



Morality and the Retributive Emotions

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MORALITY AND THE RETRIBUTIVE EMOTIONS

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JUST as the pleasant experience differs from the non-pleasant or unpleasant, and (according to many at least) the aesthetic from the non-aesthetic, internally or qualitatively, and not merely in degree, or externally or relationally, so, it is natural to expect, a moment of moral living differs from a moral or immoral moment. Indeed, from many quarters, and most emphatically from the Stoic and Christian, we have been wont to hear that if we but leave our sinful or indifferent lives and put on righteousness or goodness, we shall become new men or men reborn, even creatures of a different species. But according to many (perhaps most) analyses of morality these promises of transfiguration or translation are nonsensical lies: for the moral experience, as exhibited in these analyses, differs from the non-moral or immoral only in respect of external relations, or at the most in degree. Whether the truth resides in the promises or in the analyses is, obviously, a question of no mean import. It is also a vast one, while the time and space that can be given up to an article are brief; hence the following will be barely more than a raising of the question, or a provocation, by means of rough statements, some dogmatic, others hypothetical.

First, we must make clear beyond the possibility of misunderstanding what we mean by a merely external or relational difference, or difference in degree. The man, then, who, thinking that thus only can he assert his superiority or greatness, should kill another who had set himself against his whim, would differ only in degree, or only externally or relationally, from the man who, actuated by a similar thought, should revenge himself only with beneficence on one who had deeply wronged him.¹ Internally in both cases the state of mind would be the same: egocentric preoccupation with grandeur; the difference would lie merely in the relation to a different external expression or act. We might, no doubt, think that the idea of invariably responding with beneficence (but not as revenge or self-assertion) had originated, probably in some other man, from an impulse very different from the concernment with one's grandeur, and had subsequently, after disguise as an idea of grandeur-

¹ Seneca (quoted by Westermarck) says in *De ira*, II, 32: "The most contemptuous form of revenge is not to deem one's adversary worth taking vengeance upon."

PHILOSOPHY

realization, been foisted externally upon the grandeur-loving man; we might even think that since he has accepted it, there must be something in him restraining or diluting his lust for greatness, power, self-assertion, or revenge. But we should declare that his state differed from that of his counterpart, the killer, at the most in degree only. If the one state had to be called moral and the other immoral or non-moral we should say that morality, as something lived, differs only externally, or relationally, or at the most in degree, from non-morality or immorality.

Of the aforementioned disillusioning analyses those of Westermarck and McDougall are among the clearest and most uncompromising. According to Westermarck¹ there are two moral emotions: moral approval and disapproval or indignation. They belong both to the general class of retributive emotions, of which many are non-moral. The second, like anger and revenge (both non-moral), forms a subspecies of resentment; the first, like gratitude (non-moral), forms a subspecies of retributive kindly emotion.² All the moral concepts, viz. ought or duty, bad and wrong, right, injustice and justice, on the one hand, and goodness, virtue, merit, on the other, are based on, or originate from, the second and the first of these two emotions respectively.³ The "qualities assigned to the subjects of moral judgments really are generalizations derived from" these emotions, "tendencies to feel one or the other of these emotions interpreted as qualities, as dynamic tendencies, in the phenomena which give rise to the emotion."⁴ The morality Westermarck treats of is chiefly a social growth, and consists in the carrying out of a code of written or unwritten rules and in the practice of virtues. On the hypothesis that there may be some other morality also, or something which better deserves the name of morality, we shall call his kind "customary morality." Granting for the moment the truth of his analysis of it, the question to be asked here is whether he exhibits any qualitative or internal difference between the moment of moral living and the non-moral or immoral. I think he does not. Nor, indeed, does he claim to do so. He does claim, against McDougall, that the moral emotions are differentiated from the non-moral.⁵ But what differentiates them? Only impartiality, including disinterestedness, which is a form of impartiality.⁶ But this is only an external relational characteristic. The non-moral or immoral resentment which one man feels against one who has baffled his or his friend's non-moral or immoral will, and the moral resentment (i.e. such that any member of the community might tend to feel it) of another against someone who has wronged not himself or his friend but a stranger, are both resentment or "hos-

¹ *Ethical Relativity*, 1932.

² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³ *Ibid.*, Ch. V.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-93.

MORALITY AND THE RETRIBUTIVE EMOTIONS

tility." They differ only as regards the external situations and the objects whereon they are directed. They may differ also in degree; but then, often, the moral "hostility" may be the more intense, the grimmer, and more terrible of the two. Furthermore, whether an internal or merely external characteristic, impartiality is not really a differentia of the moral emotions, for it can characterize also non-moral admiration or contempt (for the skilled or for the unskilled, for example). If Westermarck should urge that these are at any rate not "retributive" emotions he would overlook the almost ineradicable tendency in all of us to give to (i.e. to reward) him that hath and to take away from (or to mulct) him that hath not, a tendency which, in his own language at least, we should have to describe as arising from the pleasure or displeasure caused in us and as therefore retributive. He might urge that, unlike the moral emotions, such admiration or contempt is not directed towards the will, person, or character. And, indeed, it is in their direction that we should have expected him to look for the differentia of the moral emotions: such a direction, constituting personal relationship, might, although itself a relational characteristic, differentiate the *relatum* internally. But he himself specially insists that it belongs also to non-moral retribution.¹ Besides, it does not go deep enough so as to constitute a qualitatively or internally specific personal relationship. Customary moral judgment, although it makes, as he points out,² a great ado about intention, motive, will, character, is concerned with a person only *qua* executor of the code of general rules or practitioner of one or other of the received virtues in its generic aspect. These, the general rule or the generic virtue, and not the person in his personality or individuality, are at bottom its subjects. Westermarck emphasizes the necessity to customary morality of computation by general rules,³ and describes the moral judgment as referring its subject to a class, as "labelling the act according to certain obvious characteristics which it presents in common with others belonging to the same group."⁴ Now, a person can be computed, classified, or labelled only in respect of some generic attribute, and not in respect of his individuality; it is the attribute, and not he, that is morally judged. It is, of course, true and very important that, as Westermarck insists,⁵ retributive hostility and kindness cannot make any distinction or separation between the attribute and the person: they identify the one with the other (so long as we do hate, we cannot hate the sin without hating the sinner); but this means, not that they are essentially directed, as he maintains, upon persons, but that they preclude personal relationship and the appreciation of personality. Com-

¹ *Ethical Relativity*, p. 172.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 115.

² *Ibid.*, Ch. VI.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

PHILOSOPHY

firmatory of this, there stands, in spite of all his attempts to explain it away,¹ the glaring fact that judgments indistinguishable from the moral, and often taken as moral, are frequently passed in connection with matters which by no stretch of the imagination can be said to refer to the will—and that too, not only in the undeveloped societies which he chiefly considers, but in our own: Try as we will, it is impossible to find an internal or qualitative difference, or even one which is not merely of names, rites, and ceremonial, between the attitude to another, or for that matter, to oneself—call it condemnation, or resentment, or hostility, or disfavour, or exclusion, or what you will—for not having been born into the right class or heir to sufficient money, or for ignorantly not wearing the right clothes or committing a social *faux pas* or being aitchless or even, at one time, for not mispronouncing Latin in the English way, and the attitude to another or oneself for having wilfully committed murder or robbery or perjury. The truth—a most important one, and for that reason here dwelt upon at some length—is that between the judge upon the bench of customary morality and the prisoner at its bar the relation is, in more senses than the obvious one, impersonal.

I am convinced, then, by Westermarck's analysis that, as regards the morality he treats of, there is no qualitative or internal difference between the moral moment and the non-moral or immoral. A difference, of course, there is, but it lies entirely in the external acts done or favoured and the external objects pursued or approved. I have called the morality in question "customary," but this term may conveniently be used to cover all morality which, whether customary or not, consists, like customary morality, in the execution of a code of rules or programme of measures and in the practice of virtues, and consequently pronounces judgments which are impersonal in the sense that they do not touch personality or individuality. I am further convinced that, with Westermarck, we must place such morality in the region of retribution. It is with his idea of the nature of retribution that I differ. Does retribution always and necessarily involve "self-feeling" or the "self-regarding sentiment" or not? That is the question.

First a minor point, chiefly of terminology, must be disposed of. Wherever, in order to refer to Westermarck, I speak of returning pleasure for pleasure and pain for pain (he also uses "benefit" synonymously for the one, and "harm," "loss," "injury," "suffering," for the other), I use "pleasure" and "pain" as respectively brachylogies for "liked" and "disliked" processes, physical or psychical or psycho-physical, for I do not think that the consideration of abstract pleasure and pain, except in comparatively rare cases,

¹ *Ethical Relativity*, pp. 162 ff.

MORALITY AND THE RETRIBUTIVE EMOTIONS

influences conduct or enters into our deliberation about conduct.¹ The concernment with processes for their own sake or as ends it will be convenient to refer to as "biological."

I accept from Westermarck, as a legitimate technical adaptation, "resentment" (tending to issue into hostile retribution) for that genus of which anger and revenge are species, and I emphatically agree with him that "it is impossible to draw any distinct limit between these two types of resentment."² But he uses "resentment" for any reaction to inflicted pain (disliked process) as such, even apart from self-feeling, and it is from this reaction that he wishes to derive moral disapproval. Herein, I maintain, he departs both from ordinary language and from fact. The reaction in question would more appropriately be called "vexation" or "annoyance," and it leads primarily to shunning the nuisance, and to paining or destroying only in self-defence or as a removing or preventive or deterrent measure, which is, of course, not retribution proper. The latter, the retaliation with pain as an end in itself (though this, we shall see, is not quite an adequate description), inspired by resentment, angry or vengeful, and in response, as we shall maintain, not to inflicted pain as such but to inflicted pain, if at all, only when taken for something else, comes only with the emergence of at least inchoate self-feeling. Moral disapproval, since it is a form of resentment, while resentment is impossible without self-feeling, is, therefore, a manifestation of self-feeling.³ But the latter, or the "self-regarding sentiment," is in many persons very undeveloped or inactive,⁴ and it is significant that, just as they are not much given to anger and revenge, so they have little use for the moral concepts in general and for moral disapproval in particular: they admit that they refrain from lying or adultery or stealing because they *dislike* them—that is, their reaction even to these is mere annoyance and not resentment or moral disapproval. Such a one—and he would be of their class even though he were utterly beneficent instead of being a scamp—is Tito Melema in George Eliot's *Romola*, who, almost completely devoid of the self-regarding sentiment, is bewildered by moral disapproval as by revenge, both equally incomprehensible phenomena to him, and whose nearest approach to anger is "a cold dislike." On the other hand, observation of life teaches us

¹ My use is, I believe, actually that of a good many so-called hedonists. If I differ at all from Westermarck (see *Ethical Relativity*, pp. 259–61), the difference is not material to the argument.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³ For the present purpose self-feeling may be understood as that which develops into the feeling of inferiority and superiority.

⁴ In some anger, though not in revenge, it may be little developed. Such anger is very like mere annoyance and leads to the phenomena the consideration of which induces Westermarck to use "resentment" for the reaction to inflicted pain as such.

PHILOSOPHY

that the people most inspired by self-feeling are both most susceptible to anger and revenge and also most apt to be moralists, while moralists are particularly liable both to the self-regarding sentiment and to anger and revenge. Such observation is most happily "coadunated" by Plato in his term τὸ θυμοειδές,¹ which may be translated by "the self-regarding sentiment," "the irascible principle," "the principle of moral disapproval," or "the moral policeman principle." Westermarck himself, although he covers them both by the same name, "resentment," and although he does not distinguish between being pained and being offended,² seems to feel that there is a gap between the protective reaction against inflicted pain as such (compared by him to "protective reflex action") and retaliation with pain as such or as an end in itself. He makes intelligence bridge the gap: "But," he says, "as a successful attack is necessarily accompanied with such [the enemy's] suffering, the desire to produce it naturally became, with the increase of intelligence, an important factor in resentment. And when pain was distinguished as a normal effect of resentment, the infliction of it could also be aimed at as an end in itself."³ But if that is all, this, surely, is a veritable *pons asinorum* for "intelligence" to make.⁴ The fact is that the two reactions are different in kind, and that the one is not a development of the other. Self-feeling is the differentiator. Indeed, he himself, in the next sentence, goes on to say: "Resentment is particularly⁵ apt to assume this character under the influence of self-feeling of the injured party, as a means of humiliating the offender."

The rôle of self-feeling in resentment can best be studied in the latter's most palpable form, revenge. To say that the vengeful man desires the infliction upon his enemy of pain as an end in itself is to preserve one important truth—namely, that for him the act of retribution is an end in itself and aims neither at the cure nor deterrence of the offender nor at anything else. But to think that the infliction of *pain* as an end in itself is the meaning of that act is to be misled by one of those many philosophic abstractions which do away with all real problems and raise false ones in their stead because they obliterate the vital distinctions which are carefully marked by common speech. The latter tells us that the vengeful man desires, not to pain or hurt his enemy, but to "be even with him," or, better still, to "bring him to the dust," to "humiliate" him, "lower," "bring down," "diminish" him, to reduce him to everlasting subjection or submission. All these phrases, we find,

¹ *The Republic*.

² *Ethical Relativity*, p. 72.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69; cf. p. 83.

⁴ Nascent intelligence is supposed to distinguish, growing intelligence to confuse, means and end.

⁵ "Exclusively," according to me.

MORALITY AND THE RETRIBUTIVE EMOTIONS

describe, not a biological concernment, a concernment with any process or quality of process (pain),¹ with any doing or suffering on the part of any one, but a concernment with *position* ("even," "low," "lower," "down," "under").² In so far as any pains or processes enter into the question, they do so because they are taken to stand for, or to symbolize, position, the redress of the balance of power or the return of the *status quo*. The symbols of retaliation are strangely diverse from circle to circle: the infliction on the offender of physical or mental suffering or of death, rebuke or admonition, giving him a certain look, extorting an apology from him, exchanging pistol shots with him, even "heaping coals of fire upon his head." A study of them leads to the conclusion that though the notion of position comes from revenge itself (from the self-regarding sentiment or the concernment with superiority and inferiority), the denotation of that concept is determined by other factors in human nature. As its *terminus ad quem*, so is its *terminus a quo*: revenge is caused, not by pain as such, but by whatever is taken to stand for affront or insult or humiliation or lowering, or violation or diminution of one's position, for an attack upon self-feeling. Here, too, the symbols are very diverse and are determined not by the individual's self-feeling but by his whole history and that of his circle.

The apparent desire to retaliate with the infliction of pain as such, which Westermarck takes to be revenge, can only be understood in the light of the less specific apparent desire to inflict pain as such without any provocation whatsoever, or to have others suffer, whether at our hands or not. This sadism or malice, in its turn, remains an opaque phenomenon until it is seen to be also a manifestation of self-feeling. Such a manifestation it indeed is: the suffering or loss or misfortune or other state of others delights us only because it is taken as a lowering of their position and consequently a comparative heightening of ours (where the suffering is taken for elevation of rank we do not desire it for them). Self-feeling contains an ambiguous impulse, satisfiable alike in destruction and in construction—for we may be higher than others alike by their falling as by our rising—but more tempted by destruction, which is easier while construction always meets with difficulties

¹ To say that the vengeful man desires to inflict the pain of humiliation is merely to flee from the real problem to words. For "humiliation" is the defining term of the phrase and is therefore the term to be defined.

² It is impossible to exaggerate the importance for Ethics of the fact, most often neglected, that there are desires, both moral and non-moral, not only for pleasure, processes, experiences or states of mind, but also for position, form, structure, relations; and that position, etc., can no more be reduced to process (or pleasure or experience) than a square can be described as an event.

PHILOSOPHY

which, until at any rate they are overcome, are always humiliating. The ambiguity, especially in favour of construction, is never resolved by our own self-feeling, but partly by the thrust upon us of the self-feeling of others, partly by other impulses in them and in ourselves. These, especially in a settled society, set strict limits to the destructive manifestation, limits generally observed until there occurs a disturbance to the position which, at least in the overt and effective part of our life, we have had to accept. The disturbance may arise from the chance highering of others or the chance lowering of ourselves, or from the wilful aggression of others against ourselves. In any case it provokes the impulse to self-assertion or self-vindication or self-exaltation in its primordial ambiguity and indiscriminateness; we then desire our own elevation over *any* others in *any* way and whether by our own efforts or others' or by chance. This explains why, when our spite, envy, or jealousy, or revenge are aroused, *anyone* who comes in our way is liable to fall victim to it. It explains why revenge, as McDougall maintains along with Steinmetz,¹ is originally undirected: not only the Malay *amok* but also civilized Europeans are apt, according to common speech, to "revenge" themselves upon *anyone* instead of, or even in addition to, the offender. It explains, further, why revenge can be constructive as well as destructive: in spite of what Westermarck says,² a man severely criticized for having written a bad book and thus wounded in his self-feeling might very well "consider the writing of a better book to be an act of revenge." It explains, lastly, such common expressions as "he was avenged by others," or "by the turn of events." Ambiguity and indiscriminateness are inherent in self-feeling; it is not they that need explaining but rather such determinateness and discrimination as it presents. These are formed by the limits imposed by others' self-feeling or other impulses in them or in us, for even when disturbed in our position we still observe limits and do not simply strive for unlicensed omnipotence: such a limit is, for example, the normal relevance of revenge, its direction upon the aggressor only.

In desiring to explain revenge I have inevitably been led into giving a composite photograph of many manifestations of offended or obstructed self-feeling: spite, jealousy, envy, anger, revenge. This is because it is impossible to draw any distinct limit between them, since they are differentiated, not internally or qualitatively, but only externally (e.g. by the external occasion or situation), so that the more self-feeling predominates in a man's nature the more they are apt all to resemble the most extreme of them, revenge. In this they are resembled by other manifestations which have not been mentioned above but which are also concerned with one's

¹ *Social Psychology* (21st. ed.), pp. 121-122.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

MORALITY AND THE RETRIBUTIVE EMOTIONS

own superiority and others' inferiority: scorn and contempt. All may be said to be species of the negative reaction of self-feeling or of the reaction of offended or obstructed self-feeling. This reaction may be called resentment or the affective-conative aspect of devaluing or negative valuing. Revenge is the extremest form of resentment.

Moral resentment or disapproval is a species of resentment or of negative valuing. As we have seen, it is not differentiated from the other species by its reference to the will. The only differentia there remains is impartiality, an external one and one which, since the moral reference to the will is unimportant, will make us include in the species "moral disapproval" all impartial contempt for any attribute. The impartiality may be said to consist in the fact that the offence is not simply to the self-regarding sentiment of the particular individual as such but to that sentiment in so far as the individual identifies himself with a system of definable and therefore generic positions (rights) or functions. (The system may be regarded as society, or as in Heaven, or as the Moral Law, or as the Kingdom of Values.) The impartial man regards himself and others simply as the incumbents of such positions or mandataries of such functions. He resents, disapproves, blames, or condemns whatever stands for an affront or violation to any position or function, whether his or others', and thus for belittlement or diminution or lowering of the *supremacy* of the whole system; he despises or scorns or devalues (excludes) whatever comes outside or short of the system. The meaning of retributive action (punishment) is simply in the restoration or assertion of that supremacy or in the declaration or exclusion of the low or the outsider as low or outsider, but the form such assertion or declaration or exclusion takes (admonition, degrading, banishment, fining, imprisonment, flogging, death) and the other purposes it subserves (deterrence or reformation) are determined by other impulses than the retributive.¹ Apart then from the external characteristic of impartiality, we meet here the same concernment with position as we have already reviewed. Nor is there any disinterestedness except in so far as this is synonymous with impartiality. Disinterestedness in the sense of freedom from one's self there is not. For the disapprover has identified himself with the system and an offence to it is an offence to his own self-feeling. *Mutatis mutandis* we may extend to him the quotation about Australian savages given by Westermarck:² "Strike the gens [system] anywhere, and every member of it considers himself struck." Hence the intensity of the impartial resentment varies in direct proportion to the reality which the identification has for the imagination: consider, for

¹ Above all, reformation is not the aim of moral indignation or resentment. The ideal of the latter is a Hell of the eternally damned to act as a foil to the Heaven of the elect.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

PHILOSOPHY

example, the difference in our resentment of a wrong to "Humanity," to China, to our country, to our class, or of a violation of Christian ethics, of a code fought for by our ancestors, and of a code invented and championed by ourselves.

Whatever has here been said about resentment and moral disapproval applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to their contraries, which, therefore, need be treated only briefly. The term "retributive kindly emotion," chosen by Westermarck for the contrary of resentment, like his detailed description, does not differentiate this fundamentally from the altruistic sentiment or from sympathy, although it is fundamentally different from them, being a concernment with position, whereas they are concernments with pleasure (process). It is the positive or expansive reaction of gratified self-feeling; we might call it "positive valuing" simply, were it not that this term implies impartiality; we will call it "acclamation." Acclamation is not for the pleasure-giving as such but for whatever is interpreted as high, or elevating or exalting, and the aim of its active expression (e.g. of honouring) is not to give pleasure as such or to confer benefit—we honour largely, or chiefly, the dead—but to express or declare height, elevation, exaltation, although, as in the case of their contraries, the strangely variable denotation of these notions and consequently the active expressions are determined by other impulses than our own self-feeling. The aim is, above all, to identify ourselves with the acclaimed by finding either the latter in ourselves or ourselves in him or it: ultimately, as many wise men have pointed out, it is always ourselves we magnify, extol, praise, worship, etc. Contrary to the proverb, the prophet finds honour most easily in his own country, provided he magnifies what is already there magnified, since his countrymen in honouring him honour themselves; even into the awe-inspiring mountain we project ourselves, according to the Empathy theory, and the sublime in Literature, Longinus says, fills the reader's soul with exultation, vaunting, and pride as though he were the author.¹

Discounting, for the reasons already given, reference to the will, we must reckon as "moral approval" all impartial positive valuing (worshipping, venerating, respecting, honouring, prizing, praising, esteeming, etc.). "Impartial," as has already been explained, means "generic." Impartial approval is the inclusion of something or someone regarded generically in a system of generic positions or functions; it is an exaltation of that system. Disinterested it is not: ultimately it is ourselves, identified with the system, that we approve.²

Beginning with Westermarck, I end with McDougall. For the soul

¹ *On the Sublime*, VII.

² Even in self-condemnation, wherein we approve our "higher self" and are proud because the condemnation, after all, comes from our own self.

MORALITY AND THE RETRIBUTIVE EMOTIONS

of what I have in an extended sense called "customary morality," I make out to be self-feeling or the self-regarding sentiment. And so, apparently, does McDougall. At any rate he tells us that "moral advance consists, not in the coming into play of factors of a new order, . . . the moral instinct or conscience, but in the development of the self-regarding sentiment and in the improvement and refinement of the 'gallery' before which we display ourselves . . . until the 'gallery' becomes, . . . in the last resort, one's own critical self standing as the representative of such spectators."¹ No stronger expression than this could be given to the contention that between the moral moment and the non-moral or immoral the difference is not qualitative or internal. As against the analysis here favoured Westermarck's would have resentment and its contrary, and therefore the moral impulse, biological concerns with pleasure and pain (or processes); and he explains them genetically as derivatives from the impulse to living or survival, which are favoured by natural selection.² If genetic explanation there must be, one could point even to the repelling, excluding, or destructive activity of the electron as analogous to resentment, and thus proceed to derivation. Whether the survival function is really primary in resentment or in any other manifestation of self-feeling may, however, be doubted: of all their impulses, anger or its analogue in animals most often makes them deviate from the path of survival, while only something analogous to vanity (a form of self-feeling) can explain in them so many features which do not make for survival or even militate against it. But not everything need be explained by Natural Selection, for she has long ago been exposed as a careless judge. To understand resentment and its contrary, we must explain, not the impulse to living, not processes or pleasure and pain, but self-feeling and "position." The explanation of these two will also explain customary morality, in which "good" and "bad," "right" and "good," terms used for so many things, connote, briefly, "position-making." It is a thorny and intriguing explanation which cannot be even indicated here³ except by the remark that perhaps greater light is thrown on the subject by Adler's treatment of neuroticism than by most treatises on Ethics or values.

If customary morality (in the extended sense here given) is the only morality, then we must conclude that the moral moment is, qualitatively or internally, not at all different from the non-moral or immoral. This conclusion will be paradoxical to those who have taken seriously what I have referred to as the promises of transfiguration or translation.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 213-221.

² *Ethical Relativity*, pp. 68-69, 95 ff.

³ I have attempted it in a forthcoming book, *The Ethics of Power* (Allen & Unwin).

PHILOSOPHY

There may, however, be another morality, one which does not consist in the carrying out of a code or programme or in the practice of virtues but in full and free communication and appreciation between persons in their individuality, one wherein the moral concernment is neither with process as such nor with position but with meaning articulated in a situation free from reference to self. In such a morality the moral moment, the "enjoyment"¹ of such meaning, would differ qualitatively or internally from the non-moral or immoral; at any rate it would so differ both from biological concernment and from the concernment of self-feeling. But such a morality, having no room for self-feeling, will have no room for "values," for any praise or blame, approval or disapproval. This will certainly sound paradoxical to many. These will maintain (indeed they do maintain) that if such a life is conceivable and possible, it ought not to be called "moral" but "supra-moral," "beyond good and evil," "mystical," "religious," or "of grace." The issue thus raised might be a mere logomachy: what is important to decide is whether such a life is that which should be preached and practised. If we decide in the affirmative we shall call it "moral", on the ground that this term can only be of use to denote the life which should be lived; to customary morality, on the other hand, we shall refuse the title "moral," on the ground that, as something "lived" or "enjoyed" by the agent, it is not materially different from what, even in the language of customary morality, is called "not moral." We shall not need to show that this real morality has ever been lived by anyone, for we have long since learnt that morality is something preached rather than practised. None the less, it will be possible to show that, as regards at least its content, and even as far as the mitigation, though not the transformation, of its temper, customary morality has been not a little influenced by it.²

¹ The word is used in Professor Alexander's sense.

² I have so worded the article as to avoid the question whether approval or disapproval is a judgment or merely an emotion or sentiment, for the simple reason that for my purpose I needed to examine only the affective-conative aspects of these attitudes, aspects which, most people agree, are essential to them. I have also avoided the question of objectivity and universality. But I have indicated that the denotation of "good" and "bad," "right" and "wrong" (i.e. "high" and "low," or in general, "position-making") in customary morality is strangely variable: the only possible account of it is a historical one, such as none has better given than Westermarck.