any state? (M,131f) Kames further questions whether it is likely, as a matter of fact, that in cases of civil strife, or famine, the distinction of property is always overthrown.[30] (M,133f) Hume, he says, has not made his point.

Kames' arguments against the doctrine of the original convention in Hume miss their mark since Kames seems to think that Hume argued that the making of the compact was a historical event. Hume, however, held that the original compact is impossible, for to sign a compact already presupposes the notion of a promise.

> It has been asserted by some, that justice arises from Human Conventions, and proceeds from the voluntary choice, consent or combination of mankind. If by Convention be here meant a promise (which is the most usual sense of the word), nothing can be more absurd than this position. The observance of promise is itself one of the most considerable parts of justice, and we are not surely bound to keep our word because we have given our word to keep it. But if by convention be meant a sense of commom interest; which sense each man feels in his breast, which he remarks in his fellows, and which carries him, in concurrence with others, into a general plan or scheme of action that, in this sense, justice arises from human considerations.[31]

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[30] Ibid., 186.

[31] Ibid., 306.

Both Kames and Hume are agreed that there is a social sentiment, and while Kames' arguments against Hume in themselves sound plausible, they are totally irrelevant in the context of what Hume actually said, except those that argue against utility as being a basis for moral behavior at all.

Quite typically, Kames tries to resolve the problem entirely by refusing to resort to reductionist schemes. What results is an alarming increase in the various original propensities of men. Consider the history of man: at first, man was brutish. The state of nature was the state of war, and from this view . . . it might seem that the moral virtues are not natural, but acquired by means of education and example in a well-regulated society; in a word, that the whole moral part of the human system is artificial." (M,92) But the original tribe of men must have perceived beauty and deformity in nature (and in their mates); then why not also a perfection or right and wrong in actions? Our first ancestors must have had the rudiments of a moral sense. (M,93) Then how can we explain the brutish nature of ancient men? Kames makes a case for the environmental determinism of human character. Devoid of comfort and security, ancient men would want to live primarily by the principle of self-preservation -- to supply his wants without any obstruction from the moral sense. There being no basis for arbitration, barbarity, roughness and cruelty would be the character of the human species. (M,93) But this is all a matter of circumstance. "For

in the practice and habits of war, the malevolent principles of man would gain strength and vigor, as the benevolent principles do by the arts of peace. And to this consideration may be added that man is by nature shy and timorous; and consequently cruel to those he masters. The security obtained in a regular society, put an end in a great measure to our fears. Man becomes a magnanimous and generous being, not easily daunted; and therefore not easily provoked to acts of cruelty." (M,94)

What sort of creature would a man be, to be endued with a hoarding appetite, but with no sense or notion of property? This is the state that Hobbes asks us to believe in. And, says Kames, "to do justice to Hobbes," his argument is just if this is the case, "then the state of nature is a state of war, all against all." (M,70f) But the relation of the hoarding appetite to the sense of property is like that of veracity to the disposition to believe what is asserted to be true. "Veracity would be of no use were man not disposed to believe; and, abstracting from veracity, a disposition to believe would be a dangerous quality; for it would lay us open to fraud and deceit. There is precisely the same correspondence betwixt the hoarding appetite without the sense of property." (M,69) The latter is useless without the former. Kames' conclusion is that justice and the sense of property are both essential to society, and all societal organization presupposes both. (M,68) And, of course, they are irreducible.

47. Not only in some of the particulars, but even in whole of Hume's intention in writing his moral philosophy, Kames misunderstood him. Hume had not denied that there is a sense of duty. Only, he wanted to say that duties are either natural or artificial. The natural ones can easily be traced to a natural propensity. The artificial ones (like justice) can be accounted for by the ideas of utility and a feeling of humanity. It is this feeling that causes us to feel pleasure or pain in regarding the acts of another person as either useful or not. When we say that an action is virtuous, we are thereby expressing the sentiment of approval which we feel.[32]

It has seemed to some critics that by beginning with the pleasure and pain principle, in terms of which we gauge our "approval and disapproval," Hume had conceeded too much to egoism, which is a fault in his system.[33] The net result of his analysis is, however, to stress the dis-interested passions, especially benevolence and sympathy. If moral approval and disapproval are distinct species of pleasure and pain, he also claims that what is virtuous or vicious is not individual actions, but only the qualities and characters, the durable principles of the mind.[34] Particular acts are virtuous or vicious only as they are indications of these dispositions.

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[32]Hume, Enquiries, 289.

[33]C. D. Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory (London, 1930), 93.

[34]Hume, Treatise, 575.

Sympathy is to account for the cause of pleasure and pain -- and this is present in every man, light or dark. We cannot always know the utility of an act, or classes of acts, especially when, as is usually the case, we are in a large social group. What society has done is to set up conditions in such a way so that by habit, training, etc., we learn to make no exceptions of ourselves. This is all there need to be for an account of morality. Each of these ideas Hume expands with considerable ingenuity.

None of this denies the sense of duty. It is only to explain it in terms of something else, namely, the natural human propensities and inclinations, plus social conditioning. The end of moral education is to produce a harmony and uniformity in the attitudes (of approval and disapproval) in a group of people.[35]

48. To bring the discussion to a close, Kames objects to Hume's reductionism. To explain duty by approval alone makes duty seem subjective; for duty, then, like approval, would differ with each person. Moral virtue, Hume did say, is whatever raises in a spectator a certain kind of pleasing sentiment of moral approval.[36] But, says Kames, approval, even if it were a calm passion, may be subjective and personal. But Kames too, describes the moral relations as secondary relations; something that depends on the percipient,

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[35]Hume, Enquiries, 272f.; Treatise, 577, 579ff.

[36]Hume, Enquiries, 289.

but which is attributed by him to the external world (or the situation in which he finds himself). The relation itself, however, depends on the constitution of the percipient. (M,191f) So it is as "subjective" as it is on Hume's view, and both philosophers are faced with the problem of introducing an objective element into their system of morals. Hume does this by the reconditioning and education of the natural inclinations of men. Kames did it, on the other hand, by an illusion of nature, but an illusion which we cannot avoid. Kames, one might say, has gone farther afield from common sense than the direct path taken by Hume.

But we can also see that in attempting to account for all the complexity in human behavior, Kames multiplies the original and irreducible constituents of human nature. Thus he discovers not only the desires, the passions, the faculty of reason and a moral sense, but also the sense of beauty, sense of property, sense of honor, benevolence, self-love, the hoarding instinct, the instinct to believe, the sense of veracity, etc. The complexity becomes almost alarming.

CHAPTER V

Kames and Recent Ethics

49. The present chapter will be concerned with some very recent writings in ethics, and a comparison of these recent views with that of Kames.

The first question with which I deal is whether Kames' theory of moral "perception" differs at all from that of a twentieth century intuitionist like Prichard. This comparison needs to be made since while I think it is clear that Kames' view is not emotivist, there are at least two other views held today with which his view might be identified: namely, intuitionism, and the family of theories recently developed at Oxford. It would be convenient to remove at the start the possibility that Kames is an intuitionist. Then we can begin to appreciate the ways in which his view resembles more recent trends in moral philosophy.

50. Kames and Prichard both describe our discovery of our duties as "moral intuition." I propose to limit my discussion to their account of how we see and recognize our moral duties, since their theories of moral "perception" are central to their moral philosophies and at the same time, clearly indicate how they differ from each other.

The immediate point of similarity in their views lies

in the assertion that a moral obligation is ultimate and underivable. This is Prichard's answer to the question: "What reasons can one give to the question, 'why should I be moral?'?" Prichard insists that this question is an illegitimate one, for the sense of obligation to do anything is sui generis, and not to be explicated by anything else.[1] This is also the case with specific moral obligations, for these too arise from their own nature, and not from some other thing. The answer to the question, "How do we know whether we ought to do X?" is that we must just see it -- that it just arises from the case itself.

> The sense of obligation to do, or of the rightness of, an action of a particular kind is absolutely underivative or immediate. . . . This apprehension is immediate, in precisely the sense in which a mathematical apprehension is immediate, e.g., the apprehension that this three-sided figure, in virtue of its being three-sided, must have three angles. Both apprehensions are immediate in the sense that in both insight into the nature of the subject directly leads us to recognize its possession of the predicate; and it is only stating this fact from the other side to say that in both cases the fact apprehended is self-evident.[2]

But suppose we ask the question, "how can we explain the way in which the obligation is imposed (or perceived)?" Kames' answer is immensely different from that of Prichard or Ross. Prichard and Ross answer that the obligation is perceived in the nature of the act itself. Prichard, as we have

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[1] H. A. Prichard, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" Mind, new series, XXI, 21-37. Reprinted in his Moral Obligation (Oxford, 1949), 1-17. References will be to Moral Obligation, cited henceforth as MO, 7.

[2] Ibid., 7f. Cf., W. D. Ross, The Foundations of Ethics, (Oxford, 1939), 173.

just seen, uses the analogy of mathematical intuition to explicate how this perception works.[3] If we were to take the analogy seriously, then the angles of a triangle have 180 degrees by virtue of the relation that holds between the three lines. It is inherent in the figure and the system of geometry to which it belongs. This we can cognize. It lies in the properties of triangles. So also with the obligatoriness of moral acts. They are properties inherent in certain acts.

Kames, too, would say that the obligation to perform an act is imposed by the nature of the act. But not quite in the way that Prichard or Ross would explain it. According to the intuitionists, a feature of the act itself is seen to be obligatory. Suppose we take the case of making promises. Prichard found the explication of the obligation to keep promises especially difficult.

> The paradox is one which promising shares with giving and exchanging something. For, to take the case of giving only, what we call my giving X something seems to consist in substituting for an obligation on other people's part to refrain from doing anything which would prevent my having the power to use some material thing, a similar obligation on the part of me and everyone else except X to refrain from doing anything which would prevent X having the power to use it -- so that it seems to consist in destroying one obligation and creating another. And for this reason giving and exchanging are just as paradoxical.
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> I propose to assume that we shall all allow on reflection that an obligation is a fact of a kind which it really is impossible to create or bring into existence directly.

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[3] Prichard, MO, 8; CF., W. D. Ross, The Right and the Good, (Oxford, 1930), 32. Cited henceforth as RG.

> On this assumption we shall have to allow that the only way to resolve, i.e., to get rid of, the paradox is to succeed in making out that in what we call promising to do something, what we create or bring about is not really, as the term "promising" suggests, the obligation to do the act promised, but something else, our creation of which renders us bound to do the action promised. In other words, I shall assume that on reflection we shall all have to agree that what we call "promising" to do [so-and-so]cannot really be what the term "promising" suggests it is, viz., creating an obligation to do the action, but must be the creating of something else, the creation of which gives rise to the obligation to do it . . . [4]

But let us consider a special case. Should I return the book to Jones as I promised to do? The act, not having been fulfilled, does not yet exist. Then what property of this non-existent act do I cognize as being necessary to my performance of it? Prichard suggests that there is "something implied in the existence of agreements which looks like an agreement and yet, strictly speaking, cannot be an agreement."[5] If I promised to return a book to Jones, why am I bound to do it? For Prichard, it is obvious that it is impossible by an action of any kind (like making a promise) simply thereby to create an obligation.

> If we are to create an obligation, we can do it only by creating or bringing into existence something else. And, in the case of what we call promising to do some action, that by creating which we think we are creating the obligation to do the action is, strictly speaking, certain noises. Consequently we have got to account for the fact that we do think that by making certain noises we render ourselves bound to do a certain action.[6]

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[4] H. A. Prichard, "The Obligation to Keep a Promise," in MO, 169f. Cf., Ross, RG, 47.

[5] Prichard, MO, 179.

[6] Ibid., 177.

Our duty, however, in the case we are considering, is to fulfill the promise -- a future act;[7] like Jones' "receiving what I have promised to return to him."[8]

> My act is right qua being an ensuring of one of the particular states of affairs of which it is an ensuring, viz., in the case we have taken, of my friend's receiving the book I have promised to return to him.
>
> Our duty, then, is not to do certain things which will produce certain results. Our acts, at any rate our acts of special obligation, are not right because they will produce certain results -- . . . what is essentially right is to secure the possession by my friend of what I have promised to return to him. . . . It is right because it is itself the production of a certain state of affairs. Such production is right in itself, apart from any consequences.[9]

The demand to perform the act promised seems to come objectively from the future act which had been promised, but is still undone.[10] "We have to recognize the intrinsic rightness of a certain type of act, not depending on its consequences but on its own nature."[11]

But when more details are sought for the nature of this non-psychological cognition, the property it cognizes in many cases turns out to be unique and unanalyzable.

> Thus it is plain that even though when we think ourselves bound to do some action we do feel ourselves constrained

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[7] Ross, RG, 44f.

[8] Ibid., 42.

[9] Ibid., 46f. (Italics mine.) "The word 'right,' when used in a context of moral thought, seems to me to mean very nearly . . . the same as 'obligatory' or 'what is my duty." Ross, Foundations of Ethics, 43.

[10] Ross, RG, 44ff.

[11] Ibid., 47.

> to do it, we do not mean by our being bound our feeling constrained, but something else; and again, that even if, when we do the action, we do approve it, we do not mean that we approve it. Recognition of the failure of these supposed definitions is no proof of the unique and therefore indefinable character of the thing meant by "our being morally bound to do some action," but it does help us to recognize its unique character by forcing us to recognize its difference from other things with which it has been confused.[12]

It becomes clear on this account that the moral obligation is not only something external, but also inexpressible.

The comparison between Kames and Prichard can now be made briefly. On Kames' view, (as in Butler's) seeing the nature of the act, what it actually amounts to, (and its anticipation) gives rise to the obligation. This much sounds like the account given by Prichard. But on Kames' view, we are restrained (from doing harm, for example) by our emotional repulsion towards the act. And likewise, we are attracted towards, and approve certain other acts. Some of these we also feel duty-bound to perform. The sense of duty is something internal, and particularly for Kames, non-reflective, and ipso facto not concerned with matters of fact. It is highly colored by the feelings of approval or disapproval that we feel, for the moral sense has the dual function of approving (or disapproving) an act as being fit to be done (or being unfit to be done), as well as directing one to fulfill his duty. While on Prichard's view, the moral obligation is a feature of the act which we cognize, and it is a property of the action, just as three-sidedness is the pro-

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[12] Prichard, MO, 95.

perty of triangles.

Particularly does the difference become striking when we recall that in Kames' view, moral relations are secondary relations which depend on the feelings and emotional responses of the percipients; and it is a delusion of nature that compels us to see these qualities as being a genuine part of the external world as we experience it. This further seeing of the moral sense, which is nothing like the seeing of a mathematical property, is something that we cannot help but experience, provided that we have accurately cognized the relations that actually hold in the situation that we find ourselves.

51. The aim of the remaining portion of this chapter will be to point out that there are contemporary parallels to the principal questions which Kames tried to answer, and to his methods of solving the problems.

It was seen in the discussion of Kames' analysis of the moral sense, that he was attempting to show how it is that we know our duties; what it is to be <u>morally bound to perform</u> a certain act; and what it is that goes on in our organism when we act out of a sense of duty. Kames' answer, as we saw in the preceding chapter, was developed in opposition to the explanation of moral behavior as given by Hutcheson and Hume. Kames objected to Hutcheson and Hume for their reductionist tendencies. He found this tendency objectionable because in accounting for moral behavior in terms of reflex approval or

sympathy and utility, they lost the distinction between "acting out of a sense of duty" and "acting out of one's inclinations and desires." Kames can also put this last difference in terms of "rightly guiding a man to act (in the sense of justifiably doing so)" and simply "moving him to act."

The emotive theory of ethics has been criticized in a similar manner by certain recent philosophers. My first task will be to describe this criticism and ascertain to what extent it resembles that of Kames.

My plan for the next few sections is the following. First I give a sketch of emotive ethics, taking Ayer's account as a model.[13] Then I discuss, in a general way, the objections given by some recent Oxford philosophers.[14] Later I take up a particular development of this criticism and treat it in some detail. It will be the view developed by D. W. Falk.

52. A view like Prichard's makes sentences like, "I ought to keep my promises," and "Promise keeping is right," into factual sentences about matters of fact and objective features of relationships that obtain among people.

According to the emotivists, such a description of moral language does not do justice to the affective, non-

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[13] A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth, and Logic, (London, 1936); (2nd ed. London, 1946). Cited henceforth as LTL. Also C. L. Stevenson, Ethics and Language (New Haven, Conn., 1943). Cited henceforth as EL.

[14] R. M. Hare, S. E. Toulmin, D. W. Falk, P. H. Nowell-Smith, J. O. Urmson, are representative philosophers of this group. For their writings, consult the bibliography.

factual aspects of moral propositions. If a moral cognition is like seeing that the angles of a triangle total 180 degrees, how can there be disagreements about such intuitions? Yet "what seems intuitively certain to one person may seem doubtful or even false to another."[15] Can one, as a matter of fact, ever agree about intuitions that are unanalyzable and somehow unverifiable?[16]

The emotivists therefore proceeded to give their own analysis which they thought did full justice to the ways in which moral language has persuasive and moving power. Their analysis is based on a theory of language.[17] Two different sorts of uses that language can be put to were distinguished: cognitive and non-cognitive "communication". Cognitive discourse, being about matters of fact, is subject to all the rules of verification, but non-cognitive discourse, not expressing any propositions, can neither be true nor false. "Fundamental ethical concepts are unanalyzable, in as much as there is no criterion by which one can test the validity of the judgments in which they occur."[18] Ayer then adds, that ethical terms express feelings, and are "calculated also to arouse feelings, and so to stimulate action."[19] And if, of course, we cannot

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[15]Ayer, LTL, 106; Cf., Ross, Foundations of Ethics, 38-41.

[16]Ayer, LTL, 106. Cf., Prichard, MO, 95; G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica (Cambridge, 1903), 6-8.

[17]Ayer, LTL, 33-38.

[18]Ibid., 107.

[19]Ibid., 108.

have any criterion for deciding the validity of moral concepts, then it would follow that moral statements assert nothing at all. They are pure expressions of feeling . . . and are unverifiable as a cry of pain or word of command is unverifiable because they do not express genuine propositions.[20]

Ethical judgments are expressions of feeling, and attempt (covertly) to modify the feelings of the people being spoken to. This does not mean that a discussion involving moral concepts does not incorporate matters of fact and beliefs. What appears to be an ethical judgment is "very often a factual classification of an action as belonging to some class of actions by which a certain moral attitude on the part of the speaker is habitually aroused."[21] The referents of the moral approval and disapproval are classes of actions, not particular actions.[22] A particular act is labelled to be of a certain type, and this is a matter of fact. Our emotional responses are usually elicited by the fact that it is of a certain type. This normative function of ethical terms in no way precludes the possibility that there may be descriptive elements in a moral exchange. Disagreements in moral discourse are primarily about these residual elements of description, though "a consideration of any dispute about a matter of fact will show that there can be disagreement without

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[20] Ibid., 108f.

[21] Ibid., 21.

[22] Ibid., 21.

formal contradiction."[23]

The meaning of ethical terms, then, can be defined "in terms both of the different feelings they are ordinarily taken to express, and also the different responses which they are calculated to arouse; and thus, the 'meaning' of the word 'good', in its ethical usage, is differentiated from that of the word 'duty' or the word 'ought'."[24]

On this view, statements like "promise keeping is right" and "you ought to keep your promises" are expressions of emotion -- the latter being distinguished from the former primarily then in having an explicit imperative form.[25] Saying that something is good or right or ought to be done, exhibits your approval of such acts, and attempts to persuade a man to do so as well. The language of morals is a tool for persuasion, to the end that disagreements in attitudes may be resolved.[26]

How this view came under scrutiny and critical attack is the topic of the next section. I first describe the general pattern of analysis before going into a case study.

53. Much as it does injustice to the complex methodology of the recent analysts at Oxford, it will help to describe it before going into specific details.

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[23] Ibid., 21f.

[24] Ibid., 108.

[25] Cf., Stevenson, EL, 26; Ayer, LTL, 108.

[26] Stevenson, EL, 14f.

Like the emotivists' description of moral argumentation, the Oxford view is also based on a theory of meaning. For the emotivists, their theory of meaning was based on their theory of verification: words (and sentences that can be compounded out of them) have meaning if there is something to which they correspond, and which verifies them.[27] Ethical words have nothing to correspond to them, and that is why the emotivists were able to say that they were unverifiable.[28]

But on the Oxford analysts' view, the meaning of ethical words like "good," "right," and "ought" (like any other word) are determined, not by looking at the words themselves, nor to the thing to which they are thought to refer. Rather, they ought to be seen in the context of the sentences in which they occur, and more, these sentences themselves ought to be scrutinized in the behavorial context in which they are used.

To what use do people put moral words? In what sorts of contexts do they arise? The contexts that are to be scrutinized are not merely the sentences in which these words occur, but the ways in which these sentences themselves

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[27]Cf., "3.21: To the configuration of a simple sign in the sentential sign corresponds the configuration of the objects in the state of affairs." Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (London, 1922), 47-49; Cf., Ayer, LTL, 10f, 99.

[28]Ayer, LTL, 108f.

are used.[29] In what circumstances do people use sentences containing "ought"? What other sentences usually follow? What sorts of behavior? Are the inter-relationships between these ought-sentences and those that accompany them similar to those that hold between other moral sentences and their contexts? The process of finding these contexts and comparing them has been described as "mapping the grammar of moral (or prescriptive) speech."[30]

The net result, of course, is to discover similarities and differences in the various modes of linguistic behavior. The first thing to do is to see all the ways in which various patterns of linguistic usage differ, and whether these differences are important to us or not, before beginning to group them together. The end of the analysis is not translation. Reductive translation was Ayer's intent in substituting one set of sentences, expressing wishes and commands (which were thought to be simpler and clearer), for sentences containing words like "good" and "ought".[31] The

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[29] Cf., "The way in which each utterance is used, we discovered, was to be understood fully only as a part of a larger activity: as soon as this frame was borne in mind, the logical properties of the mode of reasoning were seen to be related directly to the function it performs, and this again to the purpose of the activity of which it is a part." S. E. Toulmin, An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics (Cambridge, 1950), 84. Cited henceforth as Reason in Ethics.

[30] D. W. Falk, "Goading and Guiding," Mind, New Series, LXII, 170. Cited henceforth as "Goading".

[31] "Over the undecided region [i.e., the vagueness in natural English] common usage permits us to do as we please." Cf., Stevenson, EL, 35.

purpose of analysis, rather, is to discover the minute (yet significant) ways in which one mode of discourse shades off into another -- and by discovering these differences, begin to understand in a better way the job that each uniquely performs.

Before I take up a particular analysis of prescriptive speech for detailed examination, I propose to discuss some typical Oxford analysts as a group, to show that there are similarities in their method as well as their "program"; and that the philosophy of D. W. Falk belongs to this group, but that there are ways in which he is unique.

53. The philosophers that I am going to consider as a group are Toulmin, Hare, Urmson, Falk, and Nowell-Smith, since they have shown a similar interest in the logic of moral language.[32]

First, the ways in which they are in agreement. They take as the starting point of their discussion the emotivist claim that ethical words, not describing any fact or asserting any proposition, must be meaningless, and can be identified with expressing one's feelings, or commanding someone to do something.[33] But when we consider "describing something" as a procedure, this activity may be contrasted with a number of others.[34] With each pair of contrasting

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[32] See the Bibliography for their writings.

[33] Ayer, LTL, 108.

[34] S. E. Toulmin and K. Baier, "On Describing," Mind, New Series, LXI, 13-38.

activities, a different facet of the process of describing is brought out. One can interpret, explain, value, declare, tell, account for, predict, reprimand, soliloquize, pray. Each of these differs from describing in a different way. Describing is marked off from other kinds of activity not by the forms of the sentences that occur in it, but by the uses to which these sentences are put.[35] "Just as the same sentence is not confined to a single role on all occassions, so also it may have more than one role on a particular occasion of use."[36] For example, one can embarrass someone by just describing to him his appearance to others.

> Among the sorts of classification in which the words "describe," "description" and "descriptive" do not belong are the following: grammatical classification as indicative, imperative, adjectival . . . stylistic classification, as poetic, slang, technical, flowery . . . and classification by effect, as boring, ineffective, discouraging, moving, stirring, heart-rending, blood-curdling . . .[37]

The net result is to remove the sharp distinction that one might have initially drawn between being descriptive and being prescriptive; or between being descriptive and being normative, etc.

Of course, these philosophers will agree that ethical statements are, as a group, radically different from factual statements. The intuitionists, the emotivists, and the

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[35]Toulmin and Baier, "On Deserting," 28; Falk, "Goading," 147f.

[36]Toulmin and Baier, "On Describing," 25.

[37]Ibid., 25.

Oxford analysts in this respect are in agreement, that rules governing "ought-sentences" are not the same as those governing "factual statements." But if ethical words are characterized by the ways in which they do not describe, can you contradict them? Can you prove ethical statements wrong? Can you show that "stealing is not right," and that "Hitler ought not to have burned the Jews"? Despite Ayer's contention that "disputes about questions of value are really disputes about questions of fact,"[38] the worry increased that on the emotivist theory moral discourse is made impossible. How can you convince someone that he is wrong? How is it possible to show someone that he ought, really, to pursue such and such a course of action? Persuasion on the emotivist view becomes subjective, non-rational and capricious. "If so, there is no assurance . . . that misguiding won't be used as well as guiding."[39] The cure would be to show that what we think we do in everyday life -- talk about moral problems, make decisions, and aid each other in making proper moral choices are not merely expressions of emotions and causal influencing of other people by words.

Against the emotivists, these analysts insist that ethical statements are beliefs, and we must allow truth and falsity to apply to moral judgments.[40] This affects reasoning

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[38]Ayer, LTL, 21f.

[39]Falk, "Goading," 167.

[40]Cf., R. M. Hare, Language of Morals (Oxford, 1952), 10f; Toulmin, Reason in Ethics, 21ff.

in morals since ethical statements acquire many of the features of cognitive statements, allowing many factual statements to function as reasons to support ethical statements. The connection between moral judgments and the reasons given to support them becomes "logical," not merely psychological. This is brought out by Toulmin very clearly. He suggests in his account of moral reasoning, that there are at least two kinds of logic; the ordinary logic of formal discourse, and moral logic.

> We must examine . . . the logical rules to be applied to ethical arguments, for there are ethical arguments consisting partly of logical (demonstrative) inferences, partly of scientific (inductive) inferences, and partly of the form of inference peculiar to ethical arguments, by which we pass from factual reasons to an ethical conclusion -- what we may naturally call evaluative inference.[41]

In like manner, Nowell-Smith says

> For the concept of logical implication or analytic connection between statements I propose to substitute the concept of "contextual implication," and for the concept of self-contradiction that of "logical oddness."
>
> The major problem of theoretical ethics was that of bridging the gap between decisions, ought-sentences, injunctions and sentences used to give advice on the one hand and the statements of facts that constitute the reasons for these on the other.
>
> I shall say that a question is "logically odd" if there appears to be no further room for it in its context because it has already been answered.[42]

But similar modes of analysis can be put to different uses, depending on the interest of the analyst. A politician-philosopher might distinguish "describing" from "influencing"

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[41] Toulmin, Reason in Ethics, 38.

[42] P. H. Nowell-Smith, Ethics (London, 1954), 80-83.

and "legislating" for his purposes. Or an art critic "describing" from "appreciating" and "appraising." And the context that they select may differ as well. In this respect, the analysis of ethical discourse by Toulmin is interesting.

Toulmin's analysis may be stated in terms of his key labels, "objective," "subjective," and "imperative" functions of ethical discourse.[43] When engaged in an ethical argument, we employ reasons imperatively, to urge the person to see the validity of our reasons; at the same time, we express our approval, our emotional concern and interest in the issues involved. This expression of personal interest and involvement is the sense in which ethical arguments are subjective. It is in no way esoterically private or capricious, for ethical reasoning is inter-personal, and is evaluated to be valid or invalid by a rule of procedure prescribed by the community to which the persons belong. These rules of procedure are maxims held to be true by the community and they are objective in the sense that the majority of the members of the community are in accord with it. These maxims are not openly expressed, nor are they usually openly examined except in times of crisis.[44] But the important thing is that the community assents to them. They are presented to the members of the community as worthy of assent, and worthy of use as measures by which to gauge and govern other activities;

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[43] Discussed in Part I of Reason in Ethics.

[44] Ibid., 177ff.

people are conditioned to accept these maxims as "true" and somehow woven into the structure of the universe.

Ethics, thus, has a sociological orientation. Moral behavior is seen by Toulmin as the process by which we achieve a harmonious satisfaction of desires and interests;[45] and the function of ethics is "to correlate our feelings and behavior in such a way as to make the fulfillment of everyone's aims and desires as far as possible, compatible."[46] The very notion of a community of interest (a purposive society, a realm of ends) limits the scope of ethics.[47] In a moral disagreement, there is always, to begin with, some sets of "beliefs" on which the two disputants are agreed. And it is by means of this area of agreement that they resolve their attitudinal differences. Whether such methods of agreement can be used by persons from two very different societies is a difficult empirical question for Toulmin. Nowell-Smith and Hare, in a like manner, venture into the community to describe the scope and limits of ethical discourse.[48] Suppose we had decided to act in a certain manner, and were asked to justify our decision. A complete justification

> would consist of a complete account of its effects, together with a complete account of the principles which it observed, and the effects of observing these princi-

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[45] Ibid., 223.

[46] Ibid., 137.

[47] Ibid., 224.

[48] Nowell-Smith, Ethics, 98f; Hare, Language of Morals, 69.

> ples . . . Thus, if pressed to justify a decision completely, we have to give a complete specification of the way of life of which it is a part. This complete specification it is impossible in practice to give; the nearest attempts are those given by the great religions, expecially those which can point to historical persons who carried out the way of life in practice. Suppose, however, that we can give it. If the inquirer still goes on asking "But why should I live like that?" then there is no further answer to give him, because we have already, ex hypothesi, said everything that could be included in the further answer.[49]

The analysis by Falk, however, takes quite another direction. He finds that the inter-personal approach to ethics such as Toulmin's leads "strongly to skepticism in the matter of ultimate ends and preferences, and their corrigibility by reason."[50] In the last steps of the ethical argument, one must leave others to make the judgments of relevance and validity for themselves; "they are not among the prerequisites of rational guidance which we can deliver to them."[51] Of course, interpersonal moral discussions must be studied; but one must also pay attention to ways in which a person, faced with a moral problem, makes decisions for himself in the first person. Thus, Falk's interest in moral philosophy is not the social context of moral argumentation, but the phenomenology of moral behavior; of motivation, of how we discover and see our duties, and do it for ourselves.

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[49] Hare, Language of Morals, 69.

[50] D. W. Falk, "Action-guidance by Reasons," (Unpublished, hectographed article in two parts, written at the University of Michigan, spring semester, 1957), I, 20. (Italics mine.) Cited henceforth as "Action-guidance".

[51] Ibid., 20.

The reasons for my choice of the ethics of Falk as a detailed case study in the remaining sections of this chapter are two-fold. (1) He is allied to the philosophers of the Oxford school, and his account of moral language is developed in opposition to the emotive analysis of ethical words. (2) But his main interest lies in questions about the relationship of duty to motivation, of reason-giving to seeing one's duty. These were the topics with which Kames dealt, and thus, Falk and Kames lend themselves to a comparison.

In the use of prescription and commands for the purpose of persuasion, Falk finds three modes of speech behavior. These he calls "goading," "guiding," and "ought-ing". I describe the process of this analysis in the following section.

54. The emotivists described the function of moral language as expressive and evocative; and they especially stressed the imperative function of sentences like, "You ought to keep your promises." Falk agrees that "you ought to" has a practical role like "do!" But does it follow, he asks, that their logical properties are alike?[52] He notes that on the account given by Stevenson, for example, moral imperatives are quasi-imperatives, and are thus, not pure imperatives. But to make good the claim that they are similar, the emotivists must examine the dissimilarities. And these dissimilarities must be shown to be irrelevant to

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[52]Falk, "Goading," 146.

the "issue" -- the issue being the question of what is the essential similarity in the functional features of imperatives and "ought" sentences.[53]

Where then did the emotivists go awry? Falk finds two points of attack.[54] (1) Emotivists have claimed that moral statements are not assertions, since they are "normative."[55] And normative statements like "Spitting prohibited" prescribe a norm. "But the term [norm] is not of ordinary language, and there are no settled rules for using it,"[56] since samples of its use in common speech cannot be found. And if we look at its use by philosophers and lawyers, we discover an ambiguity. To say that a sentence is normative might mean that it reports a law as being in effect, or that it in itself issues a law. (2) The second point of attack hinges on this ambiguity. Prescribing a norm, it has been claimed, is different from stating a fact about a norm (like its being in effect). "You ought to" tells someone to do something. Hence, it has been claimed that it cannot be a report that something is the case. And this claim is correct. But Falk insists that a statement can both state a fact and prescribe.[57] In saying to someone,

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[53] Ibid., 146.

[54] Ibid.,147ff.

[55] Cf., Ayer, LTL, 21.

[56] Falk, "Goading," 147.

[57] Cf., Toulmin and Baier, "On Describing," 26.

"smoking is forbidden here," you report the rules of the railway company, but not "for information, as in a lecture on railway bylaws, but for direction, as a way of telling someone to stop doing something."[58] A statement of fact can be evocative, expressive, directive as well as informative, depending on what you say, how say it, in what context, for what purpose.

55. The distinction between "guiding" and "goading" as modes of prescriptive behavior is drawn by Falk in terms of the degree to which we say that one mode is more rational than the other; i.e., (1) to what degree is there "giving of reasons" in either of these modes of behavior? (2) To what degree can one distinguish these reasons as being "good" reasons and "bad" reasons?

Prescription is persuasion. It may be direct, like saying "do!" or indirect, like saying "smoking causes cancer," or "smoking is prohibited in these buildings." And in the activity of persuading people, the indirect method has been sometimes described as primarily a way of supporting non-rational methods by other means. "There is some measure of coercion in every direct telling or asking, even the mildest 'please'; one feels one is being goaded into responding. But coercive intention can be denied of every indirect plea; the speaker can claim that he is only trying to guide, not to goad; he is not himself doing the urging,

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[58] Falk, "Goading," 149.

he is only 'letting the facts speak' for him."[59]

(1) Direct Persuasion: The feature of direct persuasion that we first notice is that in so doing, you voice your wish -- what it is that you want done. But, merely voicing them does not make them prescriptive, for one could utter a wish, and then follow it up by remarks such as "don't do it merely because I say so," which removes the prescriptive force of the speaker's wishes. Thus, pleading is made direct by the fact that the utterance does not rely on what is said in order to be effective. "Any prescriptive utterance thus tends to manifest something about one's own mood and concern in speaking; and in direct pleading one relies for effect on what one's speaking makes manifest as much as on what it says."[60] Persuasion depends on the whole process of what one is doing as well as what one is saying. "Hence the way people explain their compliance with direct pleas: 'because one was told to"; not just 'because one was told something."[61]

This completes Falk's description of direct persuasion. But even at this, he is afraid that there may be an oversimplification. Pleading directly seems coercive. How do acts of coercion differ from involuntary acts?[62] Prescription (what Falk also calls pleading) has been distinguished

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[59] Ibid., 151.

[60] Ibid., 153.

[61] Ibid., 153.

[62] Ibid., 154.

into rational and non-rational prescriptions. Persuasion by rational methods "is purely by reason" and not coercive. But there are forms of direct pleading in which we find something that is sometimes called a "reason" for doing things. Orders, threats, bribes are referred in common speech as supplying these reasons. Falk partially meets the difficulty by distinguishing "reason" from "cause".

> One speaks of a "reason" where one can ask for the consideration which induced someone to do something; but not all behavior has reasons. A shout makes one flinch, but it is the cause of one's flinching, not the consideration which induced one to flinch; and direct pleading partly causes behavior directly by what it does. One may succumb to the policeman's voice or bearing not from any considerations, but like the snake obeying its charmer. This much, direct pleading is the continuation of violence by other means. It is coercive in the sense of controlling others while by-passing, if not paralyzing, any kind of voluntary contribution to their own behavior.[63]

There is a sense in which one persuades rationally, when he adduces or proffers a reason. But a direct command "imports" a reason into the situation by what it does; that is, it creates a reason. Threats and bribes, though less obviously do the same.

> Compared with having force used on one's body or nervous system, to yield to put up incentives is to yield to "rational methods" and "voluntarily". But in another use of these terms, this would be a travesty of the facts. A child is not taking its medicine "purely of its own accord" if only because it was offered a sweet, or threatened to have to do without it; nor would this be the occasion to boast how amenable to "reason" it was. Had it taken the medicine on the ground that it would do it good, this would have been a different matter. Here, what is meant by "rational

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[63] Ibid., 154.

> methods" is to persuade purely by adducing reasons which pre-exist in the nature of the act and its circumstances; and by "acting of one's own accord" to act purely from the consideration that there are such reasons.[64]

To act on a reason (on the consideration that) is to act with a thought in mind that a certain state of affairs was the fact of the case and these facts were"relevant" to his action.

In the sense of rational method which Falk wants to introduce, "telling," asking, threatening, or bribing are the negation of using rational method but rather a way of making people do things than of their own accord.[65] This is to goad. But all goading is not coercing. "One is goaded or coaxed when one is offered a bribe or a tempting deal. But no one can claim that he was coerced by bribing." The point is that coercion may be borne willingly or not. We act voluntarily when we do something in order to obtain something wanted; what is done to avoid something unwanted is not done voluntarily. When bribed, we respond willingly to being goaded; when threatened, unwillingly. All direct pleading tends to coerce in this way. It persuades by influencing causally.

(2) Indirect Persuasion: Indirect pleading can be explained more briefly. It is in most ways the reverse of direct pleading. To prescribe indirectly is to present facts for consideration, facts which must belong to the situation

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[64] Ibid., 155.

[65] Ibid., 156f.

as it is, and not to one's own importing. It relies purely on what is said and not how it is said; so that it always makes sense to ask of an indirect telling, "What did it say," and "was it true?"[66]

If, therefore, in the context of indirectly persuading, one were to say "I want you to," then one usually adds, "but don't do it because I want you to," for an indirect persuasion usually presents facts and reasons that are impersonal, of concern to others. Of course, all of the impersonal matter may be said evocatively, but to do so beyond a point, when the listener begins to notice it, makes the use of evocation (if it is being used deliberately) backfire. A fact, even an impersonal one, said vehemently, begins to function like a hint -- and becomes effective by the tone in which it is said, rather than in the facts communicated. It is like saying unpleasantly, "The bus leaves in ten minutes," to a guest one wants to get rid of right away.

Impersonal pleas are persuasive by proferring a fact; facts which one claims are sufficient reasons, if heeded -- though this claim is not verbalized. But it is understood, for otherwise why offer that particular fact for consideration?

Indirect pleading Falk calls guiding. It is "to influence without compulsion. One is not creating an evocative situation, one is merely using the situation as it is. One is trying to make others do only what they will acknow-

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[66] Ibid., 157; Cf., Nowell-Smith, Ethics, 77f.

ledge they have independently a reason for doing."[67]

> Wherever guiding is used as a method, persuasion has an other-regarding orientation: looking at actions from other people's point of view, trying to make others do what they would want, or would have an incentive to do, if they were not ignorant or obtuse.[68]

56. On the basis of these two ways of describing prescriptive speech, Falk can now criticize the emotivist view.[69] He has two criticisms: (1) To say that moral words are used to evoke a response makes morality all goading. The suggestion in so describing moral discourse is that thereby we are trying to get our own way to some personal end. To describe moral discourse as "trying to reach an agreement in attitude" has the same overtones. And this makes a travesty of moral behavior for this reason. If direct pleading is supported by evocative observations, it is irrelevant whether the observations are used to guide or to misguide.[70] No such distinction is possible; for any fact can be taken in hand and imported. "One can allege that something is the case, knowing it is not; or quietly not mention what one knows is the case besides; or put forward what is the case knowing it would provide no good reason on dispassionate consideration."[71] For in commands and in evocative telling, how it is said is what matters most.

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[67] Falk, "Goading," 160.

[68] Ibid., 161.

[69] Ibid., 163f.

[70] Ibid., 167.

[71] Ibid., 162.

(2) To identify "oughts" with commands and evocation ignores many of the ways in which using the word "ought" is like guiding. "Commands and demands, in their ordinary sense, can only issue from persons, capable of displaying their will impressively."[72] "But usage suggests [that] what is done purely because one ought to . . . is done purely from considerations relating to the nature of the act and its circumstances; it is precisely not what is done because one was told to."[73]

The fact that saying "you ought to do this action" is related to being able to give reasons for it, is shown by a curious feature of a moral "ought". This feature also points out that a moral ought is different from giving reasons. Saying "you ought to" is different in type from saying "It's getting late," to guide someone to leave, for "You ought to go," is not given as an alternative or in addition to saying that it is getting late.

> The fact is "you ought to" is not used to replace or supplement any of the features of the situation ordinarily put forward in persuasion by rational methods. On the contrary, it only works in conjunction with them. "You ought to go now" is incompletely persuasive by itself. . . . In order to make moral persuasion as effective as it might be one will mention any feature of the situation whatever which may count in the circumstances in favour of the doing which one is trying to induce; and only then will one add, if one does, "and so you ought."[74]

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[72] Ibid., 165.

[73] Ibid., 165.

[74] Ibid., 166.

"Ought" in this manner can occur only in the use of rational methods of persuasion.

57. I now summarize what has been accomplished in the preceeding three sections. Guiding is related to the use of rational method, in which we point out various facts which we know to be relevant. Thus, of the facts adduced which serve as reasons, it is always appropriate to ask, "Is it so?" and "Is it true?"

Direct persuasion is in its general pattern, opposed to indirect persuasion and the use of rational method. Here, how it is said, in what tone, how impressively counts a greal deal. And the saying of "Get out!" or "Don't smoke!" imports, or creates a fact by causing it. To ask "Why?" of direct commands like "Leave the house right away!" (said in a harsh voice) is pointless.

Being told "You ought to go," or seeing for oneself that some action is a duty, clearly falls neither into the first nor to the second pattern of prescriptive speech. Sentences with "ought" in them are not the use of direct commands. For one thing, when told you ought to do this, you can reasonably ask, "Why?" (One can also ask, "Is it true that it is really my duty?" and "Ought I really do it?" without being pointless.) By telling someone that an act is a duty, one makes a claim that he has reasons to back it up. Moreover, unlike goading, how you say, "You ought not . . ." is irrelevant. Saying "you ought to," too harshly or angrily raises a doubt in the listener's mind, and he can retort,

"what are you trying to do, force me?"

But saying, "You ought to," or "I ought to do it," is not guiding because, "You ought to," does not function as a reason. One points at all the facts relevant to the case that are worth considering and then says, "So you ought." And such a statement is not on a par with the facts that one can adduce.

I can now make some initial comparisons with Kames. The first thing to mention, of course, is a difference which is quite apparent. Falk's account (like that of most Oxford philosophers) is grounded in linguistic analysis and is largely a study of the logical structure of certain kinds of sentences or an analysis of "grammar". Kames' account, on the other hand, is primarily a psychological one. But there are traces of what we might call logical points: for example when Kames says that to have considered and come to a decision, and not to be able to give a reason is sheer idiocy. But his attention is squarely located in the study of the psychological constituents operative in moral behavior.

The first point of similarity is that Falk's account, like Kames', is provoked by an earlier theory which both felt was too reductive. Both their accounts, moreover, were provoked by emotive theories of ethics. Kames tried to show that explaining moral behavior by the language of approval alone is not enough; Falk that the use of the "ought" has clear differences from direct commands and by identifying the two, one loses sight of the unique but important function of

"ought-sentences".

The second similarity is that both their theories are tri-partite in pattern. This needs elaboration, and will turn out to be not quite as trivial as it sounds. This comparison, moreover, will lead us to questions about motivation and the status of cognizing the moral ought.

In saying that Falk's analysis is tri-partite, all I mean is that he separated out in his analysis (in this case the logic of prescriptive speech), three distinct elements that are operative. His description of how these three patterns of behavior are related, created problems which were also the problems that Kames had to face.

First I list what the three elements were. Then how the problems arose.

58. The elements were the following: (1) guiding, which is the use of reasons to influence behavior. (2) Goading, which is moving someone to act by causing them to do so. One does not merely rely on pre-existing incentives in the person who is to be influenced. One can "liberally create them, and pile them up to enforce any end, however purely personal or capricious."[75] (3) Saying "You ought to," which is neither of the above.

The parallels with Kames are obvious. Directing, using reason, adducing the facts of the case, are the use of reflection and the faculty of reason. Goading is, in

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[75] Ibid., 157.

Kames' terms, motivating a person to act, by influencing his desires and propensities. The moral sense recognizes duty and says, "You ought to." The moral sense, of course, is neither guiding nor goading in Falk's sense. In this connection, the fact that Kames says that the moral sense guides, and the fact that Falk says that to use the rational method of persuasion is to guide, makes little difference. (That they agree will become clearer at the end of this chapter.)

However one accounts for the inter-relationship among these three, there were certain consequences that had to be avoided. (1) Not to describe the relationship between duty and motivation in such a way so that only when one had a motive for acting could we say that a man had a duty to act in such a manner. For this would make it impossible for anyone to have, ever, the conflict between duty and desire (or what he wants to do), for if he saw an act to be a duty and didn't want to do it, it would not be a duty that he <u>had</u> to fulfill, anyway. (2) At the same time, to describe the relation between the faculty of reason and action in such a way so as to avoid the puzzle about how a person with <u>all</u> the known reasons for doing an act should still not do so.

The problems that arise are all concerned with the relation of motives to duty. (1) Can a sense of duty motivate? (2) How does the process of giving reasons to someone relate to motivating him? (3) How should one describe the nature of moral cognition -- i.e., the nature of saying "so you ought," or "it's your duty."

I try to show in the following sections that both Kames and Falk were faced with these problems; and I take them up in the above order.

59. Kames, it will be remembered, described the function of the moral sense as a guide to moral conduct. By the faculty of reflection, a man sees the relation or situation that he is in, and this perception raises a sense of pleasure, and a special kind of approval. The moral sense intuits, at the same time, an obligation (an ought-ness) which binds the man to perform a certain act, and directs him to do so. At the same time, pleasure and approval raise a desire, and a motive to satisfy the desire. A moral man is the sort of man who has the disposition to be guided by the moral sense, and to decide and choose the course of action which the moral sense approves (or, in another locution used by Kames, to reinforce the "connection between the will and the prevailing motive" [M,171]). Of any such cases of decision-making, the agent, if questioned, ought to be able to give reasons for his decisions. The moral sense, however, is non-reflective. Thus reasons -- other than reiterating the fact that one has intuited a sense of duty or an obligation (that is, that it was moral) -- would be facts gathered by the faculty of reason in the examination of the situation. What status has this non-reflective perception of the moral sense? Kames says it can act as a kind of motive, but this motive, not being a desire, wears a difference.

On Kames' account, there are the following constituents of a moral act: (1) the facts of the case and their consequences which we can discover on reflection and observation, except, (2) the fact that this action was intuited (perceived or seen) by the moral sense as a duty. (3) The moral sense (the sense of duty) which guides and can be a kind of motive. (M,171) (4) There must be a motive (in the sense of a correlative of a desire) present to move the man to act.

In an earlier discussion, on the moral sense,[76] the question was raised as to whether on Kames' view, (a) only acts that one was moved to perform could be duties; and (b) whether the sense of duty (a realization that a certain act was an obligation) itself could move a man to act -- i.e., function as a motive. I concluded that if Kames' answer is that only acts that are motivated are duties, then he is mistaken, for such a view makes it impossible to have situations where we could know an act to be a duty and still not be able to bring ourselves around to doing it. The case, as Kames leaves it, makes the connection between duty and action too tight, so that it is difficult to see how one can ever have a conflict between desire and duty.

The argument that Kames used to reach such a conclusion, must have been something like the following:

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[76]See Chapter III, section 33, of this dissertation.

(1) Men cannot be obligated to do what they cannot do.[77]

(2) It is impossible to act without a motive.

(3) From these it would follow that we cannot be obligated to do acts which we have no motive to do . . . and the discovery that an act is an obligation must, also, be the discovery of a motive for acting. And we have already seen that Kames holds that it is impossible to act without a motive.[78] This proposition is one of his cardinal points in his psychological determinism. And so we find him saying, "No action is a duty, to the performance of which we are not prompted by some natural motive or principle." (M,54)

At the same time, however, he wanted the sense of duty, the moral sense, to be able to direct (and motivate) men into action. Can the moral sense motivate? Kames' answer to this second question is that the moral sense is an indirect motive, and can only act as a guide. And a moral man is one who has the disposition to choose in such a way as to satisfy those desires that the moral sense approves. (M,178) That is, he has the disposition to heed the moral sense. He is also the sort of man, who in any moral decision, can, if asked, give reasons for his decision. (M,159)

60. A similar discussion was carried on by Falk. He asked the question: what does the demand for a motive or

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[77]To put it briefly, "ought implies can."

[78]Cf., "A motiveless action or 'acte gratuit' is logically impossible." Nowell-Smith, Ethics, 124.

reason, as a condition of anyone's ability to act amount to?"[79] His answer, which constitutes an analysis of "motives" is more complex than Kames', though here again, parallels may be found.

"Having a motive" is used in various senses in common speech, and it isn't appropriate always to equate (as Kames did in his official doctrine) "having a motive" with "having a desire". A reason for a motive Falk defines as

> a moving or impelling thought, the thought of that for the sake, or in view of which, some act is done: and I myself see no intelligible alternative to saying that it "moves" or "impels" in the sense that it functions as a cause of actions, in the conventional sense of cause as an antecedent implying a consequent by a rule of invariable connection. I should therefore, describe a motive as a <u>causa rationis</u>, a mental antecedent which, when attended to by a person, and in otherwise comparable conditions, will invariably be followed by an orientation of his organism towards the action thought of, in a way which, except for the intervention of distractions, counter-motives . . . will terminate in the action itself.[80]

A motive, then, for Falk is a moving <u>thought</u>, a thought of something or other requiring action, such as impels us into the necessary action. But to say that there is something, the thought of which would (if present) move us to seek it, is different from saying that we "desire" it. There are, then, Falk concludes, two senses in which someone can say that there was a motive for an action; either in an <u>occurent</u>

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[79] D. W. Falk, "Ought and Motivation," <u>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</u>, XLVIII, 111-38; Reprinted in Sellars and Hospers, <u>Readings in Ethical Theory</u>, 492-510. Cited henceforth as "Ought", with references to <u>Readings in Ethical Theory</u>; 494.

[80] <u>Ibid.</u>, 495.

sense or a dispositional sense.[81] In neither sense is a motive identical with desire.

In the occurent sense, a motive is actually present, so that "he is being impelled (or caused) by the thought of some act to do it." In this sense, to have a motive to do some act and "desiring to do it" would be equivalent if "desiring" merely meant "being impelled". But Falk suspects that this equivalence is not borne out by common usage.[82] It seems to him that "desiring" is used not for being impelled, but for feeling impelled; and the latter is a composite statement, asserting that we are impelled, and that we have perceptual evidence for being so. Saying that someone has a desire, thus, is saying more than that someone has a motive or is impelled. Consistently, neither impulses nor desires ought to be called causes, "since our having an impulse is not the cause of our acting, but the very fact of our being caused to act."[83] Our introspective psychology seems to support this by the fact that "we feel desire in proportion as our impulses are in difficulties,"[84] and seems to depend on the extent to which the passage of motives into action is blocked by psychological or physical barriers.

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[81] Ibid., 495f; Cf., Gilbert Ryle, Concept of Mind, (London, 1949), 117f.

[82] However, he qualifies it by saying "it seems so to him." Falk, "Ought", 496.

[83] Ibid., 496.

[84] Ibid., 496, footnote 1.

In the dispositional sense, there is no connection between "having a motive" and "desiring". In this sense, a person "is said to have a motive when the thought of some act (either as such, or as having some property or effect) is capable of inducing him to do it; and the fact that someone would be made to do some act if he dwelt on the thought of it, in no way entails that he is being made, or desires to do it."[85] As a matter of fact, someone may have a very strong reason for doing something dispositionally, and yet may actually be desiring quite another act (because he has not given thought to the situation he is in at all).

Falk's analysis has a number of difficulties which make it less satisfactory than it appears.

Falk says that motives can be occurent or dispositional. In the dispositional sense, a motive is never a desire, for "to have a motive is to have a moving thought of an act . . . which is capable of inducing him." Only in an occurent sense, says Falk, can there be any relationship between desire and a motive. But desires can be both occurent and dispositional. I can desire money and to be rich, but desire to sleep now. I can desire a painting by Picasso, but not constantly. Further, on Falk's account, there does not seem to be any reason why we cannot substitute "to have a motive is to have a moving thought of an act . . ." for "to have a motive is to have a desire for a state of affairs,

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[85] Ibid., 496.

for the sake of which . . ." A moving, or impelling thought, after all, sounds like something passional. Nothing in ordinary discourse seems to prevent this substitution; what prevents it is the fact that Falk uses "to desire" to mean "to be caused". Desiring Falk explains as feeling impelled; and to feel impelled is to be impelled and to have perceptual evidence for it. But here again, it seems to make perfect sense to say, "I feel impelled to do such-and-such," and not be actually impelled. Falk has further elucidations to make before his case can be settled. The problem, admittedly, is a very difficult one.

Kames' doctrine was that motives were the desires to bring about an end in actions exerted as means to an end. "Thus," he says, "the same mental act that is termed desire with respect to an end in view is termed a motive with respect to its power to determine one to act." (C,i,46) All motives were desires, looked at from another vantage point. Only desires were motives. Thus, when he came to consider the moral sense, he could not say that the sense of duty too could act as a motive, since the moral sense was not a moving (or exciting) faculty. Yet, at the same time, he felt that duty, in a sense, was its own sanction (and could act as a "motive"). Thus, he seems to modify his answer by adding that the moral sense can be an indirect motive; one that has the power to function dispositionally in a moral man who pays attention to it. This is clearly Kames' answer to the question about the motive power of the moral sense, though

he does not develop it fully.

The conclusion that I reach is that Falk's account of motivation and its relation to duty is still incomplete. Kames and Falk are both agreed, however, that the sense in which a sense of duty can be a motive is a dispositional one. There still remains the question of what sort of faculty the moral sense is. We approach this topic by considering first the relationship that holds between "reason-giving" and action. In the following section, the background of this problem is discussed.

61. How does the process of giving reasons to support a moral judgment relate to conduct? Moral judgments are meant to influence action. How could cold hard matters of fact, and the faculty of reason move a man to act? Hume said that the reason is inert, and that reason is, and ought to be, the slave of the passions. Then any reason that one might give in moral argumentation would have to influence the passions. This is to motivate.

Suppose Smith tells Jones that he has a "duty" to perform. On the emotivist view, this ascription of duty expresses Smith's approval of the act, and his hope that Jones will do so as well. Jones will examine the act, its possible consequences, and what the act itself amounts to. All of this study of the case will yield "knowledge of facts" -- and Smith as well as Jones can supply them. The emotivists hold that this must be all the knowledge that

guidance can require. For there are no other facts available.[86]

> It is plain that a persuasive reason must be able to determine people to choose or reject certain courses of action. It must therefore be conceived as a kind of cause, as residing in such knowledge or belief that is causally geared to "changes in attitude". As Hutcheson put this: a reason that can figure in action-guidance must be an "exciting truth".[87] And what is an "exciting truth"? Surely one which will excite when it is known. For, if it did not excite when it is known, what could be the point of calling it exciting?[88]

Known facts, therefore, on this view, will influence people to action in proportion as they are reasons.

There are several consequences of this view. The first is that there is no way of evaluating reasons as either being appropriate or relevant except as they move or not. (That this consequence might be objectionable, is related to the feature of goading where any fact may be imported into a process of persuasion provided it did propel the victim into action.) For, on this view, how can you know that you have got a good reason, except by discovering that you are being influenced?[89]

Falk's criticism of such a view as this is that its use of the word "reason" does not fit the way in which it is used in common speech.

There are two senses in which one may say that someone

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[86]Ayer, LTL, 21f; 106ff.

[87]Cf., Hutcheson, Illustrations, 203ff.

[88]Falk, "Action-guidance," II, 2f.

[89]Ibid., II, 6.

> has a reason in a consideration before him: namely, (1) that he has a reason for wanting to do a thing, or (2) that he has a reason for doing it, one which "tells" in its favor. In both these senses, one may either have just some reasons or a decisive reason; either some or a decisive reason for wanting to do it, or for doing it.[90]

Reason for wanting to do something plays a causal role. And we mention reasons in this sense, to explain why our attitudes are what they are. This is one sense in which self-guidance depends on self-knowledge. But there is another important thing we do: we explore the objective situation that we are in, to see whether in it there are features (reasons, facts) that would change our attitudes. And if we discover something, we can say, "Here I have a reason for or against doing the thing."[91] One is no longer saying anything about wanting to do the thing, but only for doing it.

A further consequence of this view and an important one is that a reason, in this usage, is not something "which inevitably will excite or persuade one as soon as it has become known:

> On the contrary the grammar of "tell" leaves it quite open whether a consideration which "tells" will also compel. What tells against overeating may be known to one and not deter one, even if it tells decisively, and one is aware that it does. The consideration gives one cause for a change of attitude, but "giving" cause does not here mean that it must be causing one to change it.[92]

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[90] Ibid., II, 9.

[91] Ibid., II, 10.

[92] Ibid., II, 10.

Common experience bears this out. There is the case of the man who is given all the reasons that he can have, and admits that they are good reasons and still does not act. (E.g., the case of the inveterate smoker who admits that smoking causes cancer.) Or we could be faced with two conflicting reasons, both of which are decisive, and not know what to do. "The point is that to admit indecision in the face of known reasons for a fact is to admit that a known reason can fail to influence determinately."[93]

The case of the man who knows all the reasons in favor of doing an act yet is not moved to act now allows us to ask the question about the nature of the moral cognition. This is also the question that was posed by Kames. How does the moral sense guide? How does it "see"? Can it prompt a man into action? And how does what it sees relate to action?

62. The problem for Falk is that action-guidance by reason is not infallible. Indeed, guiding a man is the using of rational methods; of pointing out impersonal, objective facts which would be relevant. One expects, in bothering to point out the facts at all, that they will be of interest to the person spoken to. So that we could use the word "ought" in such a situation as this, to express the reasonableness of such a course of action for someone who is not actually feeling reasonable about it. A man does

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[93] Ibid., II, 8.

not want to perform an act. He knows all the reasons in favor of doing it, and admits that they are good reasons. But he persists in not acting. In such a case, if we are patient, we can go over the entire plethora of relevant facts again and then say, "So you ought to do this." In order to activate him, we can recall past situations, or speak vividly in order to stimulate his imagination. But beyond this, we are "confined to saying: 'well surely . . . this is a reason, and how much so, you will have to judge for yourself.' In the last resort, one must leave others to make the judgments of relevance for themselves; they are not among the prerequisites of rational guidance which we can deliver to them."[94]

The example of the man who knows all the reasons about the case and will not act appropriately is the case of the obtuse man; and his failure can be of several sorts. (1) He may know all the reasons, but fail to know <u>that</u> he has all the reasons; "and how much of a reason he has, in the reasons that he knows."[95] To know <u>that</u> he has a reason is to realize, to appreciate, to admit to oneself, <u>that</u> one has a reason, and a weighty reason at that.[96]

(2) But he may be the sort that expects <u>further</u> reasons, and forgets that sometimes, one can find a <u>reason</u> in the very facts of the case, on what it is that he is or is not going to do.[97] These are intrinsic reasons, not

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[94] <u>Ibid</u>., I, 20.

[95] <u>Ibid</u>., I, 9.

[96] <u>Ibid</u>., I, 9.

[97] <u>Ibid</u>., I, 13f.

further reasons, and intrinsic reasons, unlike further reasons thus are hard to teach. And yet, "what one knows of the very nature of the thing may be said to tell for or against doing it no less than what further one knows about it."[98] What it is to do harm, is an example. One can know and be told all about what results causing pain might have. "One cannot conceive how, knowing that this will cause pain, he could be ignorant of the possible reason against causing pain as such, and would have to have it disclosed to him. A purely intrinsic reason for doing a thing is in all and no more than is signified by the word for the thing."[99]

Action guidance in this sense, requires knowing that (1) there is a case for accepting or rejecting something as an end; (2) that this end is something to be sought or to be avoided; (3) one ought to seek or avoid it; (4) one has reasons for seeking it or avoiding it, in what it would involve or in its very own nature.[100]

Falk says that there is no difference in saying any of the above four, andfor this reason: in each of the cases, one has the difficulty of moving from the facts of the case to the conclusion that one ought, or that one does, indeed, have reasons, etc., for acting.

> How a reason is "in" the facts, and how an obligation "results" from them are similar puzzles. One way or

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[98] Ibid., I, 13.

[99] Ibid., I, 14.

[100] Ibid., I, 22.

> another, one is not getting away from what seems a fundamental feature of action-guidance by reason: that it requires, in addition to an adequate acquaintance with the facts of the case, some supervening cognitive step; one which in aid of completing, if need be, persuasion by the facts of bringing home to people their persuasive relevance for them.[101]

What is the nature of this step? Falk calls it a fact-supervening cognition.[102] The clues to the understanding of this concept come from the conditions in which one expects it to become effective: "when it is taken to heart," "when one gives it entry," "when one allows it to prevail with one."[103] It is a persuasive seeing of relevance. Its power is dispositional -- whether it is fulfilled depending, not on any external factors, but "the agent's own concurrence."

> Language is permeated with expressions which suggest that, in order to be fully influenced by knowledge, it is not enough just to possess full knowledge. One may act blindly by acting in ignorance, but also by turning a blind eye to what one knows. One may not face, absorb, assimilate what one knows. One may not let it penetrate, sink in, ponder it, dwell on it, chew it over.[104]

63. To recapitulate: the situation that we are examining is the case of a man who knows all the reasons in favor of performing an act. Still he does not perform it. Falk's explanation of how this is so is that while he knows the answers (that is, that he can recite the facts at hand), he does not realize that what he knows constitutes good reasons

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[101] Ibid., I, 23.

[102] Ibid., I, 4; Cf., Ibid., I, 6, 23; II, 1.

[103] Cf., Ibid., I, 19; II, 11, 13.

[104] Ibid., II, 13f.

for acting. This second order cognition is no longer about more facts, for there are no further facts to be known. This "fact-supervening" cognition which would, if it took place, actually move the man to action, can be described in other ways: he must take the facts (what facts he already has) to heart; he must appreciate the facts as they are; he must let them enter (into his heart, his mind, his bones). It is to see (to be mindful of) the persuasive relevance of the reasons that he knows. When he has succeeded, of course, he would be moved to act.

There are several things to notice about this second order realization. It is not to get more reasons; that we already have. To have reasons and to know that he has them are not on a par. The function of this seeing is more like saying "so you ought to" than saying "because she is crippled." But the main feature to notice is that the language by which this seeing is described has a strong non-cognitive function. "To take to heart," for example. We say that so-and-so took it to heart, meaning she felt the case very strongly, whether it be the criticism of a friend, the loss of a pet canary, or any other mishap. It is used, not so much to say that she intellectually knew what it was that happened, but more, that it hit her strongly, and what was particularly hit was her sentiments, her feelings. As a result and as an external sign of her having taken it to heart, she appears down-cast, sad, dejected, unhappy, etc. "To give it entry," "to allow it to prevail," and especially,

"to appreciate" what the facts are, are locutions that bear out the case for this emotive response.

The same non-cognitive aspect colors the term "relevance," as applied to the "seeing of the fact that one has reasons that ought to be relevant," (reasons, that is, that "ought to count"). This supra-factual seeing is what bridges the gap between the "giving of reasons which are about facts," and "being impelled to act." To "allow it to prevail," "to take it to heart," moreover, means to be directed by it, dispositionally. This sense of direction, however, is no longer the sense in which giving of reasons which are about facts is directing or guiding. For guiding by giving reasons is in part, at least, a cognitive proffering of facts for consideration. But in this higher, fact-supervening cognition, the process is no longer cognitive, for no new facts are gathered; the result sought is affective.

More scrutiny should be given to the meaning that the word "relevance" has in this context. How do we go about discovering that some set of reasons has persuasive relevance? Ultimately by being persuaded, for the point of trying to see this further relevance (that one does indeed have sufficient reason for acting) is to be moved. The relevance is a causal one, of setting up an invariable connection, if and when one recognizes, appreciates this relevance. So whether we call this further step -- over and beyond the adducing of the facts of the case -- cognition, seeing, intuition; or non-cognitive, of feeling, the fact still remains

that this step is emotively motive. Are the facts I have at my disposal persuasively relevant? It is nearly pointless to ask, "is it?", "is it true?" in this context. One would, at best, be told to see for himself. The process is self-motivating or self-guiding.

Point for point, this description of the "fact-supervening cognition" parallels the function of the moral sense as described by Kames. (1) The proper function of the moral sense depends on the accurate cognition of matters of fact, not only about other people, and one's self, but also the relations that he has to things and to other people. (2) The moral sense is non-reflective. It is not the cognition of facts. It is a direct awareness. One might call it non-rational. (3) And seeing an act as a duty (the function of the moral sense) is to bridge the gap between the work of reason in the sizing up of actual situations, and the motives and desires. (4) This process of "bridging" Kames calls "directing" -- a dispositional property which depends on the character of the agent, in the same way that, on Falk's view, how well and how frequently one takes things to heart, or allows proper motives to prevail, depends on the sort of person we are.

(5) The striking thing is that this similarity in the description of the moral sense or the function of moving from factual statements to a statement containing "ought" as a conclusion (in a line of reasoning), had resulted from similar problems, namely, the nature of the relationship

that holds between duty and motivation, and reason and conduct. These problems in turn arose from a similarity in the structural parts of the moral psychology (on the part of Kames), and the different modes of prescription in moral argumentation (on the part of Falk).

This completes my discussion of Kames and contemporary ethics.

CONCLUSION

64. In the last chapter, I have tried to show that there are certain parallels between eighteenth and twentieth century philosophy; both in the provocation that prompted the formulation of the views, and the structure of the views that were developed.

I argued that Lord Kames' ethics was directed against the reductive tendencies in Hume's and Hutcheson's moral philosophies, as well as the particular form of reduction that these philosophers gave. Kames' general pattern of argument was the following: (a) reflex faculty of emotional approval and disapproval is too undifferentiated to account for moral behavior, for works of art, useful objects, acts of heroism and acts done out of a sense of duty are all approved in different ways. (b) The views of Hutcheson and Hume cannot account for acts done out of a sense of duty -- those cases when we use the words, "you ought to do so." In this respect, however, I believe Kames' understanding of Hume was incomplete. But it is nevertheless clear that Kames wanted the sense of duty to be a natural faculty in human nature, and not something that can be resolved into some other faculty, like benevolence or sympathy. To put it in another way, "saying you ought to" is a distinct and unique pattern of verbal behavior, irreducible into something

like "I approve of it, do!" or "doing so will lead to the general good."

In respect to both arguments, recent Oxford analysis shows a parallel. (a) The Oxford analysts were dissatisfied with the reductive tendencies of emotive ethics (as well as intuitionism); especially as regards the explaining of the grammar of moral words by translating them into expressions of emotion and persuasion by prescription. (b) Particularly were they concerned about the fact that explaining the moral uses of "ought" as an instance of giving commands made it impossible to explain the process of reason-giving in moral argumentation. This amounts to saying the following: the distinctive feature of moral argumentation is having to give, or being committed to give reasons. This is shown by the fact that when we tell someone that "he ought to," he can ask us "why," without being pointless. If he does so, we cannot merely say "because . . ." or "because I tell you to." More likely, we would say "you ought to" only <u>after</u> we have pointed at all the facts of the case that are relevant to the issue. In either case, the availability of relevant reasons, ones that do not merely <u>cause</u> one to act, is presupposed in our being able to say "and so you ought to." This feature of reason-giving is made impossible in emotive ethics because any reason that actually prompts a man to act will be relevant; moral words being calculated to evoke certain feelings and certain actions.

65. In detail, I tried to show that there is at least one Oxford philosopher, who, taking the above pattern as his orientation, tried to give an account of duties and motivations; the particular area of interest to Kames.

And here, further parallels were borne out. Both Kames and Falk began with a similar number of elements as constituents of moral behavior. The faculty of reflection (the adducing of facts and reasons); the passions and desires (influencing causally by affecting a person); and the moral sense (saying "and so you ought to"). These structural parallels in moral psychology and moral grammar in themselves indicate little. The interesting thing is that both Kames and Falk wanted a certain kind of relationship to hold between these three parts.

(a) They are both agreed that moving a man to act presupposes the instincts and the passions. Thus moral judgments influence a man's passions and desires -- they can affect him and move him.

(b) But whatever the relationship that holds between the three parts, it had to account for certain facts. (1) The fact that some men, with all the knowledge about a certain case which show that this act ought to be done, still do not act. Sometimes, they even admit that they have all the reasons necessary to showing that they ought to perform the act. So it appears that merely knowing the facts of the case is not enough. At the same time, (2) there are conflicts between duty and what we want to do; so that duty

and motive cannot be identified by such a statement as "only actions that a man is motivated to perform are truly duties."

What relationship can we set up which would still account for the above facts? (1) The faculty of reason adduces facts -- relevant facts. (2) In saying "and so you ought," the availability of these reasons are presupposed. But saying "you ought to" is grammatically distinct and not on a par with the particular reasons given. On Kames' account, the moral sense intuits a duty -- non-reflectively. But in any decision, including a moral one, a man can be held accountable for giving reasons. (3) The process of knowing <u>that</u> one has reasons that <u>count</u>, and being influenced by them to act, is dispositional. This further <u>seeing</u> of relevance is called a "fact supervening" cognition, and bridges the gap between having the facts and letting it move one to action. Since this further seeing is dispositional, whether a man would be moved or not depends on whether "he takes it to heart or not." Kames describes this process as the directing or guiding power of the moral sense (a non-reflective intuition), which men with the proper disposition would allow to guide their conduct. This is the "moving power" or "motive power" of the moral sense; and the connection between the "sense of duty" (seeing that <u>one ought</u>) and conduct is dispositional.

(4) What then is the connection between the moral sense and motivation? In this area, both Falk and Kames

get into some difficulties.

On Falk's account, the sense of duty can be a motive. But we need not say that we have a desire to do our duty, because the sense of duty (ought-ing) is not a desire. There are two senses of the word "motive," the occurent and the dispositional senses. In the occurent sense, motive can mean "desiring," if we understand that all that it means is "being impelled" and "also feeling impelled." (The difficulties in saying this were pointed out.) The sense of duty (or ought-ing) as a motive is dispositional; it is a "moving thought."

On Kames' account, the sense of duty also functions dispositionally. In itself, the moral sense has no motive power. Only desires (and the passions) can move. So Kames takes the strange position of saying, "Only acts which are prompted by some natural motive or principle are duties." (M,54,81f) How to interpret Kames on this point raised difficulties. Prima facie, he seems to be saying that only acts which are motivated are duties; thus making the conflict between duties and desires impossible. (I raised the possibility that perhaps all he meant was that if a man has a duty, that action is one that he must have an ability to perform, a variant of "ought implies can".) At any rate, this point is a difficulty in Kames' philosophy.

The difficulties that Falk and Kames both get into are similar, and this tends to show that their original views must have been alike; these difficulties being, (a) the exact

nature of the "fact-supervening" cognition of relevance, or in Kames' phrase, the non-reflective intuition of the moral sense which can guide men to act; and (b) the relation of duty to motivation.

66. As a general conclusion to this dissertation, I should like to make some comments about the results achieved.

The resume given above is a summary of the sort of moral philosophy Kames held. It is a picture of a view developed in the period between Hume and Reid. It is a complete account of moral behavior, based on a realist epistemology and a deterministic psychology. Its general structure is like the moral philosophy of Butler; and it was developed in conscious opposition to the moral philosophy of Hume and Hutcheson.

But we also have a comparison of this eighteenth century view with a very recent one. What results has <u>that</u> achieved? (1) I believe that I have succeeded in showing that there is a remarkable similarity, both in intent and in structure, between the moral philosophies of Kames and Falk, a twentieth century Oxford analyst. (2) Of the general merits of their respective views, at least the following can be said. Kames' account, written probably in his spare time, does not contain enough details to allow one to decide on an interpretation with certainty; whereas Falk's view is more detailed and more carefully developed.

(3) There is a difference in the methodology of the

two philosophers. One discusses ethics in terms of the psychological constituents of man; the other in terms of the grammar of moral discourse. Being used to the fashion of doing the latter ourselves, discussing moral behavior in terms of the will and the reflective faculty of man, etc., seemed at times to raise more difficulties than it solved. Yet on closer examination, it was possible to correlate these two accounts, both in the direction of their polemic, and in the ingredients that went into their compositions. Not only was there a correlation, but the difficulties which the two philosophers got into were of the same sort, confirming the initial supposition that here indeed were two views that were alike. The interesting result is that despite their apparent differences, they were describing very much the same thing.

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