

very lively exercise of skepticism which feels itself justified in examining and criticising the basic beliefs and doctrines bequeathed to us by tradition. Thus the whole subject of sex in general and homosexuality in particular are subject to the search for a truer and more satisfying basis than ever before. Just what do right and wrong, then, mean for the homophile? The present study is an attempt to develop briefly that aspect of a philosophy of life which is termed ethical or moral.

Ethics has to do with the inner aspects of life, mental and spiritual, and conduct. It studies purpose as determined by outer conditions, or outer conditions of individual behavior or institutions as determined by the inner purpose. To study choice and purpose is psychology; to study choice as affected by the rights of others and to judge it as right or wrong by such a standard is ethics. To study an institution may be economics, or sociology, or law, but to study its activities as resulting from the purposes of persons or as affecting the welfare of persons, and to judge its acts as good or bad from that point of view is ethics. The place of value as related to standards will be taken up later.

Following somewhat the Freudian theory of personality, conduct or behavior may take place on three levels. Behavior on the first or lowest level is initiated by various biological, economic, or other non-moral impulses or needs of the organism, non-moral so long as their ends are merely accepted, but becoming moral when their ends are compared, evaluated, and chosen deliberately. This type of behavior is characteristic of animals, children, and persons who act ordinarily without reflection, instinctively and disregarding of consequences either to one's self or to others. The purpose of moral education is to transform this type of behavior to the higher forms, that is, from non-intelligent action to intelligent action.

The second type of behavior is that which is determined by the "folkways" and "mores" of the group to which one belongs, and is approved by it. The

standards are accepted by the individual with little or no critical reflection and are handed down from one generation to the next. They may be termed group habits, and are likely to be quite independent of intelligence and flexibility, although they may have had some utility in a previous age. The history of many of the religious sects illustrates this point extensively. A distinguished leader or a set of circumstances may have pointed out a specific need which became embodied in an ethical code, rational at the time, but later a mere formality imposed by group inertia. Many years ago a non-Prussian minority in Germany resented the arrogance and domination of the Prussian military of whom a notable characteristic was the wearing of conspicuous uniforms with large brass buttons. These buttons became the symbol of the hated overlords, and gave rise to a distaste for all buttons. This minority migrated to the United States and settled in western Pennsylvania. Years afterward, when doubtless the origin of the distaste was wholly forgotten, the religious sect representing this minority considered the wearing of buttons "wicked" and do so to this day. The writer has seen these people in eastern Ohio with their buttonless garments cut to long outmoded styles but conforming to the rigid ethical code of the group.

The third type of conduct is that in which the individual thinks and judges for himself, considers whether a purpose is good and right, decides and chooses, and does not accept the standards of his group without reflection. Complete morality is reached only when the individual recognizes the right or chooses the good freely, devotes himself wholeheartedly to its fulfillment, and seeks a progressive social development which involves the sharing of every member of society. A rational method of setting up standards and forming values must be substituted for habitual, passive acceptance. Voluntary and personal choice and interest must be substituted for unconscious identification with group welfare or instinctive and habitual response to group needs. The ultimate purpose is individu-

al development with the demand that all persons shall share in this development. The worth and happiness of the person and of every person are paramount. Thus one passes from the realm of the instinctive and merely expedient to that of the rational.

A concept that has had great vogue in our time with reference to the nature of personality is that of integration, the hanging together, as it were, of the various aspects of the person. Perhaps this quality can best be seen in connection with its opposite. So-called insanity or mental disease can best be understood in terms of the disintegration of the personality. One is shocked by the conversation of the abnormal as it will contain the most glaring inconsistencies and disharmonies. And the so-called normal is not always as consistent as he thinks he is. Someone has said that the greatest invention of the nineteenth century was the ability to hold two ideas at the same time which cancel each other out. One thinks of the "Free World" and the attitude of many of its citizens towards Negroes. Conduct and character are strictly correlative concepts. Continuity, consistency throughout a series of acts is the expression of the enduring unity of attitudes and habits. In fact conduct may be defined as continuity of action. Deeds hang together because they proceed from a single and stable self. Customary morality tends to overlook the connection between character and action. The essence of reflective morals lies in its consciousness of the existence of a persistent self and the part it plays in what is externally done. Motive is the attitude and predisposition of this self toward ends which are embodied in action. Mere foresight moves to action only when it is accompanied by desire for those ends. A set and disposition of character leads to anticipation of certain kinds of consequences and to the neglect of others. There is no such thing as motive and will apart from anticipation of consequences and from effort to bring them to pass.

The discussion of motive leads directly into the larger area of value, the su-

preme concept of philosophy and the starting point for all consideration of personality. Closely related to it is the concept of freedom. The fundamental task of intelligent living is that of examining the relative worth of varying and opposed values and of bringing about their most valuable combinations. They assume moral significance in so far as they contribute to human living its worth and reason for being. To live as a rational being man must organize his life and thought about the attainment of goals, which express his ideals and ultimately his values. As a matter of fact men do live the greater part of their lives amidst their ideals and experience their highest moments of enthusiasm when they are working and sacrificing more immediate goods for them. The problem of the moral or supreme form of living is that of selecting and organizing ideals. To be free to choose one's goals does not mean to be free from all determining factors in one's nature, but rather to be free to express in action the preference to which these factors give rise. Custom, tradition, emotion, imagination—all these play their part, but reason must ultimately dominate. Freedom is self-determination leading to self-realization which is the equivalent of living rationally or intelligently, the realization of one's potentialities, the expression of one's natural impulses within the limits of one's ideals. The product of conscious effort is willed action, wherein the motive, which represents the attitude of the total conscious being, is held at a particular time and in a particular act of choosing. One is free in an action when it represents the self as a whole and is not the sporadic and momentary expression of some impulse.

As was suggested above, it is in theories of value that all ethics finds its starting point. The theorists of the subject are divided between those who hold that value is inherent in the cosmic order, objective and ultimate, and those who hold that it is an attribute of a deeper reality, a construction of the mind. G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and John Laird hold value as undefinable. Laird claims that

nature itself possesses value. This objective interpretation of value is termed the realistic theory of value and was the one held largely by the older religionists who, however, approached objective idealism and located values, and more particularly ethical values in the mind of a personal God. Thus ethical behavior was reduced to a list of prohibitions. One might use the divided page, listing the "wicked" or "sinful" acts on one side and the permissible acts on the other. The great defect of this procedure lay in the fact that the "mind of God" was confused with social and cultural origins, which, as was illustrated above, were likely to be lost in a historical perspective. And the most trivial and inconsequential acts were forbidden, (when the writer was nine years of age, his father gave him one of the worst scoldings of his life because he and a friend took a walk in the woods on a Sunday afternoon) while great, obvious evils such, for example, as graft and special privileges in business and government, adulteration of food and drugs, etc., were never mentioned. Even some of the so-called realists have not held consistently to the completely objective theory of values. For example Russell holds that values are the creations of man, and R. B. Perry defines value in terms of interest, and anything may acquire value when it is desired. That act which secures in the largest degree the interests of all is morally right. S. Alexander finds that truth, goodness, and beauty involve an "appreciating mind" and involve a relationship between mind and its objects. When satisfactions are organized and made coherent within the individual and in the relation of individuals within the social group, they are morally good. If one holds that ethical values are objective and inherent in the universe, it would seem that he has the obligation to discover them and present them to us. Thus far no one has been able to go beyond purely abstract concepts which turn out to be mere classifications or categories, such, for example, as truth, beauty, and goodness, which give very little help in the actual concerns of living, and arbitrary lists of forbidden acts which

obviously do not escape their cultural relativity.

To this writer the philosophy known as personalistic or dynamic idealism seems to offer a more acceptable basis for ethics than realism, although it does not deny an objective world, but sees it in a proper perspective which, in its relation to persons, is an inference rather than a primary datum of experience. The world, or reality, in its ultimate structure is a system of conscious beings whose most profound nature may be expressed in the term *persons*. The total universe is a system of selves or persons, who may be regarded either as members of one all-inclusive person who individuates them by the diversity of his purposing, (this view represents that of absolute idealism) or as a society of many selves related by common purpose, (this view represents a pluralistic idealism and is the one held by this writer). The person or self is the process of conscious experience ever moving forward in a time sequence, and having a two-fold character, first, a reaction to the objective world, and, second, a regurgitation of past experience in memory for the purpose of examination, criticism, and the deepening of meaning, in a word, for the development of insight. This process may be called the consciousness of consciousness, an ever more profound understanding of one's own nature and experience. The physical world is within the world of experience which is the entire world of reality. Some have thought that this view denies the existence of an outer or objective world. (*Esse est percipi*, to be is to be perceived, — has often been interpreted in this way.) It does not do so, but it recognizes that, without a perceiving mind, it lacks reality, that is, an object which no one perceives is merely an inference, or abstraction, by a mind. The most hard-boiled research scientist never escapes himself in the process of his work, and it is becoming better recognized that all scientific conclusions are inferences drawn by the minds of persons without whom there would be, as far as human beings are concerned,— just nothing. Values originate in the self

and exist only for the self. They are not substantive, things, but attributes of the on-going process which is the consciousness, the person. The inner feel of the person, that by which he knows that he is a person, may be called the intuition of the self, or more immediately, desire. Ordinary living consists of the rhythm of *desire-satisfaction*, repeated endlessly. And the remote goal may be termed self-realization, the fulfilling of the potentialities of the person, his ultimate welfare and happiness, always recognizing that such fulfillment takes place in a social setting of other persons who are entitled to the same privilege. Thus ethical value, the Good, becomes that which contributes to the ever-increasing welfare and happiness of the individual, that which is constructive of personality, and the ethical social Good is that which contributes to the welfare and happiness of all members of the human race. The sacrifices of individuals are sometimes required for the common good, but such sacrifice comes to be a good in its own right. Welfare and happiness are not entirely satisfactory as definitions of the Good, which is easier to see in specific situations than in purely abstract terms. The next part of the discussion will attempt to bring the matter down to earth.

The idealistic interpretation of value and ethics remains on a level of abstract concepts perhaps to too great an extent. It has remained for the pragmatic and instrumentalist philosophies to bring the discussion to the level of everyday experience. For these views value is the supreme category. Like the idealists they find human experience to cover the sum-total of available data. Absolute standards are not discoverable. Values vary from situation to situation and with specific needs. Facts are those aspects of the stimulus-reaction situation which seem to hold a certain consistency and the reactions to them are as near as we can ever come to absolutes. All objects of value receive their value from the functions they perform in the situations where they occur or in situations related to them. Nothing taken in isolation can be

said to possess value. In fact nothing exists in such isolation. And the personal idealist says that nothing has reality in isolation from the person. Thus welfare and happiness must be defined in terms of the activities of actual persons in actual situations. For example in most cases living of the person is better when he is well-nourished than when he is starving, when he is healthy than when he is sick, etc., as the anthropologist gives the activities of human beings everywhere. The fact that those activities are so similar gives rise to the error that the goods of life are absolutes. Moral values arise, not alone when the good of the individual is referred to, but also when the situation is social, that is, when the interests of other people are affected by the object of value. Moral standards and attitudes are accepted because they manifest values in the social situations. There are no absolute and permanent standards other than these. There are no eternal ideas of good and evil. Utility then becomes a concept of high place in the discussion. Value is interpreted in terms of control, mastery, use. One thus returns to intelligence or rationality. Some are disappointed that ethics cannot furnish the list referred to earlier, these acts are moral, and these are immoral. Each individual must exercise his intelligence to determine the quality of his own behavior. The moral person is the one who does so and is not moved by blind impulse or enslaved by a narrow and bigoted society. I suppose no one escapes the necessity of expediency when a society will destroy the individual who departs too conspicuously from the norms which it professes with no regard for origin or rationality. Each person, unless he has a yen for martyrdom, is likely to conform to the point at least of survival, but, from that point on, he would seem to have a moral obligation to do what he can to create more rational attitudes and norms in the society where he finds himself.

Thus far the discussion has dealt with ethics in a general way which applies to all the aspects of life, but now it would seem appropriate to look a little more

closely at the ethics of the homophile. It seems somewhat presumptuous, however, to suppose that one can add to what René Guyon has written in his *The Ethics of Sexual Acts*, probably the most complete and rational treatment of the subject now extant. While paying him full honor, this writer differs from him in two points. In the first place Guyon objects to a metaphysical interpretation at the basis of ethics. Like John Dewey, who made the same mistake, he assumes that one can build up a theory without presuppositions and then proceeds to state certain principles which are based upon assumptions. John Dewey's followers were somewhat embarrassed, but found it necessary to specify the unconscious assumptions underlying his work. As a matter of fact there is no genuine thinking without some presuppositions. The most thorough research scientist must assume the uniformity of nature, the reliability of sense observation, the worth of his research, and others. Thus we have attempted in this study to find a legitimate starting point for the elaboration of our ideas and that point lies as always in the realm of metaphysics. Our second point of disagreement with Guyon refers to his separation of the acts of living into two spheres, one involving moral decisions and one quite removed from that sphere, such, for example, as eating, and other acts of physiology, psycho-physiology, hygiene, etc., which cannot be either moral or immoral, but rather amoral. Sexual acts come within this amoral sphere and should not be used as criteria of virtue, utility, or value, since they are incommensurable things. This writer cannot see any act of the human being which is outside the realm of the ethical unless one returns to the view of the older religionists with their division of behavior into the "sinful" and the "righteous". When one sees the world as a whole and a consistent whole, he must recognize that there is a right way and a wrong way to reach even the most ordinary and commonplace goals. In baking a cake, if one does not use the right proportion of baking powder to flour, his

cake will fail. To claim that such an activity is amoral in contrast to a personal relationship involving honesty or its opposite, seems to this writer to come close to assuming the bifurcation of the world into natural and supernatural, a view here rejected.

Thus we come to our conclusion that sexual acts, the same as any other, are subject to rational examination and are accepted or rejected as to whether they operate constructively toward the building of the Good Life or its opposite. Now it happens in a given society and a given set of circumstances that a particular act so often operates destructively that it becomes expedient to enact its prohibition into law, but even here one has to be careful not to think of such restrictions as absolutes. For example, in our society and that of Europe it is rather well accepted that unethical sexual behavior includes: relations with underage persons, the use of force or violence, public display, and the conscious transmission of venereal disease. And yet that these prohibitions are not absolutes is proved by the fact that there are other societies which think very differently about them. In some countries of the world where minors are not protected by law, pre-adolescents are sometimes prostitutes and initiate sex behavior on their own account; the writer once lived in a primitive community where the birth of a child in the family was a festive occasion and all members of the family, old and young, were invited home to witness the event. Privacy had little meaning here. There is a certain inertia in man which leads him to wish to avoid rational thinking and find the situations of life expressed in simple terms of black and white, yes and no, but life is just not built that way and successful living requires a price to be paid, and that price is seeking for constructive goals and the use of rational means in attaining them. There is no other way.

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