

ATTENDING TO OTHERS:
ETHICS, LOVE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

by

NICHOLAS JOHN STARKEY

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Abstract

The thesis concerns the manner in which a good manⁱ attends to others as individuals, and the rôle of the concept of attention in modern moral philosophy.

In Part I of the thesis I argue that the structure of much modern moral philosophy neglects the issue of the attention the good man offers others as individuals, taking as examples the works of David Gauthier, Charles Fried and Bernard Williams. I argue that their heavy emphasis either upon universal rules of action, or upon purpose, leads to the issue of the proper attention of one individual to another being neglected. Where accounts of the quality of attention which we owe others are implied by other details of their respective moral theories, I argue that these accounts are in various ways distorted or incomplete.

In Part II I turn to the study of affection and of love for an alternative account of the attention we should offer others, and the different perspective this casts upon our lives. I first consider two theological studies of the loves of Eros, Agape and Philia; that of M.C.D'Arcy, and that of Aelred of Rievaulx. I then progress to an account of compassion and of friendship seen outside of any theological context.

I argue that the attention to others found in certain forms of love gives us an altered sense of the other as an individual, and that this changed sense of another conditions our wider moral understanding, including our sense of what we owe to others outside of relations of compassion and friendship. I illustrate the way in which the argument of the thesis might alter our sense of what is good and what is bad in some familiar virtues and vices.

I conclude by briefly exploring the ways in which an account of ethics based around the forms of attention and response to others, might also give us a clearer picture of the true nature of the moral self.

ⁱ Whilst I shall often employ masculine terms, for simplicity, they are intended to be taken colourlessly, and to apply equally to men or women.

Dedication

For my wife, Claire, with love.

Acknowledgments

This thesis was written under the supervision of Professor N.J.H.Dent, and I would like to record my sincere gratitude for his help, advice and encouragement. I would also like to thank my family, and my wife Claire, for their continued help and support.

Art and morality, with certain provisos...are one. Their essence is the same. The essence of both of them is love. Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real.

(Iris Murdoch, *The Sublime and the Good*)

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Part I

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introductory Remarks

This thesis was born from a feeling of frustration. This frustration was the feeling that certain morally significant experiences and attitudes were being sidelined or discounted by modern moral philosophy, but I had no clear sense of how this came to be or how it could be corrected. My dissatisfaction with what I was reading was not at this stage particularly clearly defined, but I felt a keen sense that the way in which we are, at our best, present to others as individuals, and let them be present to us as individuals, was pushed to one side by much moral philosophy. By this I mean that the struggle to perceive and to *attend* to another justly, fairly and generously, and the impact which this may have on our view of life, seemed to have no place in most modern moral philosophy. And yet, as I have said, these thoughts were not much more clearly formulated than this, and it was not clear to me just what it was in modern ethics that I should protest at, what premise or what conclusion to disagree with, in order to place things, as I saw them, upon a right footing.

Part I of this thesis, almost half of its length, is concerned with trying to diagnose this frustration, trying to be rather clearer about just what it was I wanted a moral philosophy to help me express, and just what it was that was preventing me from expressing it. For the remainder of the thesis I suggest an account of ethics which avoids, I hope, the limitations I have attempted to identify. The first, 'diagnostic' part should be read as an important part of the thesis for its own sake, and

not merely as scene-setting for my own account: getting this diagnosis right is a primary aim of the thesis.

In the outline of the thesis given below, Sections 2.1 and 2.2 discuss the analysis of that dissatisfaction which I have described, and the causes to which I attribute it, in the work of contemporary philosophers. Together these analyses constitute Part I of the thesis. In 2.3 and 2.4 below I outline the positive phases of the thesis, which comprise Part II of the work, in which I attempt to construct an alternative philosophical account of ethics.

2. Outline of the Thesis

2.1 Abstraction and Universality.

The frustration I described above remained for some time quite ill formulated. It was given much clearer definition by Iris Murdoch's work.ⁱ (Footnotes are to be found at the end of each chapter).

Murdoch's work emphasises a common construction running through contemporary philosophers' work in ethics. Motivated, Murdoch says, to avoid any emphasis upon the inner, for fear of failing to learn Wittgenstein's and Ryle's lessons about the public nature of meaningful discourse, the good man is seen as an agent rather than as a perceiver. That is, when we delineate the subject matter of ethics, the moral life is seen as a series of choices concerning how to act. The act in question must be factually specifiable, and "supported by reasons held by the agent to be valid for all others placed as he is".

A moral concept will be roughly an objective definition of a certain area of activity plus a recommendation or prohibition....The points...which I should like to emphasise for future reference are these; the behaviouristic treatment of the "inner life", the view of moral

concepts as factual specifications plus recommendations, the universalisability of moral judgement, and the accompanying picture of moral freedom. (Murdoch (3), p. 77-8)

This construction affects how what Murdoch terms the good man's vision of others enters into ethics. I shall more often refer to our attention to others than to our vision, for the term 'vision' is perhaps too exclusively associated with the senses and in particular with sight, and may appear to endorse an easy distinction between vision and action, of the sort which I want to object to.ⁱⁱ Nevertheless I shall, on occasion, also refer to our perception of others, and to our struggle to understand them, for the form of attention I am exploring includes both of these things. It includes also, I think, a generous use of the imagination, and, often, attentive action and assistance too, but this is to anticipate.

Perhaps it will seem at first that an account of the form of our attention to others, and the form of our understanding of them, is entirely neglected by the sort of ethics Murdoch describes above. Instead, it emerges that the understanding of and attention to one person by another is given a determinate place by default. A certain form of understanding of the other is presented, where it is discussed at all, as a *pre-requisite* of proper action. The understanding which subserves a behaviourist ethics of action, in which all recommendations and factual specifications are universalisable, is one in which the other remains to us *an instance of the universal*. That is, our perception of the other is cut off at a certain point - morality requires us to attend to another only as of a certain type, standing to us in a particular type of relation, and we then switch our attention back to other issues, chiefly the actions required in such a situation and the reasons for those actions. The sense that encountering another individual as an individual *is in itself* an important moral task is thereby denied.

All of this seemed at once familiar to me from what I had been reading. Although I do not wish to argue that any one of the philosophers I am going to discuss fits this picture exactly, the reader

will, I hope, see the operation of this picture of moral philosophy at work in some of the writings of the contemporary philosophers who I critique in Part I, and it is my contention that it throws a good deal of light on the absence of a proper place for the other as a focus of attention as an individual in their work. I trace echoes of this impersonal approach to ethics in the writings of two contemporary philosophers in particular: David Gauthier and Charles Fried.ⁱⁱⁱ

Whilst it emphasises how widespread this abstracting, depersonalising effect is in modern philosophy that both these philosophers can in other respects be seen as representing competing approaches to moral philosophy, I should make clear the limit of my ambitions here. I do not want to claim that every contemporary moral philosopher utilises the sort of construction which I am highlighting here. Neither do I want to claim that where it is present it is present to the same degree and with precisely the same effects. Indeed, I argue that Fried's work does far more to limit and counteract the depersonalising effects of this construction than does Gauthier's. Nevertheless I do want to argue that something of the construction I complain of can be readily found in their work, and that it does have the sorts of effects I identify, namely making ethics as they interpret it impersonal, especially in our attention to the other as an individual.

Tracing this construction through the work of two significant contemporary philosophers is primarily intended as necessary demonstration that the construction I am calling attention to in modern ethics is indeed a reality, and not the product of my own mind and my own misreading. However, whilst I am insistent that I do not want to claim that this depersonalised ethics is all-pervasive, I do hope that the picture which emerges in my discussion of Gauthier and Fried is sufficiently familiar to the reader of modern moral philosophy to be recognised as a significant influence upon the subject. Whilst I could not explicitly argue this without it dominating the entire essay, it is my contention that this is a widespread approach, seen in varying degrees in

many writers, not usually acknowledged, indeed not recognised as a distinct and identifiable approach. I shall, however, need to leave this claim to the judgment of the reader.

The point that this common pattern of construction in otherwise very different philosophies is usually unacknowledged and unidentified is an important one. For it is my aim in identifying this strand of thought in contemporary philosophers to be as clear as possible about the sort of rôle which it plays in their philosophy. It is my contention that I am uncovering not an explicitly held thesis, nor a common conclusion, but simply a common approach and starting point, and I shall illustrate in my discussion of Gauthier and Fried how the depersonalising effect of their philosophies is to be found in the structure of their arguments, and is not in itself argued for. This of course makes it all the more difficult to argue against, and dissent involves something more akin to the process of unearthing and exposing to view the presuppositions and structure of an argument, rather than any more conventional refutation of a philosopher's conclusions.

This embedding of a morally significant account of attention to others within the very structure of a philosopher's work should of course throw light upon the sort of frustration which I mentioned at the start of this introduction and which formed the starting point for my research. This frustration was not born of finding the conclusions which many philosophers reached unconvincing or fallacious, which is I suppose part and parcel of engaging in philosophical debate. Rather it was a feeling of the debate taking place on lines which made it impossible to express certain sorts of feelings and experiences. It was a frustration born of finding that where one disagrees with a conclusion, one disagrees with the obvious alternative just as much and in just the same way; the feeling that one's disagreement lies further back, that the decisive move in the conjuring trick has already been made^{iv}.

It is thus the intent of this thesis to bring a construction which influences much modern philosophy out into the open, at least in the two cases I discuss. When that is achieved this approach to ethics may be properly assessed, fairly compared with the alternative construction, which I go on to offer, and hopefully more easily recognised in other philosophers' work. It is hoped that this will be a valuable exercise even if the reader should then embrace the existing construction, though now as an explicitly held conviction, in contrast to and in preference to the alternative I am suggesting.

2.2 Purpose and J.L.Stocks

The above section suggests one foundation for the essay, but it is not the only one. Whilst I have claimed, and continue to claim, that the abstracting and universalising construction which I have identified above is widespread in its influence, there are traditions in philosophy which seem to be quite free of it, and to which we might turn as an alternative. One such alternative is a certain presentation of ethics as a *purposive* activity. The ethical life of a man has often enough been envisaged as that which leads to a desired end, be that some sort of excellence or plenty conceivable independently of any other ethical evaluation, or the means to a golden mean or *Summum Bonum* which is itself the subject of value judgments of one sort or another. The third contemporary philosopher whom I discuss, Bernard Williams, employs, as I shall argue, a highly purposive account of the rôle of ethical beliefs and sentiments in human life. Now as I have said, in describing the abstracting construction discussed above I take myself to identify an approach which is found within many of the main traditions of moral philosophy (it is, I think, an influence which is seen to influence writers from many traditions whilst remaining identifiably the same basic tendency). However, it is worthy of note that Williams turns to this purposive approach precisely, he says, to counter the abstracting influence that he finds in Utilitarianism and Kantianism.

The appeal of the purposive to the philosopher who has a concern for the particular is, as I shall show, that it starts with the individual concerns of the agent, in the individual, particular situation in which they find themselves. However I shall argue, making much use of the work of J.L.Stocks^v, that viewing our plans and the people they involve from the viewpoint of purpose alone distorts and foreshortens our view of the other just as badly as the emphasis upon abstract qualities and their relevance to action which I described above. Indeed, the effects of the two approaches are surprisingly similar, for purpose and desire have the effect of limiting the way in which situations and persons are present to one by making them significant only as instances of the general, and not as individuals.

How is this impersonal, generalising effect active in a wholly purposive ethics committed to the realisation of those states of the world the agent desires? Purpose assesses the particular in the light of its usefulness for or hindrance of a desired future goal. Certain qualities of the individual are very much the point for the purposive mind, and yet other qualities appear accidental, to be, as it is sometimes put, mere 'noise'. I contrast this attention with affection, in which every quality of an individual becomes significant, simply by virtue of being part of that individual.

When discussing purposive theories of ethics my claim is not, as it was with Gauthier and Fried, that the quality of our attention is almost entirely ignored. Many purposive accounts of ethics are concerned with how the agent sees his moral position, and Williams is, as I shall show, concerned to argue that the agent must see what we might call the moral territory from one particular place - the here and now - rather than adopting a more abstract "view from nowhere". Nevertheless I hope that we shall also see that vision of the other, attention to the other, continues to be assigned a specific and subservient place when morality is identified simply as a part of the purposive. I shall argue that this leads once again to a foreshortening and a distorting of our account of the

good man's attention to another. In the second section I shall argue for a contemplative image of others, which does not *preclude* purpose, but which illuminates salient features of our lives which are not visible by considering our purposes alone.

In making out this argument I shall make no attempt to conceal the very great differences between a purposive approach to ethics and the abstracting view identified before. Proper attention to Williams should ensure that this is done, as he has, as I have said, a stated view of the contrast and very definite claims about what might be gained by championing purpose. Furthermore, accounts of ethics which share a purposive construction are various amongst themselves, and bear many important dissimilarities. I shall conclude however that if we follow Williams into what I shall argue turns out to be a purposive ethics, we will be left with an abstraction from the individual which is quite as pronounced as that which we identified earlier, albeit one arrived at for different reasons.

In summary, I shall be arguing in this part of the work that modern moral philosophy's account of the attention which one person gives to another is constrained and foreshortened in two recognisable ways.

The first of these constraining accounts begins from a conception of the self as free to choose his actions and emphasises action at the expense of vision. It interprets right action as universalisable, or at least most properly interpreted from a generalised viewpoint. Vision then enters the life of the good man in a subservient rôle, identifying the universalisable features of people and relationships, so that he might act in the way that a universal ethics requires. No place is made within such an ethic for the struggle of the good man to perceive the other more justly and truly as an individual, and the way in which this changes our sense of a good life.

The second sort of account, in many ways a stark contrast to the first, argues that ethical behaviour can be understood as a purposive activity, and that our actions should be guided towards the completion and realisation of what we most desire, be that some achievement within the world, or even the construction of a proper character for ourselves. I argue that this also sets attention a determinate and constrained task, that of identifying in the present the seeds of a better future, which is an identification of certain general qualities in an individual, at the expense of all else which is there to be seen by a more generous eye.

I should make clear that in all of this my aim is not to argue that purpose should be excluded from ethics, but only to make clear (following Stocks) the *limits* of purpose. In the positive section of the thesis I shall argue that there is a fundamental attitude of respect and attention between individuals, which individuals need to show each other to treat each other aright; and that our perception of others and the place they can hold in our lives is not illuminated by the purposes others may serve for us. A contemplative account will reveal a proper relation between persons, and when this relation is accepted and embodied into our interaction with others there remains plenty of room for plans and purposes (although the suggestion that the ways in which our friend matters *reduce* to purposes is an injustice)^{vi}.

2.3 Eros, Philia and Agape.

It is the contention of both Stocks and Murdoch that love or affection, in one form or another, is the form of attention to others that reveals them as, and responds to them as, an individual to a precious individual, in a way which the earlier theories do not. Love, in some of its modes, contemplates the other as an object of attention in their own right; that is, love is a particular form of perception in which individuality is revealed.

Before beginning this task I earnest, I appraise two contrasting theological accounts of love, one given by Aelred of Rievaulx and one by M.C.D'Arcy^{vii}. This discussion is intended to further the thesis in two ways. Firstly, subdividing the loves into Eros, Philia and Agape imposes some clarity upon the rest of the thesis, for under the general term love may fall many emotions and relationships which contrast in important ways, and should give us some familiarity with the materials, as it were, out of which I wish to construct a reformed ethics.

Secondly, and equally importantly, it serves as a preliminary discussion of the different methods by which the importance of the loves to ethics can be addressed. Aelred and D'Arcy take love to be a propensity to form attachments. They take the task for a philosophical discussion of the loves to be a matter of reconciling the different sorts attachments that the different loves promote within the same, good, life. I discuss the ways in which these two different writers try to reconcile these loves to each other, and in each case argue that they give a distorted account of the nature of the loves in the process.

My own method is developed in contrast to this approach. I do not focus upon the attempts to harmonise the loves, seen as determinants of various attachments. What I aim to bring out is the way in which the affections change our sense of the human beings we involve in our plans and purposes.

2.4 Compassion and Friendship Restated.

The theological accounts discussed above each aim to provide a single coherent theory of the loves. That is, they aim to show how, despite their apparent differences, the pursuit of Eros, Philia and Agape can follow the same path, how the same life can satisfy the needs of all three at once. In my critique of these accounts, I argue that this drive for a single theory of how we should live leads, in both cases, to a mis-statement of the differences between the loves, or a pressure to distort one to more closely resemble another.

In Chapter 7, I present friendship and compassion, free of their theological commitments, in ordinary contexts, and attempt to get a clear picture of the sense of another person which these loves provide. I argue that through these loves we see the other as an individual, and react to them as an individual, in the manner in which I have been trying to account for. The reality of another seen through these loves is, I argue, qualitatively different from the conception of them we are provided with in the sorts of universalising and purposive moral philosophy I discussed in the early stages of the thesis. In describing these loves and the attention they afford us, I also begin the process, continued later on, of showing how such attention might properly be considered as central to ethics, rather than a peripheral matter subserving our account of action.

My aim in these sections is to unearth more contemplative relations between individuals, in which others are seen justly, as centres of importance and value in and of themselves, in order to inform and illuminate (but not to depreciate or replace) more discursive accounts of moral duty and action. These contemplative relations and the changed sense of the reality of another which they bring with them will be present in the thoughts and action which the good man offers to others *outside* of relations of friendship and compassion too. So I shall argue as Part II of the thesis progresses.

In arguing this I shall be trying to construct a philosophy that articulates a perspective upon morality, which, as I argued in the early sections of the thesis, is largely neglected in modern moral philosophy. The particular loves which, I shall argue, change our understanding of others in important ways are the loves of friendship and compassion.

Where this final, positive stage of the thesis diverges from the theological discussion is not in rejecting a theological perspective *per se* - the relationship between the loves and theology is left for further exploration and falls outside the ambitions of this thesis. Rather the difference is that the theological discussions set themselves the task of harmonising the loves, and presenting a single course through life which nurtures and yet controls them all. I believe that this can itself distort our account of the loves. In my thesis it is in *the changed appreciation of what another can be to us*, which the loves provide, which re-directs our attitudes towards others in general, and indeed our attitude towards our own lives. That is, I turn from the development of the loves as virtues to something more like a discussion of the contemplative images of others which the loves provide, and their rôle in our moral discourse and imagination.

3. Other Themes and Issues

3.1 Partiality and Impartiality.

There are two further issues which run through the thesis, and which are not directly addressed above. The first is the question of partiality and impartiality.

Love is sometimes seen as being so synonymous with preference, partiality and favouritism that one might think that it must surely contrast with our moral duty. "Morality, as typically

conceived, requires impartiality", says Hugh LaFollette, "on the other hand personal relationships are partial to the core". (LaFollette p. 327) Surely, instead of basing ethics upon love, is it not rather the case that "The only legitimate personal relationships are derived from impartial duties, and therefore, are distant kin to intimacy as we conceive it."? (LaFollette p. 328)^{viii}

Of course, the choice between impartiality and personal preference can and often does cause ethical difficulties. I do not offer here a systematic solution to these difficulties. What I do want to argue is that such a difficulty need not be central to a project such as this thesis, or at least, not in any straightforward way. Indeed, I want to argue that to insist that the question of how to balance partiality and impartiality *must* be central to any debate of the relevance of love to ethics is already to take up a determinate, and controvertible, philosophical position.

Balancing partiality and impartiality is made a central focus when we make the *harmonisation* of the loves, seen as competing attachments, our subject. And yet my chief focus in this thesis is the manner in which love changes our *perception* of and *attention* to others. The justification for taking this latter approach can only be the fruits of the thesis, but in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 I focus particularly closely on the contrast between these two approaches and their varying dangers and advantages.

I argue that even the love of friendship, which from one perspective is clearly partial, when examined from the perspective of its ability to mould our attention, still reveals something about the value and nature of an individual human being *as such*. I argue that this changed understanding will then affect how we can think and act towards others be they a friend or not^{ix}.

Whilst the issue of balancing partiality and impartiality is not central to the thesis, the duty of impartial justice is not simply ignored. I argue that the duty of impartiality is, in many contexts, a fundamental part of what it is to do justice to other individuals (in others it is not)^x.

3.2 Self and Other.

It is my claim in the first part of the thesis that the understanding of the subject matter of a moral theory with which Fried, Gauthier and Williams work, shape, and are in turn shaped by, their methodologies. That is, their methods are designed to encompass and explain the particular areas of moral life which they identify as the proper area for study. Furthermore, their conceptions of the areas of moral study are themselves determined in part by the conceptions of the *first person self* which they bring to their accounts.

By contrast, for large sections of my own positive thesis I might seem to take an opposite approach, and quite ignore the question of the nature of the first person self, aside from an obviously implied capacity for love of some sort. The focus of the thesis is indeed, for a good deal of the time, firmly set upon the image of the other. This dominant emphasis upon the view of the other is a matter of presentation and explanatory strategy only. I dwell on the attention of the other in order to try to achieve the requisite clarity and thoroughness of analysis. However, as I go on to argue, it is my contention that the issues of the moral image of the self and the moral image of the other cannot be fully understood apart from each other. In view of this I go on to illustrate the ways in which love, as a perception of the other, carries implications for our perception of ourselves, and I contrast the possibilities for self-conception born out of relationships of love with those self-conceptions discussed in Part I.^{xi}

The conception of self and the conception of other are interdependent. Although my chief attack upon the philosophers of Part I is based upon their neglect of, and distortion of, the good man's conception of others, I shall make the view of the first person self as implied by my account of other-directed attention an explicit subject of discussion in the latter sections of Part II. There I shall argue that the re-worked view of the self which I offer is not merely the remainder from a

philosophy which was devised to explore quite different concerns, but that it has much to recommend it on its own merits.

4. Gauthier.

The various themes and issues raised above will be discussed at various stages in the progress of the thesis. I return now to the definition and diagnosis of my unease at the shape of much contemporary philosophy, beginning with the work of David Gauthier.

ⁱ I have been greatly helped by many of Iris Murdoch's essays and articles. Murdoch (3) and (4), and perhaps particularly (2) bear most directly on the issues I discuss in this thesis, but these themes permeate much else of Murdoch's writing.

ⁱⁱ I explicitly address and reject the notion that the struggle to perceive others which I am exploring is easily separated from and contrasted to action, in Chapter 5, Section 4.3. It should also be noted that Murdoch's term 'vision' is intended to cover something like our 'total vision of life'. In so far as elements of our 'total vision' can be separated, I am considering in this thesis specifically the place within our lives of others, and, later, the changes this leads to in our conception of ourselves.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gauthier adopts a contractarian approach, and I shall examine particularly his *Morals by Agreement*. Fried writes within the Kantian tradition, and I shall discuss his *Right and Wrong*.

^{iv} I believe this phrase derives from a remark of Wittgenstein's, but I have been unable to locate the original reference.

^v See Stocks (1), Chapters 1-4 and Chapter 11.

^{vi} I no more want to claim that involving others in our purposes is, flatly, bad than a Kantian wants to claim that we should never ask another person to pass the salt for fear of making them a means to an end.

^{vii} The first account that I shall address is Aelred of Rievaulx's *Di Spirituali Amicitia*. The second is M.C.D'Arcy's *The Mind and Heart of Love*.

^{viii} LaFollette cites James Rachels as one who holds this view. His own final position is somewhat different.

^{ix} See Chapter 8, Section 4.4.

^x In Chapter 9, Section 2.5.

^{xi} This issue is discussed in Chapter 7, Sections 3.2 and 3.3, and again in Chapter 9, Section 2.4. I give a fuller statement of my views on the effect of love upon the loving agent in Chapter 10, Section 2.

Chapter 2

David Gauthier: *Morals By Agreement*

1. Gauthier's Aims

Gauthier's main aim in *Morals by Agreement* is to provide a justificatory account of morality. That is, he not only wants to explain what morality is, but he wants this account to show why every rational person should be moral. Indeed it is Gauthier's claim that morality can be shown to be not so much compatible with reason, as *a part of the theory of rational choice*.

Gauthier explains on page 6:

Our theory must generate, strictly as rational principles for choice, and so without introducing prior moral assumptions, constraints on the pursuit of individual interest or advantage that, being impartial, satisfy the traditional understanding of morality....We claim to demonstrate that there are rational constraints and that these constraints are impartial. We then identify morality with these demonstrated constraints. (Gauthier, p. 6)

As the reference to individual interest in the above passage suggests, Gauthier's conception of the rational individual is consciously similar to the economist's account. The individual is a maximiser of his or her own utility. Reason, for Gauthier, is a slave of our desires, and we act rationally in so far as we use our reason to pursue our ends.

Gauthier contrasts his maximising conception of rationality with a "universalising" conception such as Kant's. Gauthier claims that to adopt a universalising conception account of reason *would* be to offend against his wish not to "introduce prior moral assumptions", which he has set himself

against, as it imports what he calls the "impartiality characteristic of morality" into our philosophy from the start. Gauthier seeks to show how an element of impartiality can be argued for from a morally neutral starting point.

Having committed himself to the maximising account of reason, Gauthier will then make use of the techniques which economics has developed for plotting the possibilities for the interaction of maximising individuals. The challenge for his moral theory is to show how reason, inherently so self-seeking on his account, can commit the individual to a set of fair and impartial moral constraints.

2. An Outline of Gauthier's Moral Theory.

As I have said, Gauthier's theory presupposes a utility maximising individual. The individual chooses strategies in social interaction with other such individuals which maximise his utility. These strategies must take into account not only costs and benefits available, which are simply a function of his desires, but also the potential actions of others, given their probable desires, their rationality, and their expectations of *him*.

Such maximisers would thrive in a perfectly competitive market. Under such circumstances, as described by Adam Smith, whenever I wish to increase my utility by means of interaction I must interest another in a rational bargain for whatever it is I desire, by providing a service or product which he desires too. When the market is viewed as a whole we see that the strategies which are in equilibrium - the stable and viable strategies for utility maximisers in such an environment - bring about the optimum utility for the agents involved. There is no need for any individual to restrain their search for maximum utility in the interest of others, for the pursuit of such maximum utility leads them, by an 'invisible hand', to act for the maximisation of others' utility

too. That is, we choose those actions which promote others' ends without being at all mindful of any social cause, and without submitting to compulsion: such co-operation is a part of the free pursuit of our own ends in the most efficient manner available to us in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Indeed, Gauthier likens our freedom to that of Robinson Crusoe, who presumably, if she is a maximiser (and Gauthier's Crusoe is both a maximiser and female) spends her days in the uninhibited pursuit of maximum utility, only this involves foraging and hunting etcetera, rather than social interaction (see Gauthier, pp. 90-92).

There are provisos on this interaction being fair, for whilst the action *within* the situation in which we find ourselves (a competitive market) is the same sort of response as Crusoe has the benefit of making towards her environment, still we might ask whether the situation is *itself* fair. Gauthier splits this question into two parts - is it fair that our initial endowments of wealth, talent, strength and intelligence and such are so various; and is the form of our interaction controlled by anyone in the service of their utility and at the cost of our own? Gauthier argues later that the endowment can be defended as impartial and fairⁱ, and a perfectly free market is, by its nature, free from the gerrymandering of interested parties. This being established, as he claims, Gauthier declares the free market a "morally free zone". What this means is that the constraints of morality upon our own utility maximisation *have no application*, no place at all. There is no reason for restraint of maximisation, for the pursuit of maximum utility is both maximally efficient in achieving our ends, and fair, impartial and un-coercive as just argued.

Were the world a perfect market, or potentially a perfect market as advocates of *laissez faire* economics and politics would have us believe, then there would be no room in it for restraint, which for Gauthier means no room for, that is no application for, moralityⁱⁱ. However, the world is not and cannot be a perfect market, because of the persistent presence of externalities. Given the organisation of a market society, there will always be room for individuals to benefit from co-

operative arrangements without contributing to the cost. Gauthier gives as an example of an externality the lighthouse, which benefits all who travel by sea, but leaves the self-interested maximiser with no reason to be the one who pays for it, or even to contribute to its cost, if others will pay instead. Such a person is a 'free-rider', and creates similar problems to the 'parasite', who would, for example, pollute the sea, for the costs are borne by everyone equally, and yet the advantage of cheap disposal of waste is all his own. All maximisers will play the free-rider or parasite in such circumstances, and as this tendency is common knowledge, it will be a naïve man who contributes to such joint projects, knowing that others will take advantage and seek not to pay their share if possible. The result is that lighthouses are not built, seas are polluted and every several person finds themselves in a situation which is worse than that in which everyone made equal contributions, or perhaps contributed in proportion to benefits gained. That is, equal contribution would suit each maximiser better than the pollution of the seas, but the economic analysis of externalities show why such a situation is prevented in a world of maximisers. This is the evil of externalities, frustrating our ends.

To approximate once more to the optimal satisfaction of desires, a joint strategy is required, in which every agent suppresses the immediate opportunity to maximise his utility, in concert with all other parties. Gauthier argues that the bargain which would best satisfy this requirement, that is be most acceptable to all the parties to it, is one which requires that the greatest concession required of any party is as small as possible (the principle of minimax concession) and that the least relative benefit be as large as possible (the principle of maximin relative benefit).ⁱⁱⁱ

To be party to such a contract, explicit or implicit, will appear a compelling next move to a rational maximiser, so long as the adherence of all parties to such an agreement can be reliably predicted. And yet this raises difficulties, for whilst it is easy to see why a maximiser would make the contract, it is harder to see why he would *keep* to it: a difficulty famously explored by

Hobbes, of course. Gauthier argues that agreement is possible if our conception of the maximiser is modified a little. We must assume that we have the capacity to choose and then modify our dispositions, and in making this choice a rational maximiser chooses not results, nor actions leading to results, but dispositions to act in certain ways. For the rational individual with some power over his dispositions, the way to the eventual maximisation of utility is to agree to restrain one's immediate maximisation, in accordance with a co-operative strategy to overcome the disastrous inefficiencies of externalities in the market, *and* to make this disposition to restrain one's immediate advantage and to abide by contracts once made quite manifest to others.

This person described above will find himself in the company of like-minded and similarly disposed others, and together they will enjoy opportunities for the fulfilment of their desires which are unavailable to the egoist. Such agents are described as 'constrained maximisers'. We will recall that morality was defined by Gauthier at the start of the book as an impartial constraint on maximisation. Some conditions will need to be placed upon the circumstances in which constrained maximisation can count as genuinely moral, but we can at this stage cautiously understand Gauthier's conception of moral behaviour as being the same as those strategies operative within a community of constrained maximisers. The moral man is he who agrees to such constraining strategies and disposes himself to stick to them.

We see in this description how the constraint upon self-interest which Gauthier terms "Morals by Agreement" comes about. We must however immediately address the limiting conditions which I mentioned above which must be in place for the strategies of constrained maximisers to be properly identified, in Gauthier's belief, with morality.

Gauthier has defined morality as impartial constraint upon maximisation, and the conditions upon which the network of co-operative strategies operated by constrained maximisers can be

considered fair and impartial require some further exploration. We saw that the free market was considered procedurally fair as every person's gain was achieved only through the voluntary co-operation of others, but was truly fair and impartial only if the initial endowment which we bring to the market is justifiable, and so long as no-one prejudicially controls the forms of interaction between maximising individuals, which in a perfectly free market they do not.

Gauthier explains the difficulty of the initial endowment thus:

If persons are willingly to comply with the agreement that determines what each person brings to the bargaining table, then they must find initially acceptable what each brings to the table. And if what some bring to the table includes the fruits of prior interaction forced on their fellows, then this initial acceptability will be lacking. If you seize the products of my labour and then say 'let's make a deal', I may be compelled to accept, but I will not voluntarily accept. (Gauthier, p. 15)

Therefore Gauthier argues for a proviso, consciously resembling Locke's idea that we have a basic right to what can be taken, as long as there is as much and good enough for all^{iv}. This forms the basic allowances we must give each other as a pre-requisite for negotiating actual moral constraints. Some constraints therefore precede 'Morals by Agreement', but are agreed to as a means to attain the prizes which such an agreement could give.

Similarly, whilst many co-operative arrangements could improve the lot of all agents from their newly augmented starting position, some may be shaped by social arrangements which favour particular agents invidiously and arbitrarily. To show what would constitute a social arrangement where that accusation could not justly be made, Gauthier introduces the last major component of his theory, the 'Archimedian Point'.

Gauthier's Archimedian Point is described as the point from which "an individual can move the moral world" (Gauthier, p. 16)^v. It is intended as a limit on the legitimacy of possible co-operative social arrangements, as Gauthier explains:

The demand for optimality is met by the choice of an appropriate joint strategy for interaction, embodied in the social structure. But to meet the demand for fairness, it is not sufficient to ensure that the chosen social structure provides that, in each type of interaction, no one may expect to benefit by imposing costs on another. For the structure itself may favour some persons differentially, in the potentialities it actualises or represses, and in the activities it requires or prohibits. (Gauthier, p. 263)

Gauthier gives the example of unequal education of men and women. A social arrangement might educate women to have lower horizons and more limited abilities, and then present a woman with opportunities to form a co-operative pact for her benefit. No-one could attempt to benefit from such a pact simply by decreasing her utility - the structure of Gauthier's rational bargains prohibit this. However, given that the structure of the society at large arbitrarily and differentially favours men over women, she cannot give her full and free consent to the co-operative patterns of life which are hereby offered. The patterns of co-operation do indeed provide her best means to the satisfaction of her desires within the gerrymandered society, but she has reason to wish that society could be re-founded upon a fairer basis. Until this is done, her co-operation will always be to a degree coerced and her freedom to an extent impinged upon.

In what society would everyone fully voluntarily agree to the co-operative strategies which approximate to optimality? The answer is a society where every several person can identify with a person at the Archimedian Point, an ideal person who controls and determines the forms of social interaction. That person is one who is an individual in the pursuit of their interests, but is unaware of their particular interests and endowments.

The Archimedian Point is an attempt to find an impartial condition upon which every several agent can approve the social structures which provide their opportunities for co-operation and agreement, and indeed shape their own personality and abilities.

The ideal actor chooses not to be taken advantage of in interaction. She chooses, therefore, principles determining a social structure in which her expectation of benefit from co-operation, relative to the maximum benefit she might expect to receive in some feasible social structure, is no less than that received by her fellows, or if equality is sub-optimal, no less than some person must receive whatever social structure is chosen. (Gauthier, p. 265)

Identifying with the person at the Archimedian Point approves the terms of one's social interaction as fair and impartial. It does not rationally commit the individual to comply with the terms of the social contract: the rationality of compliance depends upon the individual, concrete and particular desires which the agent wishes to fulfil and the ability of the bargains with which he is presented to fulfil them better than non-co-operation and non-constraint. "The ideal actor chooses, not compliance, but those processes of socialisation that promote the circumstances in which...compliance is rational." (Gauthier, p. 266)

3. Critical Analysis of Gauthier's Moral Philosophy

3.1 Perception and Action: The Curtailing and Abstracting of our Attention to Individuals.

It is one of Iris Murdoch's most important insights that the initial delineation of the subject matter in a theory of ethics may have an important rôle in determining what our moral theories do for us, the way in which they work, and the way in which they represent other areas of our moral lives outside of that initial delineation^{vi}. Gauthier's delineation of the subject matter of his moral theory comes along with his conception of the first person individual, from the theory of economics. I want in this section to note the initial delineation of subject matter in Gauthier's work, comment briefly upon his treatment of it, and to critically assess the effect this combination

has upon another area of our moral lives, namely attention to others. This is intended as support of my claim, made throughout the Introduction, that the construction of many ethical theories, rather than any of their specific conclusions, is what prevents certain important parts of the ethical life from receiving proper discussion.

The subject matter of Gauthier's theory is action and the mechanisms for choosing one's actions, and in particular it is the interactive strategies by which maximisers determine their actions. The subject matter - the interaction of rational maximisers - brings with it a ready-made method of study, that of economics, and this leads to the discussion of various patterns of interaction and mutual accommodation. The task for a moral theorist seems in this light to be quite obvious - to form an explanatory and justificatory account of that particular form of interaction and mutual accommodation which we find in moral life. Gauthier wastes little time in giving an account of which form of interaction should be identified with morality: he has virtually defined morality as strategies of *impartial* restraint, in keeping, he says, with the traditional understanding of what morality is^{vii}.

The delineation of our subject matter as action, more specifically impartial interaction, brings with it a certain methodology, borrowed from economics. Reciprocally, this methodology, with its consideration of externalities and of the contractual solutions needed to overcome them, provides the context in which action is seen in Gauthier. In Gauthier's ethics, an action is certainly not seen purely in the context of a relationship between historical individuals. Rather the moral significance of an action is only fully understood as a piece of co-operative interaction in the context of the tacit contract which governs social interaction generally. That is, for an understanding of an act, we are not ushered into the intimacy and privacy of a particular relationship, but are directed *outwards*, as it were, to the contractual background of the act.^{viii}

Whatever is morally important in the act is seen from the perspective of its place in a contract, and every contracting party must therefore be able to see and fully understand the moral significance of any act, given a clear view of the relevant circumstances. The act is, in an important sense, impersonal in so far as it is moral.

We can take a parallel from the law here. Supposing I hurl abuse at you. Indeed, let us suppose that I recount to you, only slightly embellished, an embarrassing incident from your history, and mock and deride you for it. Certain aspects of what I say might strike you forcibly: you may be wounded by having former experiences turned against you, and may feel that I have revealed myself as a different person to the one you took me for, that a friendship has turned out to be a sham, and maybe this will provoke other painful thoughts: how many other confidences have you misplaced? Or perhaps your thoughts do not turn to me at all, but instead you relive an experience, a single grave error, which threatens to make a joke of all you have worked for and all the values you espouse. These are the meanings of my remarks in the context first of my relationship to you, and then in the context of your history more generally.

Now if we look at the meaning of the act in the context of the law of the land, then what we pick out as the meaningful and significant parts of the remark will be very different. Indeed, there may be nothing to see *at all*, that is nothing so long as the law is held up as the context against which these remarks are to be viewed. If my embellishments are significant, and defaming (as they probably would have been), and are heard by others, then there is something to be seen - an act of slander. And in seeing the slander, the law sees only those aspects of the act which show up against the background of our legal duties.

The characteristics which were striking from your personal viewpoint as an injured friend and a person with a history out of which you have to live, are not relevant to the legal understanding of

the act. Indeed they could not be, for the law has to treat all cases alike: it is a judgment upon the acts of everyman. All acts can be considered by the law only so far as they are comparable with all other acts of the same general legal type, and this is not a defect of the law - I suppose that no other just legal arrangement is thinkable. A legal understanding of an act does not refer us to the privacy of personal relationships and individual history, but 'outwards', as it were, to an impersonal framework.

Perhaps my statement that the law is for and from everyman is not entirely accurate. The law is the law of the land, and not another land, and it is conditioned by the history of that land and the values and priorities of its people. Gauthier's contract however comes closer to being for and from everyman. The contract is, remember, acceptable to the ideal actor at the Archimedian Point, at least as long as it is fair and impartial enough to enter into an account of morality. True, one needs to have something to bring to the contract, some endowment^{ix}. However, what is required by the contractual arrangement of society must be acceptable to, and therefore understood from the perspective of, anyone who can identify with an ideal actor with some endowment, some (any) interests, and who is committed to their rational pursuit.

As a consequence, the aspect under which acts are seen is even further from considering the personal resonances of friendship and individual history than the law is. Only the most impersonal and behaviourist account of the act will be suitable, for only such language can be understood to mean the same thing from every viewpoint. Indeed Gauthier needs and uses no more expansive vocabulary to describe the moral significance of acts than the language of choice, strategy, compliance and utility offered by economics.

We have now seen the delineation of the subject matter in Gauthier. He sets out to look at strategy, and in particular strategies which constrain the individual's pursuit of individual interest.

In the light of the contractual relations which best enable individuals to pursue their interest, and in order to defend the arrangement as satisfying the "impartiality characteristic of morality", Gauthier's subject narrows to actions and strategies understood against the background of a contract which can be understood and approved by an ideal actor at the Archimedian Point.

I said earlier that the initial subject area of a moral theory may require a particular methodology, and that the combination of the two may constrain the sort of account we are able to give of areas of human life *outside* the initial area of focus. We have seen how Gauthier has framed that area of human life which he explicitly wishes to account for and to justify, and that this area extends as far as actions seen within a contractual context, and our *attention* to each other as individuals falls outside of this area. By attention I mean for instance the manner in which we seek to understand another; what we notice about each other and the weight which we give to their weal and woe.

This does not mean that, in being seemingly ignored, the matter of our understanding and perception of others is left entirely open. It is not open to us to supplement Gauthier's account of action with one of several accounts of a proper attention to others, according to what we find to be true concerning the attention of a good man. Rather, a determinate place for our understanding of and attention to each other has been created almost, as it were, by default. A certain manner of perceiving, whilst it is not central to Gauthier's project, is a necessary part of the moral life, but is subservient to the action which Gauthier defines as moral. Perception is subservient simply in the sense that if we are to behave in certain ways and to certain people, if we are to fulfil our moral obligations, we shall of course have to be able to identify those situations in which compliance is required.

In the context of Gauthier's contract, what another is to us - what we should perceive in them and what a just attention should reveal - is simply the presence of *a contracting party*, one from

whom we can demand certain things, and whose needs occasion some duty upon ourselves, who may as a contracting party demand some constraint of our pursuit of our interests.

This account needs some clarification, for another need not announce himself or herself to us as a contracting party as such in order to limit our self-interest. If the contract demands that we keep promises, then an individual contractor might appear to us as a promisee, and if the contract demands a degree of loyalty to friends then another might appear to us in his capacity as a friend. However, this is not to be confused with the form of attention I contrasted with the law earlier. In so far as my actions fall under the judgment of a contractarian morality, they are to be understood not in terms of individual relations but common contractual rules. And so it is the way in which my relationship with the other is comparable with other inter-relations which makes the classification "friend" relevant. It is the aspect of the friendship which is open to full and universal view, the aspect which is the same in all similarly placed friendships and so can be written into universal laws or principles of social interaction, which is relevant to Gauthier's moral philosophy. The feelings for a particular individual as such, and the history of that particular relationship, are not relevant: they contrast with the action as understood morally, where morality is morals by agreement, just as much as they contrast with the legal account of the act.

The form of perception which Gauthier's account implies *does* form a contrast with action, as opposed to the account of attention which I am interested in developing.^x Despite this contrast, the relationship between perception and action is straight-forward in Gauthier as the required perception follows from, and is subservient to, our philosophical interpretation of the act. To correctly fulfil our agreed moral obligations we must identify others as friends or promisees or whatever in this impersonal sense, that is the sense that leads outwards from the particular relationship and locates it in the context of general rules of conduct between people defined in

certain universally understood types of relation. All the knowledge of others that we need strive for, that is the only knowledge of others that is required for right action in Gauthier's contractarianism, is that we see them in their positions within the contract (contractor; friend; promisee etc.). We know what sorts of rights and claims others have, and in what type of relationship we stand to them, as that relationship is seen against the impersonal background of a universal agreement. All that is personal about the relationship can be safely forgotten, indeed need never be visible, from the moral perspective. The idiosyncrasies of a person, their fears and motivations, their true natures, needs and history, are unimportant from the perspective of morality. All that we need attend to is the interchangeable, the universally perceivable, the general.

We can now conclude what has been a lengthy, but crucial section. Gauthier's approach selects as its subject matter strategy and action. This action is understood in the context of a general contract, understood and approved from an ideal and utterly impersonal viewpoint, known as the Archimedian Point. Vision is not given any central part in morality: to be good is to act correctly; it is not to come to perceive correctly. Nevertheless a certain degree of perception is a pre-requisite for the main business of morality, and proper classification of others, the recognition by general type rather than particular, individual nature, is needed to subserve our adherence to the public rules of co-operative interaction.

Hence we have seen, as I claimed at the start of the section, how a philosophy which at first seems to ignore the issue of what perception and attention morality requires of us comes in fact to give it a very particular characterisation and rôle. This characterisation is of moral vision as abstracting the universal from the particular and individual, and discarding the latter. This is a form of the tendency in moral philosophy which I described in the Introduction (Section 2.1), and which I wanted to illustrate in Gauthier.

3.2 The Character of Interpersonal Relations

Although Gauthier claims that his argument involves no prior moral commitments, a distinctive picture of moral relations emerges from this account of ethics. What I consider to be the most central feature, in the context of this thesis, has been noted already. That is, that we are not directed by Gauthier's philosophy to attend to others as individuals, not directed to patiently discern those features of their lives which are unique to them and which are revealed against their particular relationships and their own history as an individual. Rather the focus upon action and strategy in the context of a common contract forces us to focus in precisely the opposite direction, to classify others according to type and to regard their actions and histories as they are comparable with others and relevant to the requirements of an impersonal morality.

Of course Gauthier is not the only philosopher to do this; I have said in the Introduction that this emphasis on the general and not the particular is a widespread feature of modern moral philosophy - and I have yet to show that something valuable is lost. (This latter argument belongs to Part II of the thesis.) For now I am content to note this generalising effect and show that it is not explicitly argued for but is necessitated by Gauthier's treatment of, and exclusive attention to, other areas of human inter-relation. There are other details of the picture of human inter-relation which Gauthier presents us with, however, which I would like to briefly note now, features which relate to his contractarianism more specifically, and which I do not necessarily want to suggest are examples of features found in modern ethics more generally.

One feature of Gauthier's work which is worthy of note is its individualism. Gauthier's individuals are conceived as examples of "non-tuism", that is people are "conceived as not taking an interest in one another's interests." (Gauthier, p. 87, quoting from Rawls, p. 13). Gauthier accepts, of course, that individuals will take an interest in friends and family, but notes that it is

"neither unrealistic nor pessimistic to suppose that beyond the ties of blood and friendship, which are necessarily limited in their scope, human beings exhibit little positive fellow-feeling." (Gauthier, p. 101) His non-tuism is not merely an assessment of how helpful Gauthier finds human beings to be, but has a more theoretical purpose in ensuring that individuals can be seen as independent atoms of desire and purpose as economic analysis requires. Not only are others not seen as being very often the object of another's interest in anything other than an instrumental manner, but when they are, their interests are seen as being the *content* of another's desire, but *not* affecting the separateness of individuals as desirous agents.^{xi}

To this individualism must be added relations that whilst not explicitly described and affirmed by Gauthier are implied by and fostered by his contractual analysis. I am thinking of relations of invidious moral demands and mutual judgment.

Let us take the issue of invidious moral demand first. As a contracting party another is to me a potential occasion for my natural right of self-advancement to be impinged upon by a contractual duty. This restraint of my interest is the unfortunate cost of the contractual deal, and in so far as we are purely rational we would wish to be free of such constraints and be a tyrant over others, subject to no demands on ourselves whatsoever.^{xii}

A contractual relation also implies mutual judgment. Other men by their nature as contracting parties, stand over me as judges to interpret my behaviour, in terms specified by contract, and force compliance where I go astray. And these two features - unwelcome but grudgingly accepted moral demands over one another and mutual moral judgment - *are built into the very nature of moral inter-relations* in so far as contractarianism is correct.

I want to say no more here than that this provides a potent and morally significant picture of human relations, and of the place of morality within them. Morality remains a necessary evil between individuals who are necessarily isolated from each other, and who work around each other in a spirit of mutual judgment, grudging co-operation and tolerance, and mutual coercion. The differences between us must always be kept in view, according to Gauthier's moral philosophy, and those differences must always be the subject of competition, and must result in a well regulated enmity.

The reader who is familiar with Gauthier might well suspect a gross injustice is being done here, and indeed the story as presented above is a story only half told. For Gauthier does *not* believe that human life is, in fact, quite so bleak as that. Indeed, if we all really possessed such a desire to be a tyrant, Gauthier would fear for the stability of the contract. The story as told so far focuses upon man exclusively as a rational animal. Chapters 1-9 inclusive of *Morals by Agreement* might be described (for this is how Gauthier does describe them) as the morality of "economic man". And yet economic man does not exist, for as well as a rational component to our nature there is an affective side, and one of the things we find affectively moving is interaction with others. We actually come to enjoy and hold dear for its own sake the co-operative interaction that a contractarian justifies to us, and it is this which, at the last moment, seems to soften the interpretation of human life which Gauthier is offering.

Why has Gauthier waited so long to introduce affection for others into a moral thesis? It is because he wants to give morality a rational justification, as we said at the start of this chapter. But once the real person sees, by identifying with economic man, that mutual co-operation is rational, he may well find such co-operation not merely instrumentally rewarding, but an amiable experience in itself. The rationalist in us *justifies* morality, and then we find that the affective

individual in us *likes* it. If we could *not* justify morality in the way he describes, then, Gauthier says, we would find it manipulative and could not like it.

This both provides a reassuring support for the contract itself, and also accounts for the fact that the world is not quite the ill tempered grudge match which Gauthier's analysis initially suggested.

Does Gauthier's late introduction of our mutual affection come in time to neutralise the peculiar and unappealing picture of human inter-action and inter-relation which I was describing? I do not believe that it does. What Gauthier has argued is that real individuals like the co-operation which morality involves and that this supports and maintains the institution. However, the analysis of the moral relations in themselves, that is the analysis of *just what it is* that we develop an affection for, remains unchanged.

We are still to picture ourselves as radically individual, and in a relation of competition. We are to see mutual judgment as a natural part of the (contractarian) social relations between us. Persons are not primarily attended to for their own sake in morality, but are instances of a particular sort of thing (contracting parties, assumed to be maximisers) which in particular sorts of circumstances demand the exercise of general (contractual) rules. This basic relation of mutual competition resulting in self-interested bargains between instances of a type is not changed by the fact that an enjoyment of each other's company might follow from it and be consequential to it.

What we have in this late introduction of the affective component of human life, the upgrading of man from "economic man" into the "liberal individual", is a *sweetening* of the relations earlier described, but not at all a revision of them. In order to account for the plain fact that we find good relations with others rewarding and agreeable, Gauthier embellishes the economic picture of man with a capacity for affection and a liking and enjoyment of what has already shown to be his

proper good. This is quite different from integrating our affectionate relation with others into our conception of our self and of what could be a good life for that self.^{xiii}

4. Moral Neutrality and the Influence of Science.

4.1 Gauthier's Claim to Moral Neutrality

The main task of this chapter has now been completed, that is the identification of a particular and morally relevant approach to ethics, one which sidelines and then distorts the account of the good man's attention to other individuals.

I emphasised in the introduction the difficulty involved in attacking and disagreeing with the impersonal nature of much moral philosophy, since much of what is, to my mind, objectionable is found not in the explicit conclusions of the work but in the construction itself. That is, I am objecting to certain presuppositions and a certain perception of what it is a moral theory is to address, and what function it is to perform. I hope to have illustrated this point also in my examination of Gauthier.

Both the distinctive moral nature of Gauthier's account and the fact that the morally salient points of Gauthier's work are embedded in the structure of his arguments raises the matter of his claims to moral neutrality, and it is this which I wish to examine now.

Gauthier has generated a picture of moral relations *per se* which seems reminiscent of quite *particular* relationships: he has developed an account which does not look at all to be an account of what morality simply must be, but an account of a situation we might properly fear and wish to rectify. And yet Gauthier's claims, as a distinctive virtue of his theory, that all the morally

relevant characteristics of his moral philosophy are *results*: "No alternative account generates morals, as a rational constraint on choice and action, from a non-moral, or morally neutral, base". (Gauthier, p. 17) Indeed we have seen that Gauthier criticises the Kantian tradition with its "Universalising" conception of rationality for incorporating moral presuppositions, unacknowledged, into its theories.

I have argued, however, that a very distinctive conception of moral relations has been formed in, or underlies, Gauthier's thesis and that this is less the result of explicit argument than it is a part of the very methods which he employs and examines. Human inter-relations are presented as being those of necessarily separate individuals, contrary to the claims of Aristotle and Aquinas to name only two. The moral man has been portrayed as being good on account of his actions, and not his thoughts and his attention to other people, except in so far as this is a pre-requisite for action. Furthermore, this action is interpreted as morally significant only in so far as it can be understood against an impersonal and universally understood background. We are to see ourselves as each other's judges, and will find our inter-relations enjoyable, but enjoyed as the happy result of an intractable competition between individuals. Again, our enjoyment is the emotions' favourable response to what must still be understood as a war of wills and desires, in which we accept to be policed by others so long as we can police them thorough the self-same agreement and retain as much control over the pursuit of our desires as is going to be possible.

All of this seems to run counter to Gauthier's claim to avoid any particular viewpoint except those which he has argued for. And yet, as I have said, Gauthier claims that the moral characteristics of his philosophy are a *result*, a conclusion, and makes great play of his moral neutrality, which he finds to be a particular and singular merit of his theory. It might be thought that in flatly denying this I am proposing such a great discrepancy between the reality of Gauthier's work and his claims for it that I must be betraying a misreading on my part. In fact I do not think that this is

so, and my explanation of this discrepancy between fact and perception is on much the same terms as the original criticism.

Gauthier considers the substantial moral claim made by his thesis to be that we should, in certain situations act impartially rather than partially. To spell this out more fully, it is in Gauthier's terms the claim that, in the context of a social structure acceptable from the Archimedian Point, certain impartial strategies which constrain our direct pursuit of our own maximum utility are rationally justifiable and compelling to the individual maximiser. It is this impartiality which he accuses the Kantians of smuggling into their moral philosophy at the start, and he claims that they can of course easily defend morality *if* they can defend the universalising conception of reason which they bring to the discussion.

What is the meaning and significance of this? Gauthier considers the justification and examination of rational interaction and strategy, without much discussion of attention as such, to be a matter which lies *before* the main substantive claims of a moral philosophy. It is only the specific strategies we should follow - partial or impartial, constrained or unconstrained, and all within the context of acceptable social arrangements - which count as substantial moral claims.^{xiv}

The Kantians adopt a form of this impartiality before their explicitly moral arguments get going; Gauthier does not, and so he sees himself as the only philosopher who truly eschews moral presuppositions before setting about his arguments. Other matters such as the focus on action and strategy and the impersonal context in which strategy is interpreted are not owned as moral commitments at all.

To make this clear, Gauthier's confidence that he is morally neutral and that all morally substantial claims are fully argued for results from the same delineation of moral subject matter that we have been criticising all along. Gauthier will reject any claim that he is far from morally

neutral, for his division of the moral from the non-moral in human life appears to place all his claims on the right side of the argument. And yet it is in fact precisely this division of what is and what is not acknowledged as being of the first importance in ethics that I am identifying as a type of moral commitment, as presenting a particular, controversial and distorting picture of moral relations.

4.2 Partiality and Impartiality.

I wish to make a point here about the identification of the moral with impartiality which connects with what I said on this subject in the Introduction. I said in the Introduction, Section 3.1, that morality seems to many to be so closely identified with impartiality that the prospects for a morality built upon love, which seems at first glance to be thoroughly partial, might be reckoned so bleak as to require a special plea for the reader's patience. When Gauthier says that he will justify strategies which, being impartial, "satisfy the traditional understanding of morality" (Gauthier, p. 6), this might seem to restate the weaknesses of my fledgling account. However, my argument has been that Gauthier's selection of what is and is not a part of the explicit study of morality leaves out a good deal which is of great moral significance. This argument has a counterpart, which is that what remains - simple impartiality - will on its own be manifestly inadequate to "satisfy the traditional understanding of morality".

My claim is that the demand that any account of ethics must first and foremost be scrupulously impartial, indeed that it stands or falls upon its ability to demonstrate that we must be impartial in our dealings with each other, might in itself be one part of a morally significant conception of the field to be covered by a moral theory and the characteristics that it must bear. When an account of ethics based around love is made out, it cannot of course be seen to be riddled with bias and partiality. That account may nevertheless suggest that the matter of partiality and impartiality is

not, as stated by Gauthier and many others, right at the heart of the good life in any simple way, and that the demands of impartiality may seem, in the light of the thesis, to hold a different place in ethics than the one Gauthier feels it has been traditionally assigned. This case has of course to be fully made out, and this issue will only be resolved, as I hope, towards the end of the thesis.^{xv}

4.3 The Influence of Science.

I have claimed that Gauthier's account of ethics is far from neutral, and that the way in which he seeks to make a particular virtue of his neutrality is in fact itself a symptom of the morally slanted orientation of his thesis.

I shall not try to diagnose the reason for this morally distorting emphasis on action in a universal perspective as it appears throughout moral philosophy generally. Perhaps the reasons for the adoption of such an approach are various, but as I have chosen to illustrate this generalising tendency in Gauthier specifically, I shall make some effort towards a diagnosis of the causes of this construction in Gauthier. How much of what I say might be applied to other philosophers is a matter which lies outside the scope of this thesis, and will be left entirely to the judgment of the reader.

It is my contention that the shape of Gauthier's philosophy is fixed by its relation to science, and in particular the science of economics. I want to suggest that Gauthier is working upon morality in the spirit of the development of a scientific theory in the face of initially unyielding evidence. This spirit perhaps emerges first when Gauthier further explains his preference for the maximising conception of reason over the universalising conception. Gauthier explains that the maximising conception of reason is almost universally accepted and engaged with in the social sciences of economics, decision and game theory and to a lesser extent (which signifies only a

lesser interest in rationality *per se*) political, sociological and psychological theory (see Gauthier, p. 8). Furthermore, it is the *weaker* theory:

any consideration affording one a reason for acting on the maximising conception, also affords one such a reason on the universalistic conception. But the converse does not hold. On the universalistic conception all persons have in effect the same basis for rational choice - the interests of all - and this assumption, of the impersonality or impartiality of reason, demands defence. (Gauthier, p. 8)

Gauthier chooses the maximising theory of rationality partly as the result of the direct influence of the sciences, and partly in the very scientific spirit of constructing a theory with the minimum resources, so as to make it more immune to attack or a reductionist undercutting, and more universally acceptable.

The direct influence of the social sciences, obliquely recognised by Gauthier above, merits further investigation, in particular his adoption of the viewpoint of the science of economics.

Gauthier never explicitly says that he wishes, for its own sake, to widen the explanatory and justificatory power of the theory of rational choice and its "pioneer" study, economics. However, he does explicitly set up the problematic of his book by noting the apparent incapacity of the maximising conception of the self to account for and to recommend self-constraint. Accepting that maximising view, which is the economist's view, we "begin from an initial presumption against morality, as a constraint on each person's pursuit of his own interest." (Gauthier, p. 8) It is this initial presumption which Gauthier cites as being the moral philosopher's task to explore, to see if it is justified or whether it can be dissolved. There is an "apparent paradox" to be solved if we come to the study of ethics from the perspective of the theory of rational choice: duty overrides advantage, and yet what would justify duty could only be advantage to the maximising self.

Gauthier believes that he can explain and dispel these apparent tensions and paradoxes. His stated aim is to "develop a theory of morals as part of the theory of rational choice" (Gauthier, pp. 2-3). That is, morality, which seems to fall outside of the explanations and justifications of the theory of rational choice and the early achievements of economists in developing that theory, will be found to have a place *within* a more complete account of the subject.

This, I believe, tells us something important about the spirit in which Gauthier comes to the study of morality. It is not in the spirit of trying to make sense of a troubling part of a life, that is, it is not a worry about the meaning of particular acts and dispositions and problems. Rather it is in the scientific spirit of testing a theory against apparently incompatible evidence, and extending and completing that theory to encompass such evidence.

Morality is a part of human life which has not easily fallen to the science of economics, and Gauthier sees the study of morality against the background of the theory of rational choice's struggle to contain it. When Gauthier says that "the perfectly competitive market is a foil against which morality appears more clearly" (Gauthier, p. 13) it is easier to see why Gauthier's interest in morality appears more clearly against such a background than it is to see why we must take the market as our original point of reference as opposed to circumstances within our own lives, or why it is to an analysis of the market to which we should turn rather than to the presentation of the good and the bad in literature.

And what emerges against the background of economics and the market as being distinctive and inviting fresh efforts at explanation and justification is simply, and only, the voluntary, impartial constraint of one's interests which, as we have seen, Gauthier identifies with morality. Against the background of economics as an ongoing study, the heavy emphasis upon action and choice

does not show up as being at all controversial; and the question of impartiality versus partiality likewise seems all-embracing.

In respect of Gauthier's relation to science, my claim is then that Gauthier's theories are shaped by his interest in science in a number of morally relevant ways. He takes his conception of the self which comes to moral engagement directly from the science of economics, and whilst this conception is embellished in the course of Gauthier's theory, it remains fundamentally the same throughout. Furthermore his account of what morality *is*, that is his account of the subject matter of moral philosophy, is influenced by the science of economics and rational choice: existing models of human behaviour within those sciences give definition to Gauthier's question (how is voluntary constraint upon maximisation possible?), and the contract which he proposes as a solution takes the interaction of rational maximisers as its basis.

Finally, Gauthier appears to draw upon scientific *values* in constructing his theory. He recommends his theory for its virtues of efficiency, and its *weakness*, where this means its ability to explain complex phenomena from very simple models of man, and for the way in which this renders the argument resistant to reductionist undercutting. This adoption of values from the sciences runs as far, I think, as morally endorsing the account of man which economics provides. Gauthier says: "Economics is the pioneer study of rational interaction. And it celebrates an ideal image of interaction free from all constraint." (Gauthier, p. 83) The sense that the freedom of the individual to maximise his utility is not simply a working assumption, but an *image* to be *celebrated* is absorbed into Gauthier's work.^{xvi}

Aside from this last divergence from Gauthier's supposed moral neutrality, the idea that the values which mark out a good scientific theory are the values to which a philosophical account should aspire is far from obvious. Gauthier cites Nagel's approach to philosophy:

I believe one should trust problems over solutions, intuitions over arguments, and pluralistic discord over systematic harmony. Simplicity and elegance are never reasons to think that a philosophical theory is true: on the contrary, they are usually grounds for thinking it false. (Nagel, p. x., quoted in Gauthier, footnote 4 to p. 269.)

Gauthier's reply to Nagel is: "But why should philosophy differ so from science?". Whilst there is perhaps no direct argument which would satisfy Gauthier, I do not see why philosophy *need* resemble science in this respect, or there must be any *presumption* whatever that philosophy will resemble science as opposed to, say, literature. The ways in which Gauthier's scientific interest colour and shape his conception of the self and of what morality is should further undermine the suggestion that the one must be modelled upon the other. I hope that this thesis reveals enough aspects of morality which Gauthier's approach fails to engage with to bear out the wisdom of Nagel's general approach to philosophy.

5. Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have sought to show how Gauthier's exclusive concern with the strategies of the rational economic maximiser has shifted the emphasis of his moral philosophy, in a way which distorts and truncates consideration of the way in which others appear to a good man. That is, I have traced Gauthier's beginnings in the economist's conception of man and his methods of studying him, through his impersonal account of morality as impartiality within a general context, to a view of the other which is, I want to say, distorted and incomplete. I have tried to show how Gauthier has accepted from science a conception not only of man and his nature, but of what is at issue in moral philosophy, which belie his claims to moral neutrality.

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- ⁱ See Gauthier, Chapter 7: "The initial bargaining position: Rights and the Proviso" (pp. 190-232).
- ⁱⁱ "Morality arises from market failure". (Gauthier, p. 84) See also Gauthier, p. 13 and p. 93. Indeed, defending the redundancy of morality in the market is seen by Gauthier as *being the same as* showing there is no partiality. I shall say more about this identification of morality with impartiality in Section 4.1.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See Gauthier pp. 144-146 and 154-155. This is perhaps the section of the work which will most interest committed contractarians. However, as with the details of the argument for the proviso assuring a fair initial endowment, we do not need to follow the arguments to this conclusion in detail as its accuracy is not crucial to our understanding of the basic construction of Gauthier's theory.
- ^{iv} For the details of his defence of the Lockean Proviso see Gauthier, Chapter 7: "The initial bargaining position: Rights and the Proviso" (pp. 190-232). Gauthier acknowledges that the term, 'Lockean proviso' comes from Nozick (see Nozick, pp. 175-82). The Proviso is stated in John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, second treatise, ch.v., §§ 27 and 33. As with note iii above, having shown the place of the proviso in Gauthier's moral philosophy I shall not stop to give a detailed account of his defence of it.
- ^v Gauthier acknowledges Rawls as the source of the idea of an Archimedian Point. See Rawls, pp. 260-5.
- ^{vi} See especially Murdoch (3).
- ^{vii} See, again, Gauthier, p. 6, as quoted in Section 1 of this chapter.
- ^{viii} This is not to argue that attention to the life of the individual involves *no* attention to a wider context. I make this plain in later examples, e.g. a discussion of a scene from *Middlemarch*, in Chapter 9, Section 2.5. What I want to object to is that the relevant moral context is seen in Gauthier as always being simply the impersonal stand-point of a contract available to all.
- ^{ix} "Animals, the unborn, the congenitally handicapped and defective, all fall beyond the pale of a morality tied to mutuality". (Gauthier, p. 268)
- ^x It is for this reason that I use the term 'perception' here more heavily than 'attention', as the latter term (usefully) *avoids* a clear distinction between perception and action: attending to someone might be observing them in their presence, imaginatively contemplating them in their absence, or actively aiding them. I have discussed this in the Introduction (Chapter 1, Section 2.1), and develop the issue in Chapter 5, Section 4.3.
- ^{xi} Contrast with, for instance, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Divine Names*, and Aristotle, *De Anima*.
- ^{xii} See Gauthier, p. 319, and the chapter "The Ring of Gyges", pp. 306-329, *passim*.
- ^{xiii} I will, later in the thesis, argue that we should in fact do just this. See in particular Chapter 10, Section 2.
- ^{xiv} Gauthier goes on to consider the implications and entailments of impartiality within a social context in later chapters. These include implications for the distribution of factor rent; inheritance and investment; and the claim that "with the aid of very simple and plausible empirical assumptions, we may partially order differing ways of life in terms of their levels of advancement, and justify the supplanting of a less advanced by a more advanced way." (Gauthier, p. 269)
- ^{xv} The weight which considerations of partiality and impartiality should have in ethics is discussed in several different contexts as the thesis progresses. The claim that this should not be considered as being the central issue in an ethics based on affection is made out in Chapter 8, Section 4.4, and a discussion of the way in which impartiality *should* enter ethics follows in Chapter 9, Section 2.5.
- ^{xvi} One reason why the celebration of an image is as significant, important and potentially harmful as the pursuit of a rational theory was given by Iris Murdoch when she said that "Man is a creature who makes pictures of himself and then comes to resemble the picture." (Murdoch (5), p. 75) This is indeed something which Gauthier seems to admit himself when he discusses our relation to 'economic man': "economic man is a caricature, or distortion, who has come more and more to shape our reality". (Gauthier, p. 316) I say a little more about Gauthier's celebration of and attachment to the image of the free, uncoerced maximising individual in Chapter 10, Section 2.

Chapter 3

Charles Fried: *Right and Wrong*

1. Introductory Remarks

We saw in the assessment of Gauthier how the conception of the self which we bring to ethics can shape our conception of the proper subject matter of ethical reflection, and how this in turn can determine the place which attention to others can hold in our moral philosophy, and our account of what sort of attention this should be.

Gauthier began with a conception of the self as maximiser, and described how, in the presence of other maximisers, the self would seek to enter into mutually beneficial contracts. This introduced constraint of maximisation into a life marked chiefly by the pursuit of maximum utility, and it is the rules of self-restraint within a contract which Gauthier identifies as being the subject matter of ethical reflection. From this we can note two things. Firstly we should note the subservient position of a just perception of, and attention to, others within Gauthier's philosophy: morality is identified simply with the performance of outward acts, seen in the context of a universal agreement, and one's attention to others is not seen as being a moral achievement or a moral requirement of any kind. In the second part of this thesis I shall suggest that it is neither obviously true nor morally neutral to reduce ethics to overt actions, excluding wider elements of attention to others.

The second thing of note in Gauthier is, granted that attention to others has no central place, what subservient rôle it is allocated by default. I suggested that the perception and understanding of

others required in Gauthier's moral philosophy is not more than to categorise others properly as being of a type. I shall argue later in the thesis for a quite different account of what a just attention to others might be.

I want to argue that this tendency to sideline and distort our *perception* of others is not local to Gauthier's contractarianism, or even contractarianism in general. Rather this is a feature of very many different accounts of ethics, and for a variety of related reasons. In order to make good this claim, I want to consider another two writers who for different reasons give, in my view, an inadequate account of the place that our vision of others as individuals has in ethics. Furthermore, I shall not focus upon writers who show no regard whatsoever for the place of the individual in our lives. In order to avoid picking 'soft targets', and to make good my claim that an abstracting effect is widespread amongst modern moral philosophers, I shall focus upon writers who are in fact concerned to do justice to the individuality of individuals, but whose philosophical stance prevents them, as I shall argue, from doing so. The first of these two writers is Charles Fried; the second is Bernard Williams.

In discussing Fried I shall once again show how a particular conception of the self can combine with a conception of the area of study in moral philosophy to force upon us a particular account of the place of attention to others within ethics, and a constrained account of what that attention might be. As I have said before, that these three elements of a moral philosophy are interdependent is a guiding thought in this thesis, and my attempts to give an alternative account of the rôle of our attention to others in morality must eventually involve me in an account of how this might change our sense of the moral self.

Before moving on to an account of Fried's theory, I shall briefly introduce some of the key presuppositions of Fried's theory, and say a little more about the distinctive emphasis of his

theory and its approach to individuals as such. It is appropriate to say at this point that Fried is a writer who gives a far greater priority to preserving within ethics a proper account of the individual and of our individual relations, and is particularly aware of the way in which the importance of treating ourselves and others as individuals is lost in various consequentialist accounts of ethics. Whilst I shall make certain criticisms of Fried's account, these interests yield a rich and interesting work, from which there is much to learn, and which is worthy of detailed attention.

2. Fried's Aims and Methods

2.1 The Individual in Fried and Gauthier.

Fried writes from a Kantian perspective, and as such he defends a conception of the individual as a freely choosing, efficacious agent. At the beginning of his book *Right and Wrong*, Fried plainly states that "Central to this account is the individual's capacity to choose freely and effectively, to choose between right and wrong." (Fried, p. 2)

In this he shares something with Gauthier, whose conception of the individual, so central to his own moral philosophy, also emphasises our capacity for free efficacious choice. However, as we have seen, the contractarian's account of reason is of a slave to the passions, leaving the rational choosing individual a maximiser. If morality is defined as impartial constraint, then the burden for the contractarian is to show under what circumstances impartial constraint is in the individual's better interest, and is therefore rational. This is the project Gauthier set himself.

As Gauthier notes in criticising Kantian ethics, the Kantian conception of reason is that it is *in itself impartial*, and is not a slave to the passions. Rather the rational, free and good man constrains his passions to conform to the dictates of pure reason:

Right and wrong...emphasize not the individual's selfish concerns but his moral integrity, and in this case we come closer to the historic heart of individualism. If deontology, the theory of right and wrong, is solicitous of the individual, it is primarily solicitous of his claim to preserve his integrity, to refrain from being the agent of wrong. (Fried, p. 2)

For Fried, the exercise of our rationality should not consist simply in forming a strategy for the pursuit of those things which we desire, with a contractual story provided as to why impartiality is required as a part of that strategy. Rather the rôle of reason in ethics is to identify the absolute and categorical norms of right and wrong with which our purposive pursuit of utility must be made to comply. Fried gives as examples of such norms the familiar injunctions: "do not murder", and "do not lie", and we shall look in more detail at how these 'norms' are derived later in this chapter.ⁱ

2.2 Universalisability, Particularity and Respect for Persons.

We have seen that there is a clear and significant difference between the conceptions of the individual and his responsibilities as found in Fried and in Gauthier. We might however think that we are likely to run straight into a similar form of impersonality in Fried to that which we encountered in Gauthier. In Gauthier, moral action, and the perception of others needed to subserve it, was viewed against the background of a contract which placed prohibitions on certain types of action, performed against the interests of certain types of person, in certain types of circumstance. Thus what was relevant to morality was reduced to those elements of the situation which are generalisable, a point which I illustrated with an analogy to the law. Fried is claiming that morality consists in choosing to obey certain rules of conduct, in the mould of universalisable

Kantian principles. Again, morality is seen to show up against the background of a quasi-legal injunction against certain general types of choice, and all that is peculiar to a particular relationship, or a personal history would seem once more to be irrelevant.

However, Fried is a Kantian who is wary of universality. Indeed, Fried does not explicitly mention universalisability once, although his moral norms of conduct are very much in a classical Kantian mould, and are intended to apply categorically to every rational individual. Fried seeks to do justice not only to our individuality as agents, but also to the quality of particular relationships to others, and in arguing for this Fried concentrates on the other great tenet of Kantian ethics, respect for persons.

How will shifting the emphasis onto respect for persons diminish the impersonality of ethics? This will emerge more clearly as we progress, but what I mean to suggest is that Fried will use respect to do more than simply to identify certain behaviours as falling within a prohibited type *per se*, for which the thesis of universalisability would perhaps be adequate. Rather he will attempt to show that such acts are wrong because they give the particular relationships between individuals a character which is unworthy of either individual. Put more briefly still, Fried is interested in exploring *the character of individual relations*, and this merits our attention.

I have, in the chapter on Gauthier, criticised an approach to ethics which relies heavily on evaluating individual acts against a background of universal rules. My object in examining Fried's account is to see whether a broadly Kantian ethics, down-playing although not altogether removing this element of universalisability, has the resources to give an account of the proper attention of one person to another, as individuals, by developing the familiar notion of respect for persons.

3. Fried's Moral Theory

3.1 Delimiting the Scope of Morality.

I want now to give an over-view of the central conception of Fried's moral theory, the theory of right and wrong. Central to the work, as we have seen, is the primacy of the individual as an efficacious chooser, and Fried immediately relates this conception to another core aim of the work, the delimitation of the scope and limits of moral duty.

This book is about how a moral man lives his life: how he approaches choices between his own interests and those of others, what he should do if helping one person means hurting another, how far he must take on the burdens of the world's suffering. My central aim is to discern structure and limits in the demands morality makes upon us. The demands of morality are inexorable, and our vocation for morality is the basis of our worth as persons. Yet these demands are not all consuming - they leave room for discretion, for creativity. We are constrained but not smothered by morality once we acknowledge that there are limits to our responsibility for the world's good and ill, that we are responsible for some things and not everything. (Fried, p. 1)

In endorsing the idea that our duties end long before the world is perfected, Fried sees himself as taking an attitude familiar from Christianity:

Traditional Christianity, with its doctrine of original sin, expect[s] the secular future to share the imperfections and suffering of the present and past. With such expectations it follows that the focus must be on personal moral perfection. Thus Christianity rejects consequentialism on the (consequentialist) ground that man is unlikely to gain the whole world (or its betterment) even if he were prepared to lose his soul. And of course one need believe neither in original sin nor in any theology at all to share this sense of our situation. (Fried, p. 2)

I argued in looking at Gauthier that his conception of the first-person individual (the maximising individual) went together with his delineation of the subject area for ethics (the voluntary constraint of self-interest), and that it was the combination of these two which led to an abstracted view of the other as an individual. In the quotation above, Fried is beginning to delineate the

subject area of a morality which could retain the integrity of the moral agent as he defines him, that is, the rational, efficacious chooser, respecting a Kantian conception of reason as impartial.

Identifying the boundaries of right and wrong to preserve the integrity of the self is what Fried is concerned with in *Right and Wrong*. That is, we must account for all that is demanded of us to retain our integrity, and equally importantly determine what lies *beyond* the scope of a legitimate moral duty, to ensure that the autonomy of the self is not lost through a well meaning surrender of all discretion, choice and design.

Fried develops this account in opposition to consequentialism. What is the trouble with consequentialism? Consequentialism incorporates the same impartiality of reasoning which Gauthier rejected, but which is implicit in Fried's deontology. However consequentialism is committed to impartial reasoning about the *fitting state of the world*.

It is linking what we must do with the way the world is which, Fried claims, undermines the integrity of the choosing self for, as Fried is happy to admit, the world needs no end of alteration. Now if our specific responsibilities are determined by the one over-riding duty to improve the state of the world, usually cashed out in terms of utility or happiness, then all discretion and personal choice is reduced to a mere calculation of consequences. What I must do is determined by the balance of pleasure and pain in those parts of the world which I am able to affect. I cannot commit myself to particular vocations, I cannot give preference to my family and friends, except where utilitarian analysis shows this to be the most efficient means to the right ordering of the world and the maximisation of happiness across it.

Fried argues that consequentialism is oppressive, and undermines our moral personality, which is our vocation for choosing how best to live our lives, because all decisions are reduced to the mere

calculation of consequences, and because of the totality of this claim upon our lives: "To stop even for a moment or to rest content with a second best is a failure of duty." (Fried, pp.13-14) This leaves human life a mere caricature, denying all room to choose one's own way of life, crushing all individuality and self-expression. This is to say that, for Fried, consequentialism's demarcation of the subject matter for ethics is wrong. It takes states of the world as the subject matter for moral reasoning, and this leads to it invading too much of the individual's life, and crushing his vocation for free choice.

3.2 Right and Wrong.

In place of consequentialism, Fried presents an account of morality based not upon producing good in the world and avoiding bad, but upon the categories of right and wrong as they apply to our actions. In explaining what a morality of right and wrong comes to, and how this avoids the deformation of human personality, Fried presses the following familiar Kantian ideas, which we can see as a closer definition of the subject area of morality according to Fried.

Firstly, Fried insists that morality is composed of *categorical norms*. Deontological judgments do not say that lying is generally a bad thing, or that we should avoid lying other things being equal. Rather they say: "do not lie, period" (see Fried, p. 9). This marks out a significant difference from consequentialism, in which the stringency of any moral demand is always relative to the other claims upon one's resources.

Indeed, the nearest one could get to replicating this categorical nature in consequentialist terms would be to make one *outcome* absolutely to be sought, or absolutely forbidden. But then this would lead to obsession on the one hand (all actions would have to be appraised simply on their potential, however unlikely, to further that ultimate end, and regardless of all else that might be

achieved or lost in the process); and paralysis on the other (for almost any action might run some risk, however slight, of starting a causal chain which in some minute way made the absolutely prohibited outcome more likely. See Fried, pp. 9-13.)

It might seem that emphasising the categorical nature of moral norms only reins in the choosing individual more tightly than ever. However we might profitably note that a categorical norm, in Fried's words, "displaces other judgments in its domain, so that other values and ends may not be urged as reasons for violating the norm. It is pre-emptive." (Fried, p. 12).

This is the *logic* of moral norms, and if they constrain us absolutely in so far as they apply to us, they do at least release us from the endless pull of other opportunities to help and hinder the improvement of the world as they do so. Moreover, categorical norms may be various, the prohibitions against lying and murder being only two. This eases the crushing demand of utilitarianism, the most common form of consequentialism, that proper human conduct be reduced to the pursuit of only one ultimate goal.

The second conception to be added, the second specification of what the subject area of a morality of right and wrong is, is that morality concerns *intentional action*.

That the subject matter of morality be intentional action follows from the fact that moral norms are categorical. Fried explains:

Categorical norms are morally possible because they are concerned with what we do, rather than with what we allow to happen. To be sure, morality is concerned in some way or another with all the consequences to which we might contribute or which we might avoid. The categorical norms, however, designate what it would be wrong to do, but their absolute force attaches only to what we intend, and not the whole range of things that come about as a result of what we do intentionally. (Fried, p. 20)

Thus, we can condemn an intentional action categorically without the problems of paralysis and obsession mentioned above.

The final conception which Fried wishes to add, again familiar from the history of deontology, is that of *respect for persons*. This is the substantial content of moral norms: we may not undermine the integrity of either ourselves or others as free choosing agents.

It is Fried's claim that this element of his moral theory and the other elements just cited are mutually implicative. We have seen that the categorical force of moral demands creates particular problems of paralysis and obsession unless we also adopt intentional action as the object of these norms. Furthermore, the focus upon our intentionality does justice to the conception of the self with which we started as an efficacious chooser and not simply the locus of "a causality of which merely runs through my person or my movements but is not invested with the personal involvement of intention." (See Fried, p. 27).

Fried writes:

It is a principal hypothesis of this work that the absolute quality of absolute norms (what one might call their logic), the concept of action and intention necessary to the application of those norms (the psychology of the system), and the substantive moral basis of the system, the respect for persons, all fit together in a system. (Fried, p. 29)

This system follows from the account of the self as rational chooser of what is identified as right by impartial reason. Its effect is to focus the demands of morality upon our essential nature as Fried portrays it, and to avoid having that nature crushed or taken over by consideration of the endless modifications which we could make on the world, and which would dominate our moral thinking if we viewed ourselves simply as a causal influence upon that world.

3.3 First Thoughts on Fried's Account of Right and Wrong.

I want here to note both the coherence and unity of Fried's project, its point by point rejection of consequentialism, and finally its aims. To begin with the unity, I want to highlight the way in which the initial conception of the first person as intentional agent comes together with the delineation of the subject matter of ethics as consisting in intentional actions, leaving the moral philosopher the remaining task of determining which intentions are and which intentions are not prohibited. What qualifies and disqualifies intentions is whether their substantial content is compatible with respect for persons, and in this we can begin to see how consideration of the other fits into Fried's account. We must respect others as being free, choosing agents too, agents who have to choose the right way to live, and we may not undermine their integrity as such.

Secondly I want to highlight the fact that this involves a rejection of consequentialism at each point. Fried has rejected the consequentialist conception of the self: we are to consider ourselves intentional, choosing agents, rather than simply 'levers' with a causal issue in the world. Furthermore he has, along with this, rejected consequentialism's delineation of the areas of life which fall under moral obligation: in invoking the concepts of right and wrong Fried wishes to identify morality with specific intentions, and not with the causal consequences of every single movement or absence of movement. Fried's account of the good man's attention to and attitude towards others, and of how this constitutes a further and final rejection of consequentialism, will be explored further as this chapter progresses.

Finally I want to note that in thus criticising consequentialism, Fried has been criticising the "dissolving universality" which it threatens, the dissolution of all individuality and discretion into an endless concern with the defects of the world. The attack on consequentialism's delineation of the area of morality and of its conception of the importance of others is in the final analysis a

contribution to and a completion of Fried's defence of the moral centrality of the choosing self. This is simply to note the interdependence between the conception we have of the self and our conception of what morality *is*, of what the scope and limit of its claims is.

As in Gauthier, so too in Fried is our conception of self and of the subject matter of morality interlinked with our account of the place of the other in our thoughts and acts. I want now to look more closely at the way in which our view of, and treatment of, other people enters into Fried's account. We shall need to be continually mindful of the threefold relation between our ideas of self, of subject matter in ethics, and of others, as we shall find that Fried's account of the place of others within our lives is tailored to the task of defending the individuality and the freedom of choice of the self as moral agent. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that it is in itself a sincere attempt to give proper place to the individuality of the other as seen by the moral agent. In concentrating upon Fried's account of the right attitude to others we shall see Fried continue to lean more upon the notion of respect for persons, than upon a thesis of universalisability.

4. Aspects of Fried's Theory: Particularity and Other People

4.1 Fried's Account of Harm.

We have discussed above Fried's conception of the individual as moral agent, and his account of the moral domain as concerning categorical norms of intentional action which embody a respect for persons. To see what this suggestion of what our treatment of others should be comes to in specific cases, I now want turn to Fried's account of a particular moral norm, the injunction against physically harming others.

Again Fried outlines his account in contrast to consequentialism, and he begins his analysis of the wrongfulness of harm with the now familiar assertion that a categorical injunction against harm can only apply to the *intentional action* of harming others: a duty simply to prevent or ameliorate harm as a state of the world would lead to the endless preoccupation with the possible causal outcome of one's input into the ongoing flow of events.

How does the wrongfulness of harm fit into such an account? It seems at first blush that it would fit rather more easily into the consequentialist's account: harm damages rather than improves the state of the world; is it not precisely as a causal contribution to the flow of events that we object to it? Fried's answer is that specific, intentional acts of physical harm are a failure of respect for persons, and as such are one of those intentional acts which are categorically forbidden. However, to see *that*, we must see that other choosing, efficacious agents are other *embodied persons*; that using the harm done to another's *body* as my end or as the means to my end is the same as using a *person* as a means to an end.

The connection between the concept of personality and the special moral quality of directly caused harm is based on the (metaphysical) fact that persons, the ultimate object of moral judgments, are particular entities, and more precisely particular *bodies*. (Fried, p. 33)

The fact that we must recognise others *in their embodied particularity* to see the wrongfulness of harm enables Fried to reassert the centrality of the individual to ethics. A morality of right and wrong, that is a morality of respect for persons, does not deal in abstractions but engages with particular individuals. Treating someone as a person, and respecting them as such, is engaging with particular embodied individuals in all their contingency. And this enables Fried, who has criticised consequentialism's account of the self and of the subject matter of morality, to criticise its conception of the place of others in morality too:

[The] significance of the individual person can only be asserted by the assertion of concrete particularity, by the assertion of particular contingent differences which may not make any

difference which can be generalised or derived from some more basic principle, but which are nevertheless the terms of the concrete particularity of individual human existence. This point is illustrated by the contrast to utilitarianism, which in its uncompromising universality deprives all individual differences, and thus the individual himself, of moral significance. (Fried, p. 33)

To the consequentialist, we are to improve the state of the world, and for the utilitarian this involves increasing the happiness and diminishing the pain which the world contains. But, Fried argues, happiness is important not in itself, but because it is *someone's* happiness. The categorical wrong of harm brings this out, for it does not encourage us to ameliorate harm as a state of the world contingently distributed amongst so many people, but forbids us to harm *him*, or *her*, recognised as individual particular embodied persons. An ethics of right and wrong, Fried argues, hereby reflects the centrality of the individual as first person *and* as third person:

If the primacy of the individual is to be maintained, if it is individuality, personality, which is the point of departure of ethical judgments, then the "irrelevantly particular" must be allowed significance....The absolute norm "do no harm" expresses this centrality of the person on both ends of the relation: it gives special prominence to the physical person as the object (victim) of the relation and it makes the person as agent both more responsible for what he does directly or intentionally and less responsible for what merely comes about as a side effect of his purposes. (Fried, p. 34)

I think that Fried is here making strides towards a conception of ethics which does indeed give a fairer place to the individual than does a consequentialism with its tendency to "disintegrating universality", and in the next section I shall look closely at the form of particularity which he has achieved here.

Fried is, of course, offering us universal rules of conduct, intended to apply to all alike. However, in bringing out the wrong of harming others he stresses that what is wrong about harm is seen *in the relations between particular individuals*. Fried's account of the wrongfulness of harm does not end with the claim that it cannot be universalised, that it could not be added to the universal, general rules of human conduct. Rather Fried gives us the following picture:

The two elements, intention and doing harm, may be seen as picturing a relation between a moral agent and the object of his agency, a relation which is inconsistent with the basic notion of respect for persons. (Fried, pp. 31-2)

Respect for persons is respecting others as having "the status of a freely choosing, specially efficacious person, the status of moral personality." Although Fried *is* offering us a universal rule of conduct, a moral norm, we are not encouraged to evaluate the act simply by looking "outwards" from the relation to universal rules, as we were in Gauthier, but to look at the character of the relation which is being established between ourselves and a particular person. The wrong is that I invest my own personal agency in the damage of that particular person, for that is to treat him as a means to my ends. The moral norm is grounded in the acceptability or unacceptability of this relation, and we can only see that we do in harm deny another rational creature the respect he warrants as such if we recognise that rational creatures are concrete particulars, which involves taking account of their contingent and un-universalisable features. "Direct harm describes a wrongful relation between two particular persons just because it so intimately involves their particularity." (Fried, p. 41)

This move away from a reliance upon a universal perspective seems to have delivered a far better account of the importance of others as individuals. Fried gives an account, never offered in Gauthier, of why we must attend to others in their particularity to see them correctly, and does so from *within* a broadly Kantian ethics. I want now to examine this account of the attention we should give others more closely, and look at whether the *type* of particularity which Fried says we must perceive in others is adequate to give a full understanding of our moral duty and moral relations.

4.2 Types of Particularity.

I have said that Fried has done very much to emphasise the importance of individuals in their particularity. Despite his Kantian heritage and the fact that his account does want to identify categorical and universal moral norms of action, comparison of an individual act with a general type of action does not appear to play a central part in his account of why harm is wrong. Rather he has relied upon the notion of respect for persons to show why certain relations between particular individuals are unworthy of either person. He has found "room for the inescapably particular in personality" in his account of ethics. However I now want to examine several sorts of particularity in ethics, to begin to question whether the particularity Fried delivers is, in the last analysis, completely adequate as a picture of the relations of individuals as such. I shall give, as a numbered list, three types of attention to others as individuals, to see which Fried is capable of embracing.

1) People are discrete, separate objects. Nevertheless, they are important only as they bear and promote certain general qualities. For instance, happiness is an important quality: we should seek to fill the world with as much of it as is possible, and as happiness comes as part of the lives of individual people, we should make individual people happy. But of course individuals, whilst trivially unique, are completely interchangeable from a moral perspective, providing that they may bear pain, enjoy pleasure, perfect certain arts perhaps, and so on.

As I have suggested, this account might satisfy some consequentialists, but it does not give the individual the importance which Fried wants. The individuality of others as individuals seems too peripheral to our engagement with them, and of course the emphasis upon the general state of the world in our engagement with others threatens to lead to our dissolution as choosing agents.

2) All sorts of features attach to each individual, and many cannot be profitably generalised or derived from more basic qualities, and yet these qualities *are* of moral significance.

We might note that the recognition of the individual, corporeal nature of others enables us to recognise, as Fried recognises, that a duty can be owed to this particular person here, differentiated by these characteristics, and for his sake, not simply because he is the means to an improvement of the world as a whole. People are *not* interchangeable, their characteristics are idiosyncratic, and what is important is that I treat other individuals well.

If I *do* harm you, I may have some special obligation to you - some reparation, perhaps, or at the very least some apologetic countenance or gesture towards yourself. And again when we owe such a duty it is not to one *unit*, but to *this* embodied person *here*. If there were not this person here, if they were replaced by someone who was similar in all those generalisable respects which are important to the bare fact of personhood, and with the same difficulties, but were still a different person to the one I injured, the duty might not transfer to them, but might cease to exist.

This, I take it, is the particularity which Fried argues for. And yet this form of particularity is still compatible with the individual in some way being valued *as* an instantiation of a general property. What I mean is that, to take an absurd example, we might feel that Englishmen are worthy of our respect and trust, *as Englishmen*ⁱⁱ. I might then take all Englishmen seriously, not consider them to be in any way interchangeable, nor need I treat them well simply to promote some quality which could only be promoted through their well-being (Englishness?!). I will acquaint myself with all the particular needs of my English friend so as to show him proper respect. Nevertheless, if I had to give an account of what it was in this person before me that made my respect for them necessary, and for an account of how he fitted into my thoughts and acts, it is *as* an Englishmen, and not simply as John Smith.

In this context, recognition of the individuality and particularity of others is a recognition of a *particular instantiation* of a certain property. Physical particularity is one aspect of what it is to belong to the class of persons, their being in the world like this, looking like this, vulnerable to a heavy blow thus:...and we need to be aware of this to see that the treatment of a person's body *is*, at least so long as they are alive, the treatment of a *person*. Nevertheless we are all along treating people as (particular) instances of a kind.

This is the kind of particularity which Fried has argued for. Whilst we are to see that other people are particulars, specifically particular bodies, it is not this embodiment in itself which requires respect. What we owe others we owe them *as rational choosing beings*. That we treat them well on account of their rationality, as (individual) instances of rational choice, does not mean that their individuality is trivial, nor does it mean that they are in all cases interchangeable. People are individuals, in that they are embodied particulars, and we need to accept that to treat them as we should; in this instance we need to see that harm is an offence against another rational choosing person. But again they are important as individual instantiations of a general quality. We might say: *to see the particularity of someone is, in some cases (and forgoing their harm is one) an essential part of treating them as being of a certain kind*.

3) The apprehension of the fact that what you have in front of you is an individual is at the same time an awareness of their preciousness and irreplaceability. It is not the same as the recognition that you have an x before you, although on another level that is clearly true, or even that you have this particular x, but that what is before you is limitless and unique and requires attention for what they are in themselves, which can bear an endless exploration. The sort of particularity I am trying to explore here denies precisely the thought that they require attention as an x, and that on apprehension of their x-ness we can be satisfied that we see what is *really* important about them.

This is not the sort of particularity that Fried has identified, for here *apprehension of another's particularity or individuality is itself central to seeing their importance*. Fried has made seeing particularity central to seeing another as a person, but it is another element of personhood, the general capacity for choice, which makes persons worthy of respect. For Fried, seeing another as an embodied individual is simply the form which our recognition of them as of a kind takes, at least in circumstances relevant to the wrong of harm.

Faced with this third account of what it is to recognise another in their particularity Fried might want to make this objection, and if not Fried, then perhaps the reader. Either one of them might reply that treating others as perfectly individual loci of choice *is* treating them as individuals. That is to ask: whatever *else* could treating another as an individual come to? We *must* be individual examples of *something*, and our capacity for choice is a central part of our nature - to what it is to be a human being in the world of events.

I want later to discuss Fried's conception of what it is to be an individual, and what "world" we should see ourselves relative to, but before I do so I should address this objection aboveⁱⁱⁱ. There is within it the suggestion that Fried has done all that *can* be done in accounting for the individuality we see in others, and that any sense of another individual, which is not a sense of an individual instance of something, is a spurious one. However, I have plainly admitted that on one level we do, in perceiving another, have an example of a certain quality before us. When perceiving some person x, I might have before me an example of a mother, a woman, a human being, an accountant, and so on. My claim, and it is not a metaphysical claim, is that the attention we can give that person need not see them as primarily, most importantly, as an instance of one of some general type. Rather we might focus upon their features as they hang together in a particular character, not forcing any one sort of shape or order on what we see, but simply

reacting as an individual to an individual, and in accounting for the place which this attention has within our lives we might simply say that this is what it is to see their value, or to put it otherwise, *what it is to perceive them justly* as individuals.

This latter account is the form of perception of individuality which I gave as (3) above. It is of course only a thumb-nail sketch, as it currently stands: Part II of this thesis can be considered to be the project of filling out and more clearly defining that sketch. However I want to claim that a contrast between this account of our perception of and attention to others as individuals and that given by Fried is a real and important one. Fried's morality is a morality of right and wrong, where this entails categorical judgements upon intentional actions, according to the principle of offering respect to persons. This gives an account of what it is to perceive the individuality of another, which is to perceive them as an individual instance of a general quality of rationality and choice. This retains some constraint upon the figure others may cut in our eyes, in contrast to the vision which I have so briefly outlined in (3) above. And if we ask what is the significance of attending thus, Fried's answer is that attention to their particular and contingent features, and an understanding of the metaphysical fact that these are the features of a rational person, must ultimately be glossed as being a pre-requisite in order to make choices which are compatible with the requirement to treat others as persons.

I want now to turn to an exploration of what leads Fried to what I am thus suggesting is still a constrained view of the individual, despite a good deal of his work being aimed at emphasising the particularity of ourselves and of others.

5. Critical Assessment of Fried's Theory: Perception, Choice and Morality

5.1 Attending to Others and Right and Wrong.

I said in the Introduction, Chapter 1, that a motivation for this thesis was a frustration that the way in which others are *present* to us as individuals, the way we *attend* to others, was not properly represented in moral philosophy nor was it given a central place. Having initially seemed to give an account of the importance of attending to the particularity of others, Fried has suggested no more than that we must accept the metaphysical truth that others are embodied particulars. This stands in contrast to the account of a just attention to others as embodying a free play of the mind upon another as an individual, which I so briefly sketched in (3) above.

In order to evaluate this finding I want us to turn our attention from Fried's description of the attention we owe to others to the place that attention has within his moral philosophy. If we have found that Fried has not made as much of the ways in which we can attend to others as individuals as there is to be made, this is because, in the place which attention to others occupies within Fried's philosophy, no more needs to be said. And this subservient and limited place which is afforded to attention is to my mind the chief defect of Fried's account.

As with my earlier discussion of Gauthier's work, it will at times be more convenient to talk of the place Fried gives to *perception* and a *developing understanding* of others, which are *parts* of what I understand by an *attention* to others. Such terms better reflect the sharp division between perception (or vision, or understanding) and action in Fried's philosophy, a division which I shall aim to resist in my own account, and which is absent in the term 'attention'.

I have suggested that Fried's account of the attention we owe others is limited, by way of a brief comparison with an alternative account which remains to be filled out. Such an elaboration must wait until Part II of the thesis. What I now want to suggest is that *whatever* account we give of the attention we should afford others, such an account can not have a central place in Fried's ethics. The reasons for this are in turn to do with his delineation of what morality consists in, that is his underlying account of where perception and knowledge fit alongside choice and morality in a human life. What we must get clear about is his delimitation of the place of a morality of right and wrong in human life (or his account of what morality is and can be); the delimitation of the place of perception and knowledge in human life (or his account of what knowledge is and can be); and the delimitation of the place of individual relationships in human life (or his account of what individual relationships are and can be).

Put simply, Fried first classifies perception or knowledge as lying outside of the moral, or better, perhaps, as being *before* it and pre-requisite to it. Secondly he classifies a morality of right and wrong as being concerned with sorts of choice which concern others as they fall within a type - rational efficacious choosers - leaving an account of individual and personal relationships outside, or *after*, morality. Finally, he classifies individual relationships, the engagement of the individual as such, as matters of choice and not of perception or knowledge. I shall explain all of these claims more thoroughly below. These three aspects of Fried's account combine to ensure that there can be *no* account of a generous perception of others as a central form of moral engagement between individuals as such in Fried's account.

I shall argue that the central claims of morality, the perception of others, and the relation of one to another as an individual, are given clearly defined, and quite separate places in Fried's philosophy. It is the fact that the construction of Fried's ethics makes it *impossible* for an account of perception, morality and individuality of relation to come together which I most wish to

criticise; and of course just as I must later fill out my account of what might be a proper attention to others, I shall also need to provide an account of moral philosophy in which such perception, as part of a more just attention to others, occupies a more central place.

5.2 Morality as Choice in Fried.

The first reason why the perception of the other as an individual plays no great part in Fried's moral philosophy is to do with his delineation of the subject matter of morality, to which we must now return.

We shall recall Fried's central task in writing *Right and Wrong*. On page 2, Fried states: "Central to this account is the individual's capacity to choose freely and effectively, to choose between right and wrong." In keeping with this he also asserts that "My central aim is to discern structure and limits in the demands morality makes upon us." (Fried, p. 1) These are not two separate aims competing, as it were, for centrality. Rather, the defence of the agent as a choosing individual is precisely achieved by drawing limits to those things which he is duty-bound to act upon, and in particular defending the agent against the endless requirements of consequentialism. Specifically, in order to preserve the freedom of the choosing self to decide upon the right way to live, Fried has argued that the subject matter of morality - roughly those areas of life which are subject to moral judgment - is not the foreseeable causal effect we have upon the world as the consequentialists argue, but the sorts of intentional actions, the choices, which we take. Fried has tried to give accounts of such things as the wrongfulness of harm, to take an example we are familiar with, in terms of the *type of choice* they represent, so as not to fall back upon the badness of causal consequences of harm in the analysis of why we should not harm others.

What we might now take note of is that in limiting the realm of moral judgment to intentional choices Fried has not only forced the causal outcome of our acts from the frame, but our *perception or knowledge* too. Fried is examining what actions fall within the limits of a morality of right and wrong, with all the connotations and entailments which he wants to give these terms, and which we saw above in Section 3.2. What marks out the good man according to such a conception, is not what he causes as such, and not what he *perceives* as such either. The limits of what morality demands of us extend only so far as the choices we make.

Of course, choices rest upon, and thus reflect, one's knowledge and one's judgment or perception of one's situation. However, all that this requires, in the account Fried has given so far, is that we have sufficiently adequate understanding of our situation to make the choices upon which we are judged, and we have seen this relation between perception or understanding and choice in Fried's account of harm. The perception which the agent needs is of a general and metaphysical type - that the particular, embodied creature before him is indeed a rational, efficacious person. The integrity and righteousness of the agent rest upon the succeeding *choice* he makes as to how to *treat* that person.

I have criticised Fried's account of what it is for another to be present to us in Section 4, and here is the answer as to why Fried, in his own terms, needs to say *no more* about the way in which others can be present to us. His account is simply of the perception and knowledge needed to make choices of a certain sort: Fried's philosophy will not bring out the way in which one individual attends to another as such, which, I shall claim in Part II, should be central to moral philosophy.

We shall look more closely at Fried's account of the relation between vision and choice in the next section in focussing upon Fried's account of lying. In the course of this discussion we shall see a little more of the conception of the self which Fried will take as his starting point.

5.3 Perception, Choice and the Morality of Right and Wrong: Fried on Lying.

Fried's account of the wrongfulness of lying will, like his account of harm, attempt to display its vices purely in terms of the sort of choice it represents, and without recourse to an account of its consequences. Lying, Fried will argue, involves intentionally distorting the perception and understanding of the other. Now in unpacking his account of the sort of choice which disrupting the understanding of another's understanding *is*, Fried's will include an account of the place of knowledge and perception in the make up of the self. It is his account of the relation of this perception and the faculty of choice in the moral agent which will ultimately be our primary interest.

What is wrong with lying? As with the wrongfulness of direct harm it cannot, for Fried, simply be the consequences. To show that *harming* is indeed a categorical wrong, rather than simply a bad thing, Fried had to give an account of the wrongfulness of harm in terms of the sort of choice it represented, that is he had to show that intentionally harming someone contradicts the requirements of respect for persons. Given the metaphysical commonplace that persons are embodied particulars, my harming you is a volitional attack on a particular choosing agent - a piece of disrespect for a relevant person.

Again, then, what is wrong with lying, or indeed with intentionally deceiving others by other means? There is, of course, an obvious consequentialist argument, that it tends to cause more pain than pleasure, and that other things being equal is more often productive of poor

consequences, whilst not being categorically wrong in itself. To bring lying within the scope of right and wrong Fried must once again show that the offence lies not simply in consequences caused, but in an attack upon a person as such, and is therefore a sort of choice which is wrong in itself regardless of its outcome, that is a failure of respect for persons.

How can Fried show that lying is an attack upon someone's very person, that it is in this way a failure of respect regardless of how well the deception turns out for them? Fried will argue that the sort of choice which is characteristic of the moral personality is that which is dependent upon, and which takes as a pre-requisite, our ability to judge truly about the world. This being the case, to attack someone's ability to know the truth about the world by lying is to attack that faculty of choice which is central to their personality. That is, lying is always an assault on a *person*, a denial to them of the status of freely choosing, specially efficacious persons; it is to claim another's mind as the means upon which one's purposes may run, just as physical intentional harm claimed their bodies for our use.

This account of the relation between knowledge and choice in the choosing self determines Fried's emphasis on intentional choices as the subject matter of a morality of right and wrong. This account of knowledge and its relation to moral personality is elaborated in the quotation below.

Fried says:

freedom and rationality are complementary capacities, or aspects of the same capacity, which is a moral capacity. A man is free insofar as he is able to act on a judgment because he perceives it to be correct; he is free insofar as he may be moved to action by the judgments his reason offers to him. This is the very opposite of the Humean conception of reason as a slave of the passions. There is no slavery here. The man who follows the steps of a mathematical argument to its conclusion because he judges them to be correct is free indeed. To the extent that we choose our ends we are free; and as to objectively valuable ends which we choose because we see their value, we are still free.

Now, rational judgment is true judgment, and so the moral capacity for rational choice implies the capacity to recognise the kind of result our choices will produce. This applies to judgments about other selves, and to judgments in which one locates himself as a person amongst persons, a self amongst selves. These judgments are not just arbitrary suppositions; *they are judged to be true of the world*. For consider what the self would be like if these judgments were not supposed to be true. Maybe one might be content to be happy in the manner of the fool of Athens who believed all the ships in the harbour to be his. But what of our perceptions of other people? Would we be content to have those whom we love and trust the mere figments of our imaginations? The foundational values of freedom and rationality imply the foundational value of truth, for the rational man is the one who judges aright, that is, truly.... Truth and judgment are part of the structure which as a whole makes up the concept of a self. A person's relation to his body makes up another part. (Fried, pp. 63-4, his emphasis)

Finally, and importantly, choice, the expression of desire and purpose, must always be secondary to judgment of the truth, and must be based upon it. What we must not do is to judge the world to be as we would wish it to be. "The capacity for true judgment is the capacity to arrive at judgments which are in fact true of the world as it exists apart from our desires, our choices, our values". (Fried, p. 66)

The self, as Fried pictures it here, is related to the world through knowledge and through intentional action, but only the latter is a personal and morally relevant attachment, the former remains simply a pre-requisite for this moral engagement. My knowledge of the world is dictated by the facts as ordinary perception reveals them. It is not a moral or specifically personal achievement; it is potentially available to everyone. My moral life, the formation of a specifically personal and moral engagement with the world, begins when choice begins; that is, moral life begins where perception ends. This is what I meant by saying that perception or knowledge lies *before* the moral in Fried, as a pre-requisite for righteousness, but not as a moral achievement in itself.

I want to draw particular attention to two connected features of this account of knowledge and the judgment of truth as given above.

Firstly, there is no element of affection involved in knowledge as Fried has presented it. The only possible entrance of our affective states which is considered above is the prohibited act of falsifying the truth because we would rather believe differently, or rather have others believe differently.

Secondly, I want to argue that Fried's conception of knowledge is familiar to us as the relationship of the perceiving self to the world of facts and of logic. Fried gives the example of following the steps of a mathematical deduction, and emphasises in italics that true judgments "*are judged to be true of the world.*" (Fried, p. 63) Relations to others are presented as a part of that relationship to the world; our knowledge of others is seen to be a judgment of truth of the same sort and subject to the same standards as all other judgments of fact and logic, although it might certainly be particularly upsetting to be deluded about persons, who are the subject of our deepest emotions and most pivotal choices.

I shall argue in Part II of this thesis that our moral relationships to others should not be seen as a part of this relationship to the world, the relationship of a rational individual to the world of facts and of logic^{iv}. Rather our relationships to others are based on a different sort of perception, and one which, in direct opposition to Fried's account, does quite centrally involve our affective capacities, not simply cashed out in terms of our desires and plans, but in terms of affection and love.

All that I hope to have demonstrated so far is that there is no room in Fried for an account of morality as involving distinctive form of perception and attention. On Fried's account, morality pre-supposes an ordinary view of facts and of logic, and itself consists in choices taken on the basis of such a perception. Fried here identifies our moral personality with our capacity to make

such choices, and has marked out the limit and extent of moral duty in order to defend and accommodate this conception.

5.4 Choice, Morality and Individual Relationships

We have seen that Fried is not offering an account of a morality as featuring a wider *attention* to the other. This is because Fried has taken the distinction between choices and perception to be a clear and helpful one in ethics, and has identified morality with the former.

I referred earlier in this chapter (Section 1) to a three-fold classification of moral philosophy as it is found in Gauthier, Fried and Williams. This comprises the self, the subject matter of moral philosophy, and an account of others as they enter into our moral life. The self which Fried discusses in his work is characterised as a choosing agent, rather than being seen centrally as he or she attends to others. I further claimed above that Fried finds individual relationships to be a matter of choice and not of perception, and that these choices lay outside of the realm of right and wrong as this has been defined by Fried, and these two claims provide two additional reasons why a morality of right and wrong cannot be expected to give a central place to the attention the good man gives to others as individuals. I want now to consider these two additional attempts to mark out the place of these elements of human life in relation to each other.

The first of the two suggestions above is that a personal engagement cannot fall within an account of perception and knowledge within the life of the self, and this claim returns us to the remarks I made concerning the relation of vision to choice above. In Fried's account of the self discussed above, perception or knowledge was modelled upon the knowledge we have of the world of facts and logic, and this is an impersonal knowledge, available to everyone. What is personal in the life of the agent was presented as those choices which are made in response to such knowledge.

Furthermore, personal relations such as friendship are quite clearly relations of love or affection. Fried is quite insistent that our affections and desires cannot properly condition our understanding or perception of the world, but must serve only to determine our choice of actions within that world. (Fried, p. 66) Personal relations, relations of love, can have no place in Fried's account of our perception of others and our understanding of the world.

The second of the two additional claims made above is that an account of the relationships between individuals as such will be beyond the direct interest of a morality of right and wrong. Relations of individuals as such lie beyond the interest of right and wrong because Fried carefully delimits right and wrong as those choices which reflect the standing of others not as individuals as such, but *as rational beings*. I have discussed this in the section on harm. Of course, we *may* relate to each other simply as individuals so long as this does not run contrary to the requirement to respect others as rational choosers. Indeed, Fried is keen to show that individual relationships such as friendship *do* have *some* secure place within human life, against the continued insistence of consequentialism that no attachment can have any place other than as being, perhaps, an efficient means to the improvement of the world as a whole. Nevertheless, the place friendships and other attachments to others as individuals have in a good life will not be made plain simply by consideration of the requirements of right and wrong, and some other place must be found for them.

If the relation of one individual to another is not seen in the struggle to know another as an individual, and does not fall within an account of right and wrong, how does Fried account for it? We can see an answer to this in Fried's discussion of friendship. Friendship does create relations between individuals as such, and does indeed incorporate our emotions and attachments towards each other.

5.5 Friendship and Rôles.

Once we have done our duty a multitude of choices remain to be made, and these choices lie outside right and wrong, where right and wrong is the realm of obligatory, absolute constraints upon intentional action. Although not obligatory, our discretionary decisions can be better or worse, and we recognise a good man not simply by the fact that he does no wrong, but for the positive manner in which he constructs his life (see Fried, p. 167).

We need then to see some order in these discretionary choices, some pattern in them, and some way of accounting for the varying degrees of excellence they may have. Fried suggests that we think of the forms of life which we adopt outside of right and wrong as *rôles*. The metaphor of a rôle captures the fact that our lives are ordered, and that some decisions commit us to others, that we can adopt certain additional duties as the result of the choices we make. It also reflects our freedom in adopting such forms of life.

We must consider, however, what distinguishes a good man from a bad within this discretionary sphere. The utilitarian standard is the maximization of net utility, and yet this not only crushes all genuine discretion, but denies the particular and preferential investment of time and energy and wealth which rôles involve. Were we to concede that whatever the standards of rectitude within the realm of right and wrong, we should be judged against a form of consequentialism outside of it, then we could not adopt professional rôles, could not support our kin in preference to strangers, not show particular loyalty to friends, except on those occasions in which such favouritism was in fact the most efficient way of increasing and equalising utility across the world. Such a situation conflicts with our moral intuitions, and denies the freedom which is, for Fried, so central to our moral personality. We must find a standard for excellence in our choices and rôles which does

not simply reduce to the consequences, be they considered in terms of utility maximisation or fairness to all.

Fried's suggestion is that when we act freely in adopting or pursuing a rôle, the value of the act is seen in the fact that we invest ourselves in a particular part of the world, and identify ourselves with certain freely chosen values. When we do wrong, by harming people for instance, we assert a relation between them and ourselves, which is categorically wrong in itself, without needing to be analysed in terms of fairness or utility. Similarly, when I do a service for someone, this should not be evaluated in terms of the fair distribution of that good or its contribution to the state of the world in general. Rather we should again look at the relationship formed, seeing not this time its categorical and immediate wrongness, but its excellence and virtue (see Fried, p. 172).

The individual relationships found in friendship are for Fried an example of this sort of rôle.

The special quality of friendship does not inhere in the benefits conferred, but in the relation: a friend chooses to make the good of another his own. Now a person's good is part of the congeries of attributes (some chosen, others determined by birth and circumstance) which constitutes a particular person. Thus in saying that John makes Mary's good his own in friendship, we say that John chooses to define his personality, his conception of the good, in part by whatever needs and preferences make Mary the particular person she is. Moreover, John chooses to define himself, his good, in this way not because (or not solely because) of a virtue he recognises in the good Mary has chosen, but just because it is Mary's good. He values the particular good not for that good's sake, but for Mary's sake. And in general, friends act for each other's sake. (Fried, p. 173)

Here Fried seems to me to come closer than any other of the philosophers we are discussing to doing justice to the sort of virtue exhibited in an act of friendship. Acts of friendship create relations between individuals as such. In friendship we do not relate to others as instances of a type, but simply as an individual to an individual, and the relationship between them is important and valuable in itself.

We must at this point be quite clear as to why the relationships between individuals as such are valuable and a justifiable part of our lives. Although the quality of our friendships, and other rôles, can be evaluated according to their excellence and virtue, we are not constrained to adopt the most excellent of rôles on pain of condemnation. Rôles have an assured place within our lives because they are a legitimate form of self-development and self-expression. Therefore although we may of course come to some judgment on the rôles others adopt - this is how we distinguish the good man from the mediocre man - everyone should be able to adopt the rôle of their choice without restraint or even condemnation, unless they do what is categorically wrong. This is simply a part of the freedom of the choosing self which Fried has sought to defend against the claims of consequentialism throughout *Right and Wrong*.

5.6 Self and Other in Fried.

Am I then subscribing to Fried's roughly Kantian view? There is certainly much here to like, for Fried has finally provided an account of the relationships between individuals as being valuable in and of themselves. My wish is to remind us of the relative *place* within Fried's account of human life which this account of individual relations has been forced into by Fried's delimitation of the subject area. For it remains the case that the account of personal relations such as friendship, to which we could add other forms of love and beneficence (Fried, p. 172), are made matters of choice rather than an open attention. These relations are presented as being wholly matters of choice; as adopting others as the objects of our generosity and as constituting our good. The passions of love are portrayed as being inclinations which guide and prompt choice, rather than as being modes of perception. Furthermore, Fried's account of individual relationships is tangential to his account of what we owe to others, what morality requires of us, and is placed instead within the category of *rôles*, a section of our lives marked off in contrast to duty as being a realm of complete discretion and of free self-creation.

Others occupy a constrained place in the life of the self as Fried describes it, and I want to argue in Part II that there are other, more illuminating accounts of the place which others may have in our lives which Fried's account excludes. It is important to see that Fried's analysis, and the constraint which I have argued it places upon our understanding of how others may enter our lives, is the outcome of a delineation of the moral, the discretionary and the perceptual which began with Fried's understanding of the choosing self and continued into his delineation of the subject matter of the morality of right and wrong and the decisions which fall outside of it.

In the second part of the thesis I shall argue for an interpretation of love, including friendship and beneficence, as being passions which are better understood as forms of perception and attention than as determinants of choice, and this will challenge Fried's assumption that perception or knowledge in morality can be modelled on the perception and knowledge we get in the sciences and in our understanding of the world of fact and logic. I shall further argue that far from being a matter which is tangential to morality, the loves are central to our understanding of what we owe to others.

6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has concerned the form of attention we should have for others and how far that attention might be an attention to others as individuals. It has also been about the *place* of attention to others, or vision or even knowledge, within a moral philosophy.

The chapter has been a long and involved one, because whilst I have concluded that Fried's account of moral philosophy excluded the attention of one individual to another as such from a central consideration in ethics, Fried's account is nevertheless a rich one and contains much which

is both worthy of admiration and also requires close and careful consideration if we are to do justice to it. The primary virtue of Fried's account, to my mind, is his emphasis on the *character of individual relations* rather than universal laws (see Sections 2.2 and 4.1 of this chapter).

Nevertheless, Fried's account does not begin with an examination of the relations between individuals so much as with an account of the self as being first and foremost a free chooser. This conception of the self as a free chooser, and the attendant account of the area of our lives which moral reflection brings with it, forces Fried to see these concrete relations with others as fitting into our lives in two discrete places, neither of which seems to me to be wholly satisfactory. In so far as these relations fall into the area of our lives governed by the requirements of right and wrong, Fried's central moral conception, particular relations are significant as relations *of* a kind (rational chooser) *to* a kind (also rational chooser). And for relations which fall outside right and wrong, such relations are seen as instances of choice and individual self-creation, and not primarily of perception, attention and acceptance.

It is finally, then, on the issue of the *place* of vision of others and of individual relations within our lives that my most serious criticisms of Fried emerge. My attempt to provide an alternative account takes up the whole of Part II of this thesis. Before that I want to look at one further contemporary moral philosopher, with quite different sympathies to Fried, namely Bernard Williams.

ⁱ 'Norm' is taken from Fried's terminology. "A norm is a judgment addressed to an agent directing choice. Thus a norm differs from value judgments....To say that lying is wrong is just to direct all potential Auditors to avoid lies." (Fried, p. 11)

ⁱⁱ This example is simply designed to distinguish the different ways in which we might recognise the individuality of others. I do not, of course, intend the absurdity of this example to form any sort of *satire* upon Fried's account of respecting persons as rational choosers.

ⁱⁱⁱ The later discussion I refer to comes at Section 5.3. See also footnote iv below.

^{iv} cf. Iris Murdoch: "Moral concepts do not move about *within* a hard world set up by science and logic. They set up, for different purposes, a different world." (Murdoch (2), p. 321) Murdoch argues that morality (and art) sets up a quite different relation between the individual and the world in general. Whilst I am sympathetic to much of what she says in this respect, I am, in this thesis, only concerned to explore the significance of the differences between those relationships of attention and knowledge between people and the relationships they have with the world considered as a world of facts and logic, and in particular to explore the importance of the recognition of others as individuals to ethics.

Chapter 4

Williams, Character and Purpose

1. Introductory Remarks

In the previous two chapters we have seen how an initial conception of the self, combined with an accompanying conception of the domain of moral reflection, works to shape the place and the form which a proper engagement with others as individuals can have in ethics.

In the work of Charles Fried, the delimitation of the area of moral reflection involved a division of the moral realm into two distinct conceptions: a central morality of right and wrong, in which we were to view others as of a type (rational persons), and a discretionary realm, understood as the adoption of *rôles*, which marked a process of self creation. This division, together with an emphasis upon choice rather than vision in ethics, served to force Fried's interpretation of the relations of individuals as individuals from the centre of ethics and into the category of a rôle. In interpreting our individual relationships as a matter of self-creation, I suggested that Fried not only imported a moral bias into his account, but also gave a constrained account of what others can be to us, and the place which an unfettered attention to others may hold in our relationships.

In Bernard Williams we find a writer who is keenly aware of the potential for a distortion of the place and nature of our particular attachments which is posed by the Kantian tendency to champion an impartial morality of right and wrong as the central component of ethics, and in

particular by the Kantian claim for the supremacy and difference in kind of these impartial duties over our partial attachments.

I want in this chapter to look at two papers by Williams, 'Persons, Character and Morality', and 'Moral Luck', both of which are reprinted in his collection *Moral Luck*. These papers both take the Kantian scheme as a background, and suggest another way in which ethics might attempt to reflect and encompass the particularity of others, our personal relations with others and indeed the particular and contingent nature of the circumstances of our lives as a whole. Again, Williams is not selected as a 'soft' target, far from it. It demonstrates how widespread is the tendency to abstract from the individual that it is found in a writer who is so keen to avoid it, who at first seems free of it, and who has developed a position that is so different from the two that we have just addressed. I shall begin with a discussion of Williams's approach as it appears in 'Persons, Character and Morality'.

2. Persons, Character and Morality

2.1 Consequentialism, Kantianism and the Individual.

'Persons, Character and Morality' addresses a number of issues concerning the relationship between the self, the particular attachments and projects which form the substance of one's life, and Utilitarian and Kantian moral philosophy. Of these issues the matter of our particular purposes and projects and their centrality to ethics is perhaps the most important.ⁱ

Williams argues that contemporary moral philosophy does not sufficiently respect the individuality of persons and the particularity of their attachments and desires. Consequentialism fails to respect the individuality of individuals in demanding that we act in whatever way works

towards the maximization of happiness in the world, regardless of our own vocations and plans, a criticism which we have seen levelled at the consequentialist by Fried in the last chapter. Williams notes the Kantian tradition's resistance to this consequentialist attack upon the primacy of the individual, and yet he goes on to argue that Kantianism is not in itself a suitable alternative.

Williams says that most interesting recent moral philosophy has in fact been somewhat Kantian in emphasis, and argues that this approach, in different ways to consequentialism, also contains a tendency to abstract from the individual in his or her individuality. Williams identifies those elements in a variety of modern moral philosophers' work which qualify them as being largely Kantian in outlook as being the following:

That the moral point of view is basically different from the non-moral, and by a difference in kind; that the moral point of view is characterised by its impartiality and its indifference to any particular relations to particular persons, and that moral thought requires abstraction from the circumstances and particular characteristics of the parties, including the agent, except in so far as these can be treated as universal features of any morally similar situation; and that the motivations of a moral agent, correspondingly, involve a rational application of impartial principle and are thus different in kind from the sorts of motivations he might have in treating some particular persons (for instance, though not exclusively, himself) differently because he happened to have some particular interest towards them. Of course it is not intended that these demands should exclude other and more intimate relations nor prevent someone from acting in ways demanded by and appropriate to them: that is a matter of the relations of the moral point of view to the other point of view. But I think it is fair to say that included amongst the similarities of these views to Kant's is the point that like his they do not make the question of the relation between those points of view at all easy to answer. The deeply disparate character of moral and non-moral motivation, together with the special dignity or supremacy assigned to the moral, make it very difficult to assign to those other relations and motivations the significance or structural importance in life which some of them are capable of having. (Williams (2), p. 2)

Williams is uncomfortable with "this detachment of moral motivations and the moral point of view from the level of particular relations to particular persons, and more generally from the level of all motivations other than those with an impartial character...." (Williams (2), p. 2)

In so far as Williams is concerned at modern moral philosophy's tendency to separate particular attachments and loves from the moral domain, and to make it hard to see the relevance of one to

another, he is pursuing similar themes to those explored in this thesis. Williams is concerned that modern moral philosophy has little to say about the particular attachments that are an important part of the substance of our lives. He is concerned too, and here he takes a different direction to this thesis, that such is the prestige given to impartial morality that duties of impartiality are always given *priority* over the personal and particular.ⁱⁱ

Again, the element of Kantianism which concerns Williams is its refusal to accept and engage with the prominent and fundamental rôle of particularity and partiality in the life of the individual. Whilst we do very properly have a concern for impartial justice, our attachments to the particular and the partial quite obviously loom very large in our lives, they are for the most part the *substance* of our lives, and ethics cannot disdain their claims. If ethics is to be relevant to us and worth pursuing it must engage with the particular, and cannot so closely identify with what is impersonal and abstract, Williams argues.

2.2 Williams and Fried.

There is obviously some parallel with Fried here, and indeed whilst Williams names Fried as being amongst the Kantian writers to whom he is referring, he also admits that Fried does to an extent pull away from the tendency to separate morality from the particulars of an individual life (Williams (2), p. 1). This is consistent with what I found in examining Fried's work in the last chapter: Fried was concerned to ensure that concern with an impartial well-ordering of the world did not become such an all-encompassing demand in morality that there was no room for individuals to build a life of their choosing and design, and to this end Fried tried to develop some firmer connections between the morality of right and wrong and the life outside of it. In this respect, Fried is keen to show how that he has something to say about the place of the particular

and partial in a good life, and to show that this is indeed compatible with a respect for impartial Kantian norms.

However, whilst Fried is concerned to give an account of the moral value of our partial and particular attachments which is consistent with his central account of right and wrong, the dichotomy between the central, impartial aspect of morality and our more particular attachments remains clearly recognisable in Fried, and it does play a significant and controversial rôle in shaping his moral philosophy, or so I have tried to show.

My chief interest in this dichotomy was the way in which it forced a particular *interpretation* upon direct, loving individual relations. The domain of moral evaluation was thereby split into right and wrong, in which we are to respect others upon the impartial grounds that they are persons; and an area of human life outside of our central moral duties, which were accounted for as *rôles*. This forces us to evaluate relations which are guided purely by an attention to the other, such as friendships, but also beneficence and the love of kin, in a particular way, that is we are left no option by the shape of Fried's moral philosophy other than to include such relations within our self-creation and self-chosen development. Correspondingly, my method in Part II will be to try to show the importance and significance of personal affections not interpreted as rôles but as the perception of the reality of another individual. Indeed, I shall go on to argue that this casts a new light on relations that *do* fall within Fried's central account of morality, including justice and even impartiality.

It is this structural imposition of a morally significant interpretation of particular relations and their relation to morality that was my chief reason for concern about Fried's characteristically Kantian division of the moral territory. Williams's concerns are more straightforward, and significantly different. The Kantian insists that the central duties of right and wrong are

inexorable, and must take *precedence* over particular relationships and desires which have no such impartial defence, and Williams believes that this is an unreasonable distortion of our lives, dominated as they are by attachments to the particular and the local.

The disagreement between Williams and Fried is presented in 'Persons, Character and Morality' less as a matter of philosophical interpretation of our relations, and more as a matter of moral *priority*. For Fried, whilst concern with the partial is of course quite proper and important in its place, we must not take on any claims that lead us to do wrong, and as such our partial rôles live in the space that right and wrong leaves to them. Williams, by contrast, wants to argue that our personal and private concerns do in fact hold such a pivotal position in the ongoing story of our lives that, at least in some cases, it is in fact *they* that are inexorable.ⁱⁱⁱ For Williams, ethics should consider all our desires and projects together, as they fit into an individual, historical life, with no division of the moral field such that the impartial enjoys a necessary priority over the partial.

This leads us to a broad outline of Williams's method. He will stress the importance of particularity and partiality - mainly represented as particular *projects* and designs - which serve as the embodiment of a real, particular character situated in a real, historical and particular section of the world. He will argue for the centrality of these notions to a life, and thus demonstrate that a Kantian ethics cannot itself be a fully adequate guide to a life so constituted. Rather, Kantian impartiality is no more than a 'species of the ethical', and Kantian 'morality' is simply one demand amongst others.

2.3 Character and *Projects*.

I want to focus upon Williams's main attempt to argue that our particular projects hold such a central position in life that we cannot always be ready to defer to the demands of impartial justice.

Williams explains the structure of his argument:

I am going to take up...the idea that an individual person has a set of desires, concerns or, as I shall often call them, projects, which help to constitute a *character*.

The first issue concerns the connection between that fact and the man's having a reason for living at all. (Williams (2), p. 5)

The connection between these two facts is that "unless I am propelled forward by the conatus of desire, project and interest, it is unclear why I should go on at all." (Williams (2), p. 12) What may propel us forward is a "ground project", a set of concerns which give a degree of meaning and purpose to life, and Williams wishes to emphasise how ordinary and familiar such projects might be:

For a project to play this ground role, it does not have to be true that if it were frustrated or in any way he lost it, he would have to commit suicide, nor does he have to think that. Other things, or the mere hope of other things, may keep him going. But he may feel in those circumstances that he might as well have died. Of course, in general man does not have one separable project which plays this ground role: rather there is a nexus of projects, related to his conditions of life, and it would be the loss of all or most of them which would remove meaning.

Ground projects do not have to be selfish, in the sense that they are just things for the agent. Nor do they have to be self-centred, in the sense that the creative projects of the romantic artist could be considered self-centred (where it has to be *him*, but not *for* him). They may certainly be altruistic, and in a very evident sense moral projects; thus he may be working for reform, justice or general improvement. (Williams (2), p. 13)

That ground projects may include, but do not exhaustively comprise, projects conditioned by a regard for impartial morality suggests the possibility of conflict between the structure of our lives and the requirements of utilitarianism and Kantianism. We are given the reason and motivation to continue our lives by the perception that we are separate individual persons, who have these projects a, b, and c, which we hope to see through and perhaps develop^{iv}. Utilitarianism denies

that separateness any significance; Kantianism denies that we may make what is particular and personal in our plans central to those separate lives. In this way they both deny, quite uncomfortably, the centrality of that aspect of character which encourages us to continue with our lives.

This centrality of particular projects and plans to our lives, which is a central concern with what is individual, local and not universalisable, renders the claims of Kantian morality 'unreasonable'. Williams explains that for the Kantian, when our ground projects clash with the claims of impartial justice:

impartiality, if the conflict arises, must be required to win; and that cannot necessarily be a reasonable requirement on the agent. There can come a point at which it is quite unreasonable for a man to give up, in the name of the impartial good ordering of the world of moral agents, something which is the condition of his having any interest in being around in that world at all. Once one thinks about what is involved in having a character, one can see that the Kantians' omission of character is a condition of their ultimate insistence on the demands of impartial morality, just as it is a reason for finding inadequate their account of the individual. (Williams (2), p. 14)

We might note that in the above quotation, Williams refers to the demands of character, yet the element of character which Williams is highlighting here is, as Williams warned us earlier, specifically our *projects*, and I think we can see why Williams gives this one element of character such precedence here. The personal plans of an individual are not only engaged with the particular details of the world, as seen from his own perspective, but are also forward-looking and purposive. It is the forward-looking, "projecting" element which gives us reason to go on and so makes them inseparable from a meaningful, purposeful life. And these projects which give meaning to our lives concern the particulars of our lives as we find them; they not only contain whatever commitment we have to justice but also connect with the remaining substance of a particular life, lived with other particular people. Thus the idea of a ground project is, it seems, peculiarly well placed to show why some concern with the partial attachments of life, which means those elements of life which are not specifically conditioned by a commitment to impartial

morality, is worthy of greater consideration than it is afforded by Kantian moral theory. In recognising the importance of ground projects we recognise that our attachment to what is partial and particular is central to our character, and that we cannot always reasonably be asked to give preference to what is universal and impersonal.^v

This is the account of the place of the partial and particular in ethics which Williams gives in 'Persons, Character and Morality', launched against the abstractions of either a Kantian or a consequentialist ethics, the same abstractions which Fried tried to ameliorate from within a Kantian framework. I shall in due course wish to criticise this reliance upon projects as an element of character which attends to the particular and the personal. However, a similar case for the centrality of the purposive, particular project is made by Williams in his article 'Moral Luck', which has the virtue of being based around an interesting example, and it is to this further account of the centrality of the project to human life that I shall turn now.

3. Moral Luck

3.1 'Persons, Character and Morality' and 'Moral Luck'.

Williams' 'Moral Luck' is another attempt to attack Kantian morality for its failure to acknowledge the importance which should be attached to the particulars of our lives; that is, the importance to a person of the contingent particulars of the world around him, including particular relationships and particular people and plans. In its discussion of a fictionally embellished account of the life of Gauguin, it provides an example of the way in which Williams believes personal projects must displace Kantian morality as the centre of our moral lives, not only by determining our choices, but also by its rôle in our *evaluation* of those lives.

Williams notes that there has been a strain of moral philosophy which envisages moral goodness as being immune to luck. That is, Williams suggests, in many of the philosophies of classical antiquity a good life was seen to consist in a self-sufficiency and a tranquillity which was not vulnerable to the contingencies of how things went in the world. Whilst this view of life is no longer widely held, there are analogous features in Kantian moral philosophy which we might look at here. In Kantian moral philosophy, right action is 'unconditioned', meaning that whether an act is a good one does not depend upon its consequences, but upon the quality of the intention which the act embodies, evaluated against the timeless dictates of pure reason. To be morally good is not to adapt one's actions to the particularities of one's life, and one's place in the ongoing, and contingent flow of events in the world, but is to impose a certain form upon one's actions, the form of impartial Kantian justice.

For the Kantian, then, the quality of one's moral life is immune to subsequent alteration by luck: a good decision cannot be rendered bad by the discovery that it was not as well suited to the flow of events, as they in fact turned out, as had been hoped. Furthermore, morality is seen not as some second-best form of life, that is it is not a life into which we might *retreat*, should we find a more worldly life in which our success as persons lies in our ability to successfully mould events to be rather too rough for us. Rather the moral life is our supreme vocation. Combining these claims we get something like the claim that the value and worth of our life is indeed under our control as moral agents, and is immune to luck after all, which is to claim that one may stand behind one's decisions and acts even when they unleash a wave of unwelcome consequences upon one.

The Kantian claims which combine above to diminish the significance of luck are, in fact, much the same claims as Williams attacked in 'Persons, Character and Morality', albeit seen in a different context and working towards a slightly different point. They involve the claim that "the moral point of view is basically different from the non-moral, and by a difference in kind".

Furthermore, whilst they may acknowledge that our ordinary reflections about our lives involve a consideration of the particular, non-generalizable features of our life and their contribution to the on-going development of that life, yet it is insisted that our moral assessment of our actions is to be utterly unconditioned by such considerations. And this is also the claim that "moral thought requires abstraction from the circumstances and particular characteristics of the parties, including the agent", and very obviously re-asserts the "the special dignity or supremacy assigned to the moral" as well. (All quotations from Williams (2), p. 2) That is, Williams sees here a moral evaluation of our lives which does not connect with the *substance* of our lives, that substance being the successes of our particular, forward-looking plans.

It is then a familiar combination of claims which leads to the conclusion that it cannot be a matter of luck whether an agent can justify his actions. Williams will attack this conclusion and the suppositions which support it, by once again arguing that a concern for the particularities of our lives, a concern for the concrete details of our lives and the way in which they progress and develop, is so central to our lives as we find them that it cannot be disdained by a Kantian conception of the good. And furthermore, in the example of Gauguin, Williams will once again rely upon the idea of a *project* to fulfil this task.

3.2 Williams's Gauguin.

Williams's example considers a non-historical Gauguin, who leaves his family to a grim fate to pursue his life as a painter. He is concerned about these consequences for his family, and is concerned that what he does to his family is in itself far from decent behaviour. Furthermore, the future shape of his life is put into the balance by the decision to leave: it is an open question whether he will prove to have in him what it takes to be a great painter. The future is not fully available to see in the present, in his early talent, and if he fails he shall review his failure as a

failure to make an artist of himself, not simply a failure of judgment at a time when the extent of his potential ability was clear.

Williams wants to claim that Gauguin cannot declare his decision to be justified once and for all *as* he makes it, cannot see that his decision is *of such a form* that he will never have reason to repudiate it or to deeply regret it.^{vi} Rather Gauguin will have to see *whether* he succeeds before he can finally evaluate his decision, and given that this means waiting upon uncertain events this is in fact the claim that justification is vulnerable to luck.

How exactly is Gauguin's self-justification vulnerable to luck? Williams argument is that to know whether he must one day regret his acts is to know the context out of which he might one day evaluate those acts, which is to know whether he reviews his acts as an accomplished painter or as an artistic failure. And Williams argues that this context - which is just the character he develops and the place in the world that he comes to occupy - is determined by the outcome of decision itself, and is indeed the point of the decision. As such, his retrospective justification simply *must* be vulnerable to how things go in the world of particular contingent events. Moral evaluation is, at least in cases such as Gauguin's, a matter of uncertainty and sheer luck, rather than being available to a single, secure and timeless judgment from the perspective of impartial reason.

How does the decision itself affect Gauguin's perspective? Well if he succeeds, he looks at the event from the perspective of his life as a great painter. That being so, the poor behaviour towards his family is simply a part of a successful, genuine and eminently worthwhile plan. If he is unsuccessful it could be in two ways. Firstly an external accident such as an illness could put an end to his ambitions. Here the project is frustrated, and so he can never look back at his wrongs through the perspective of their place in a successful and worthy project. Still, that plan

has not been shown up as a mere dream. If he is *intrinsically* unsuccessful, that is if it proves that he never had within him what it takes to be a great painter (which it is assumed can only be discovered by whole-heartedly trying), then "the project which generated the decision is revealed as an empty thing, incapable of grounding the agent's life" (Williams (3), p. 36). In this circumstance Gauguin can not even say to himself "I would have been justified, if only..." he has nothing to say in his defence; he has only remorse and regret.

What Williams is most keen to attack here is the notion that the choosing individual has some *purely rational perspective* from which the decision can be assessed *regardless* of its outcome in this particular instance. In fact, Williams argues, the decision is part of a life with projects, and appraisal must connect with the details of that life. This is Williams's project of re-integrating ethics with a life of contingencies and particular preferences and attachments.

We can only to a limited extent abstract from the projects and preferences which we actually have, and cannot in principle gain a stand-point from which the alternative fillings out of our life...could be compared without prejudice. The perspective of deliberative choice is constitutively *from here*. Correspondingly the perspective of assessment with greater knowledge is necessarily *from there*, and not only can I not guarantee how factually it will then be, but I cannot ultimately guarantee from what stand-point of assessment my major and most fundamental regrets will be. (Williams (3), p. 35)

Williams asks us to see and agree that we *must* indeed appraise actions from such a perspective, which is the perspective of our concrete and particular desires and projects, and not the abstract perspective of Kantian reason. Indeed, Williams challenges the reader, lest he take a moralistic view of Gauguin's acts, to consider the pleasure which we get from the fruits of the historical Gauguin's life and thus the context from which we ourselves judge the historical Gauguin's acts. Must not *we* see his acts towards his family as part of the project which brought us what *we* value and esteem, and so must we not admit that his poor behaviour is partly or wholly justified by the events and the sheer artistic success which followed it?^{vii}

3.3 Moral Evaluation and Purpose.

What I want to draw from this account is the rôle of purposive projects in appraising Gauguin's conduct. Projects provide a perspective from which we can see our acts. What is at issue for Gauguin is whether the particular project he is embarked on will be revealed as an "empty thing", or not, which is the difference between simply looking upon his actions towards his family from the perspective of a man who treated his family badly, with nothing more to say, or whether he can, so to speak, look at those acts *through* the project which made him great, repositioning those acts as worthwhile sacrifices within a worthy whole, and not *simply* as poor treatment of people who deserved better. For the justification which is available only to the successful Gauguin is that his acts were the means to those things which he most dearly cherishes and which give meaning to his life.

If we accept that we must indeed see our acts through such a perspective then we will reject the Kantian perspective on action, which sidelines all that is particular and contingent, and which insists that the perspective of eternal and ahistorical reason has final authority over any other perspective. Highlighting these apparent difficulties within the Kantian perspective is, I believe, Williams's primary aim. That a personal and historical perspective is beholden to the course of events in an uncertain world means that as a corollary of our rejection of the supremacy of the Kantian viewpoint we must also accept that our judgment of our lives is not immune to luck. However, without at all wanting to reinstate a straightforwardly Kantian viewpoint, I want to suggest that there is something deeply uncomfortable about Williams's adoption of the point of view of our projects and purposes as being the right perspective on our treatment of others.

4. Evaluating Williams

4.1 Initial Concerns.

It seems to me that there is something disquieting in Williams's Gauguin.^{viii} What exactly is it? It seems not so much to be his selfishness, for his project need not be selfish at all. It is I think that the treatment others *must* be evaluated *from the perspective of his own projects* and the life built around them. If the project fails, then others will be a central feature of his life - his life story will lead up to and then forever be seen in the light of what he did to others. If he succeeds, then it need not revolve around that at all - the poor treatment of others will be a blemish upon a life which has rather more to be said about it. And it is just this possibility of removing the treatment of others from the centre of the story, to a more marginal position as blemishes on a quite different story, which seems (I think) to Williams to offer the possibility of justification, and seems to me to be what is unnerving about Williams's Gauguin. Gauguin thinks he is justified if others can be seen from a point of view where their lives and the pain within them seem incidental to his decision, and I think that this wrenching of attention from the hurt individual to the wider project is precisely what Gauguin most urgently needs to answer for.

We might remember that in 'Persons, Character and Morality', Williams's championing of 'projects' was intended to counteract the Kantian and utilitarian "detachment of moral motivations and the moral point of view from the level of particular relations to particular persons, and more generally from the level of all motivations other than those with an impartial character...." (Williams (2), p. 2) It is my claim that in fact the focus upon purposive projects leads precisely to a disturbing abstraction from "particular relations to particular persons". I want now to look at why this must be so, by looking at the work of J.L.Stocks on purpose.

4.2 Stocks on Purpose and Projects.

As I have said, my criticism of Williams's arguments against the abstractions of utilitarianism and Kantianism is that they involve him in a position which itself abstracts from the individual as a primary subject of moral attention. I wish to identify the reason for this abstraction in the *purposive* nature of "projects", and in making this claim I shall draw heavily upon the work of J.L.Stocks.

Williams's emphasis upon projects is an emphasis upon the purposive. In 'Persons, Character and Morality' the element of character which Williams continually highlights is the projects which we have, and this is not at all accidental. Our projects are the element of our character which are inherently purposive, and it is this purposive aspect which gives projects that ability, as Williams sees it, to *propel* us through life, by giving our lives determinate aims and motive force. Deny us our ground projects, Williams seems to say, and our lives becomes purpose-less, and that is not a reasonable demand to make of anyone.

What then is wrong with this emphasis upon the purposive in our lives? Since at least Aristotle, purpose has been recognised as one of man's great defining qualities. It has seemed to many to be man's greatest strength and the source of much of his dignity that he can formulate purposes and pursue them. This ability to fit means to ends seems at first sight to be the source of our considerable mastery of the world and its resources. Furthermore, in harmonising and subordinating the mass of our desires into a coherent strategy, aiming at what we consider to be our true and most fitting goal, purpose might seem to be the perfect expression of man's mastery not just of the world around him, but even of himself: "purpose is the characteristic expression of will as sovereign over primitive desire." (Stocks (2), p. 37) How then can an emphasis upon

purpose, which is indeed one of man's great glories, be a weakness in an account of ethics? The answer is that purpose *abstracts* from our vision of others as individuals.

Purpose provides us with a particular *perspective* upon an action; it selects certain features as relevant, and discards others. Stocks says:

Clearly, any feature of any situation has infinite ramifications and is capable of entering into an infinity of practical combinations; and clearly any change in a situation will have consequences inexhaustible in range and variety. Purpose assesses the situation and deals with it from a definite angle. The value of each feature is its actual or possible contribution to a single result, and this is also the sole test of the acceptability of any change proposed. Thus what is taken into account is viewed partially and abstractly, and much is forced out of sight altogether by the limitation of the point of view. (Stocks (2), pp. 17-8)

It is this element of abstraction which I wanted to criticise in Williams' Gauguin example. What could make Gauguin's decision justifiable and his treatment of others tolerable is, according to Williams, that the project of which it was a part does not prove empty. When the project succeeds, the callousness towards family is assessed and dealt with "from a definite angle", that is, it is seen as part of the project which made Gauguin what he is. The "test of acceptability" is changed, and Gauguin need not simply ask himself whether his acts are worthy of these particular people and his particular relation to them. But this is to endorse precisely a "limitation of the point of view"; it is to look at the suffering of others *as it enters into our plans*. I want to suggest that it is not an acceptable justification of an act to force out of sight, or at least out of our direct gaze, the elements of our acts which would otherwise give us difficulty.

4.3 Williams's Gauguin and Purpose.

It might be suggested that whilst Williams clearly makes purpose a key feature of the two articles discussed here, it is surely not fair to suggest that in his account of Gauguin's reflection upon his past wrongs he has given us an abstracted picture. The point Williams was most keen to make

was that we must assess our conduct not from the abstracted view of universal and timeless Kantian norms, but from our actual and historical place in the world. Far from abstracting from the relevant details, Williams is, it might be claimed, working hard to ensure that all the relevant details are *retained and acknowledged*, which includes not only Gauguin's attachment to his family but also his aims and ambitions and potential. However, we must ask what is it which *justifies* the actions towards Gauguin's family? It is only in so far as the acts are seen against a background of a purposive project that they are justified: against such a background a series of actions is selected and evaluated simply for their efficacy in bringing about a certain end. All that matters from the purposive perspective about the *way* in which the project is pursued is the efficiency with which it serves the goal. On these criteria, a successful Gauguin's callousness seems justified, for such a Gauguin could see his action as a means to an end, and as a minor and distasteful part of a greater whole. In championing the perspective of individual purposes as a means of undermining the impartial rules of Kantianism, Williams has let a just, compassionate attention to the details of another as an individual ultimately appear to be tangential to the main business of life.

We might put this differently. We have said that what determines, for the purposive mind, the correct choice of means for a project, can only be the efficiency and economy of effort with which it brings about the required ends. Now of course there will be much more to be said about the object or action than this efficiency in achieving a certain means, and it is in these additional details that the individuality of the object or action lies. However, these idiosyncrasies are irrelevant from the perspective of the project; they are surds or remainders. What is important is simply the features of the object which pertain to the task in hand, and of course these are features which the object or act will share with many others. Substantially different actions may be considered to be of the same kind from the perspective of purpose: they are grouped by their ability to bring about a certain end, and differentiated only by their different levels efficiency in

doing so. Where two actions or objects are equally efficient, they are for the sake of purpose interchangeable, no matter what very great differences between them this viewpoint might leave aside:

The thinking characteristic of the attitude of purpose is at the level of the class concept and the abstract universal. To such thinking the universal always presents itself as an inexhaustible complex, and unknown or unknowable. By abstraction it simplifies the problem, but at the cost of a divorce between knowledge and reality: "The individual may exist," it says, "but it is the universal that is known." In a word, for such thinking, and for purpose which is its practical embodiment, there is no individual. (Stocks (4), p. 19)

Again, however, this may seem unfair to Williams. Surely he does not intend to suggest that Gauguin's treatment of his family enters his mind *simply* as a means to an end, and that it is all the same to him whether he stays with them or abandons them, or takes some third option, so long as all these options are equally efficient in promoting his success as an artist? Even if justified by success, can we not allow him some lingering regrets, and see in these regrets his continued attention to them as individuals?

The difficulty is in seeing how far a continuing regret, and what *sort* of regrets, can be accommodated within a purely purposive account. We can of course admit that this instance requires us to admit some complexities in our purposes. We have here, it might be said, two desires - to be an artist and to protect his family - which appear to issue in two irreconcilable purposive projects - irreconcilable because one requires him to leave his family and one requires him to stay. His regret is a regret that one project was abandoned and one aim neglected, and given that these projects aimed at such serious ends, this could be a deep regret, even though his actions have been justified.

How is he justified if his regrets persist as we feel they must? He is justified because he made the right decision, and the regret is regret that better things were not possible, not that he acted as he

did. Yet when the situation is fossilised in terms of the facts simply not allowing two purposes to be completed, when the facts of Gauguin's life are presented such that we see here two possibilities linked to each other and to Gauguin simply as two irreconcilable projects, I still want to register a discomfort. When the two courses of action are given no more illuminating presentation than as being two incompatible purposes, the abstraction which Stocks highlights does not disappear, it simply becomes multi-faceted. From the perspective of his purpose as an aspiring artist, what he does to his wife is neither here nor there so long as it efficiently furthers his art; and from the perspective of his rôle as husband and parent, whether he is an artist is neither here nor there so long as it does not interfere with his family. And one may alternate from one position to another, but ultimately one must choose which perspective most accurately reflects one's real preferences and projects.

When Gauguin sides with the project of a career in art, supposing that he achieves his aims and his art becomes central to his life, he is from that perspective justified, which is to say that the details of his betrayal are forced out of the picture as surds. The 'project' of his family and their welfare is forced from the picture, as surds or remainders, by the reality of his projects and preferences. And of course this is where luck comes in, for if he fails, the project which provides such a perspective evaporates.

4.4 A Related Argument: Purpose and Character in Others.

The arguments above concerning the nature of purpose suggest that Williams cannot do justice to the way in which others enter our lives as individuals. This is, however, an issue which Williams explicitly addresses in 'Persons, Character and Morality', and he wants to say that he can indeed do justice to the idea that others are to be accepted into our lives as irreplaceable individuals.

Before leaving Williams we should look at these additional arguments, to see if they can overcome the difficulties which I have argued are created by the limited perspective of purpose.

In Part III of 'Persons, Character and Morality' Williams switches his attention from the character of the first person individual and the rôle of purpose within that character, to the individual characters of others. Here it is appropriate, he says, to acknowledge the fact that the characters of other people are different from each other. The fact that others are different in character can change the nature of interpersonal relations, in important ways. Firstly, Williams says, it gives rise to the important ethical idea that other people are not substitutable. Furthermore,

To the thought that his friend cannot just be equivalently replaced by another friend, is added both the thought that he cannot just be replaced himself, and also the thought that he and his friend are different from each other. This last thought is important to us as part of our view of friendship, a view thus set apart from Aristotle's opinion that a good man's friend was a duplication of himself. (Williams (2), p. 15)

Williams is here highlighting and acknowledging themes which will be very important to the development of my arguments in Part II. The importance of perception of differences between oneself and others, and in particular the centrality of this acknowledgment of individuality and difference to friendship, will play a central rôle as this thesis progresses.^{ix} Furthermore we might note that here, for the first time, we meet the suggestion that our sense of self might derive from our attention to others; that we might learn of ourselves *in relation*, whereas so far we have seen Williams, Fried and Gauthier build their accounts of what human relations must be like from their accounts of the nature of the first person. This too is a theme which will receive increasing attention as the thesis progresses.^x

What requires comment here, however, is the way in which Williams's discussions of the character of the first person and the character of the third person meet, or fail to meet. In his discussion of the third person he has emphasised the differences in the characters of others,

including friends, and of the importance of that to our relationships. However we might ask what attitude towards another is inclined to perceive these differences and grant them an important place in our relationships. When we return to the earlier section of Williams's article, we recall that the attitude which Williams has stressed there is the purposive attitude, an attitude which, I have argued, is particularly *insensitive* to individual differences.

The attitudes and approaches which are central to Williams's discussion of the moral agent's character in Parts I and II of his article are insensitive to those elements of *others'* characters which Williams wishes to emphasise in Part III. Those elements of another's character which Williams highlights in Part III of his article seem to me to be important and to deserve the place within ethics and within personal relationships such as friendship which Williams briefly suggests that they should have. On account of this the second part of this thesis will discuss attitudes which are receptive to such individual differences. This will clearly result in the need to emphasise other elements of the character of the first person self in ethics than the purposive characteristics which Williams has emphasised in the two articles discussed above. We will, in effect, begin to adopt the method which Williams briefly introduces in his discussion of friendship, that of learning more about the self through relations with others, as opposed to interpreting our relationships in a manner which serves a prior conception of the nature of the self.^{xi}

5. Concluding Remarks

Williams's thoughts in 'Persons, Character and Morality' and 'Moral Luck' must be seen as forming a response to Kantian writers such as Fried, and we may see Williams's disagreement with Kantian thought as concerning both the subject matter of ethics and the view of the self as moral agent. Williams has explained his discomfort with the Kantian tendency to partition a

section of human life from the rest, that is the policy of marking out impartial duties and consideration of right and wrong from all other concerns, to champion the former at the expense of the latter. In order to show that this is insupportable, Williams has argued that particular, partial projects may form the centre of a life, and may hold an undeniable and dominant place either in our choice of action (as argued in 'Persons, Character and Morality') or in our evaluation of our actions (as argued in 'Moral Luck'). The demands which make up the whole of the subject matter of morality as delineated by Kantian writers might merit the unwavering allegiance of abstract, purely rational minds, but we are not such creatures, we are particular-beings-with-plans. The connection between the area of moral reflection and the concept of the self is as firm in Williams as in any other of the philosophers we have discussed.

I have noted earlier in this chapter^{xiii} that Williams's often presents his dispute with Kantians such as Fried as being a matter of whether, in the final analysis, partial or impartial motives must take *precedence*, must win out over each other, must determine action. This is perhaps in itself a symptom of the temper of modern moral philosophy, and the emphasis it places upon the overt choices taken between divergent courses of action. I have wanted in my analysis of both Fried and Williams to place a greater focus upon the *interpretation* of interpersonal relations which their reasoning leaves us with. In Fried I wanted to note the way in which friendships and other loves are manoeuvred into the area of our lives which Fried labels *rôles*, with attendant connotations of self-creation, and which appeared to define such relationships as exercises of sovereign choice.

My chief concern with Williams's work is that, regardless of whether we agree that partial preferences must sometimes win out over impartial commitments, he has chosen to interpret ethics in terms of purpose, and that methodology brings along with it a tendency to abstract from the way in which we achieve our ends. Furthermore a purposive view has been seen to render

attention to others and to the relationship between us as a contingent, eliminable element of ethics.

Such an emphasis upon the purposive attitude contrasts with the emphasis upon the importance of perceiving differences between oneself and others which marks Part III of 'Persons, Character and Morality'. I want in the second phase of this thesis to explore an attitude which is receptive to differences, an attitude which attends to others as individuals.

The following chapter, after making some further points about Williams and the limitations of purpose, will suggest that we should turn to the study of affection and love to provide an outline of what such an attention might be like, and I shall once more draw upon the work of J.L.Stocks in doing so. A fuller account of an ethics of right attention and of love will be the subject of Part II of the thesis which will begin with Chapter 6.

ⁱ The paper addresses a loose collection of issues, and in all of them Williams argues that the hold of Kantianism upon ethics should be weakened. The emphasis on particular projects can be examined on its own without undue distortion.

ⁱⁱ Williams of course believes that a commitment to impartial justice is *one* of the components of a good life, but is concerned that Kantian philosophy suggest that this should be seen as our over-riding concern, with no proper place given to more personal cares and relationships.

ⁱⁱⁱ Williams criticises an earlier argument of Fried's which tries to argue that certain instances of partiality towards family still qualify as fair and impartial, and are therefore still within the compass of a Kantian ethics. However, by the time Fried had written *Right and Wrong* he had retracted this particular argument - indeed he cites this same critique by Williams as being a good account of why he was wrong - so I shall not discuss this direct comment by Williams on the difference between their standpoints here.

^{iv} That is, we have separate characters and separate plans. This does not commit Williams to the thought that we are all very different from each other: our own plans may project us through life despite the fact that others are pretty much like us.

^v I shall go on in this chapter to question whether projects can in fact do justice to the particularity of other persons as they enter our moral lives. I would like to note in passing that the notion, which Williams seems to accept, that we might properly demand a reason to go on, is not itself entirely morally neutral or unobjectionable.

There is at least a possible objection to such an attitude, which comes out in Roy Holland's paper on suicide in his collection *Against Empiricism*. Holland notes that one attitude towards life is that it is a gift. It is in this light that suicide has been interpreted by the church as ingratitude, as flinging back the world itself in the face of the creator. Holland quotes Chesterton's remark: "The man who kills a man kills a man. The man who kills himself kills all men; as far as he is concerned he wipes out the world." (Holland, p. 154, taken from Chesterton: *Orthodoxy: the flag of the world*). Whilst this remark is made in defence of a religious ethic, one needn't hold a Roman Catholic cosmology to understand Chesterton's discomfort with the notion of committing suicide in the spirit of rejecting and finishing with the world.

Of course most would struggle to see any suicide in this way, and certainly as Holland notes the church has been quite wrong to see *all* suicides as being in this vein. To give us a sense of what he has in mind Holland has the true illustration of Peter Shanning, who spent five years gathering a band of followers who he convinced that the world would end on July 23rd, 1887, at 3 pm. A weekly paper reported: "Three o'clock came - and went. It wasn't the end of the world. But it was the end of Shanning. After his followers had left in bewilderment, he shot himself dead." (Holland p. 154)

This might be seen as a rejection of the world, and it can be seen that from the perspective of a certain tone of Christian humility there is something which can count against it. Williams does not distinguish between despair and the decision that it is "unreasonable" to go on under certain circumstances. But it seems to me that this "unreasonable" is capable of a variety of interpretations, and that it is already to take up a certain moral position, against an ethic such as Christianity where humility is a central virtue, to insist that carrying on with one's life is something one can demand a good reason to do.

^{vi} Williams's attack on 'morality' comes here from the fact that in Gauguin's case, the success of his project will, he says, provide the basis for a justification of the act, whereas failure would leave no room for such a justification. And when Gauguin judges his life it is necessarily from the situation he finds himself in there and then.

Williams attacks ways in which Gauguin's decision might be evaluated independently of circumstance. He argues that life is not the pursuit of a single commodity, sought with the same zeal throughout. It follows from this that we cannot judge aspects of our life as if from no point within it, nor are our decisions properly judged as instances of a decision policy which will best lead to the filling of that life with such goods, regardless of what that particular decision leads to. Life, Williams asserts, is lived "from here", and reviewed "from there", and the judgment which falls upon a decision has everything to do with what it lead to. A Rawlsian "plan for life", which would be more amenable to a Kantian ethics with its general commitment to rationality but no primary regard for particular personal projects, is ruled out. Furthermore, no rules pertaining to the original, uncertain situation seem adequate as a means of evaluation.

Williams admits that in reflecting on many decisions we will, of course, judge them from the stand-point of an ongoing life in which such decisions will be made again, and the quality of the decision process will often in fact be as closely scrutinised as the outcome. But where one's ongoing life enters a radically new phase because of a decision, where a sense of who it is making future choices is itself conditioned by how that first choice came out, such procedural questions seem inapplicable. The outcome, in terms of the way in which it shaped your life, is Williams says, necessarily the dominant consideration in retrospective evaluation.

^{vii} There is a further corollary to this. Gauguin's family have a quite different set of aims and ambitions. The ground projects of their lives need not be the same as either Gauguin's or ours. Therefore to show that Gauguin has, if successful, a justification of his acts does not at all mean that his family should accept his success as justifying his behaviour *to them*. The abstracted Kantian perspective might suggest that what

justifies behaviour to one must justify it to all, but in asserting the centrality of projects to our lives, Williams is attacking this claim.

^{viii} I am not alone in finding Gauguin disquieting. See for instance Phillips, pp. 192-202, for a different, and somewhat more hostile, objection to Williams's Gauguin.

^{ix} See especially Chapter 6, Section 3.2, and Chapter 7, Section 2.2.

^x See in particular Chapter 10, Section 2.

^{xi} Raimond Gaita criticises Williams's implicit claim that he has fully identified the source and place of the conviction that others are irreplaceable in morality. He stresses that we must attend to the attitude of the first person to the third, and not merely the bare fact that the other has an individual character, with particular projects and desires.

Whilst I have found this discussion helpful, it is different to my account in important respects. Gaita argues that receiving another as an irreplaceable individual goes beyond accepting that that person has projects and desires which combine together to form an individual character, and he argues that in highlighting this element of our attention to others, Williams has not yet fully brought out the rôle of a response to another as irreplaceable in human life. Rather, Gaita says, we should attend to the way in which others' projects are *received* by us, and are, or are not taken seriously.

Rather than pursue this line, I have wanted here to emphasise the difficulty of stressing purpose and character as determining the form of perception or response which one person takes towards another. The two critiques need not, I think, be exclusive of each other (see Gaita, pp. 153-155).

^{xii} Section 2.2.

Chapter 5

Recapitulation and Prospect: Gauthier, Fried, Williams & Stocks

1. Introductory Remarks

I said at the start of this thesis that I wanted to explore the reasons why the ways in which others are present to us as individuals is not only given little attention in moral philosophy, but even seems to be excluded by the very form of much modern moral philosophy. We could rephrase this to say that I wanted to see the place which others have in the life of a good man, as that life is presented in modern moral philosophy, and that I was confused as to why such philosophy seemed to ignore the thought that that place might at least in part be as an object of an individual and loving *attention*.

In the course of this investigation I have needed to widen my enquiry, and to look at the three-fold relation of the self, the subject matter of morality, and the other, as they enter into the accounts of Gauthier, Fried and Williams. I believe that this has indeed revealed the reason why there is no adequate place for an account of others as the fitting end of our attention within these three diverse accounts. I have found that all three have in some way made choice and action the subject matter of ethics, and that this delineation is shaped by the account they gave of the moral self. The accounts of moral goodness examined so far excluded the attention of the good man to others as individuals from holding a central place within their moral philosophy, by making such matters of perception and attention subservient to matters of choice and action. When we examine the forms of perception which would be needed to subserve a morality of choice and action, we are confronted with accounts which involve seeing others as only instances of a type,

or which require of us a form of attention which is wholly focussed upon the rôle others may play in furthering our projects.

This chapter is devoted to gaining a clearer overview of the material discussed so far and relating it to the project which remains, of fashioning an alternative account. The first part of this process will be to review the accounts of the self, the area of ethical reflection and the place of the other as they feature in Gauthier, Fried and Williams. Secondly, I should like to look at the different ways in which the elements of this tri-partite construction are related in the different writers, and this will constitute a further, brief layer of analysis of the writers under discussion. This further analysis shall enable the reader to see the *sort* of relation between these three elements of ethical theory I wish to propose in the second part of the thesis. This done, I shall proceed to indicate the manner in which an alternative account will be constructed, and, as I have often said, this will involve an initial concentration upon the last part of the relation - the place of others in a good life. This preview of the account I shall develop in Part II takes the form of a brief exploration of Stocks' work on affection as being a mode of attention to others as individuals.

2. Recapitulation: Gauthier, Fried and Williams on Self, Morality and Other.

I want first, then, by way of a review of the argument so far, to recall the ways in which the self, the area of ethical reflection and the place of the other enter into the work of Gauthier, Fried and Williams.

In Gauthier's work, we can now recognise the self as entirely purposive, where the purpose of the individual is always the maximisation of utility. This conception of the self is connected to an account of the subject matter of moral reflection by the economist's assertion that a maximising individual will have reason to contract away some of his freedom in order to share in the benefits

of co-operation. The subject matter of ethics then becomes concentrated upon those actions where we constrain our self-interest according to the terms of a tacit contract.

Action within a contractual context is, then, the chief subject of ethical reflection for Gauthier, and attention to others, or our vision of others, seems to have no place within an account of the good man. Of course, some understanding of others is needed to follow the terms of the contract, and so an account of what attention to others is required, in a subservient rôle, is nevertheless implied by Gauthier's moral philosophy. That attention to others which is required to subserve moral action is an awareness of those general features of the other and their claims upon you as they fall under the contract. Aspects of the other's life which fall outside of the contract are an irrelevance from the perspective of contractarian morality as Gauthier conceives of it.

In Fried the self was seen as a choosing individual who was related to the world through his knowledge and his intentional action. The precise relation of these elements, knowledge, intention and choice, was explored in Chapter 3, but we should recall that the individual's grasp of the world was rational and was uninterpreted by his desires and affections. The good man determined how the world stood aside from his feelings about it, and then acted rationally on the basis of that knowledge. Along with this picture of the self comes an account of the subject matter of morality, and to protect the choosing self Fried is careful to make this area far more tightly constrained than the consequentialist would have it.

The account of the subject matter of ethics which comes along with this account of the self and its relationships to the world is of a realm of choice and not of perception or attention. Furthermore, the area of moral reflection is divided into two by Fried. Firstly, and central to morality, is right and wrong, an account of certain types of categorically prohibited intentional actions. On this account, our inexorable duty consists in avoiding certain intentions, that is certain purposive

actions, specifically those which use others as a means to an end. In so far as right and wrong dictate the nature of our relations to others, we were to see others objectively, with a vision which initially incorporated nothing of our feelings for them, and the relationship between individuals was established by an act of choice. Insofar as the theory of right and wrong describes our actions it is sufficient to see others as instances of a type, and to affirm that relation in our choices.

Secondly, a more personal attachment is made room for in Fried, but this lies outside the realm of our central moral duties, and qualifies as a discretionary act of self-realisation, as a freely adopted *rôle*.

It is important to note that the conception of self, the demarcation of the domain of moral reflection, and the required vision of others, fit together and are consistent with each other in each case. This consistency is the source of the frustration and difficulty I expressed in the introduction. Disagreeing with Gauthier and Fried is not a simple matter of pointing to a mistaken conclusion. Rather one must grapple with the entire tri-partite conception of the other, the self, and the account of what morality *is*.

Williams shows a similar consistency of inter-relation between his conception of the self, of the area which morality should examine, and of the treatment of and attention to others which ethics demands. Whereas Fried pictured the self as a rational chooser, respecting first and foremost what is impartially right regardless of his wishes, and as such formulated a morality of right and wrong which is intended to address every rational creature in the same way, Williams is keen to insist that the self enters into ethics first and foremost as a particular *character* (see Williams (2) p. 5 and *passim*, and (3), *passim*). In arguing that individual character cannot be conceived as a peripheral part of the self, Williams gives special weight to the way in which particular purposive

projects are a component of character (see Williams (2) p. 5). Kantian demands could be presented to abstract points of choice, but we are not such things; we are particular-beings-with-plans.

The delineation of the area of moral reflection is thus seen in Williams to be wider than Kantians allow; or rather, there is no "boundary" inserted, no difference of kind insisted upon, between a narrower morality of impartial justice, and the concerns which fill the rest of our lives. Reflection upon the rôle of projects in our going on at all in life, and reflection upon how we must review life-changing decisions, convinces Williams that ethical reflection must take in all our most deeply cherished and meaningful purposes in life, and cannot abstract from our actual preferences and projects as they feature in the ongoing story of our lives (see Williams (3), p. 35).

I spent the latter part of the last chapter trying to bring out how this picture of the self and of the subject matter of ethics affects what others can be to us. Others cannot hold, it seems, a categorical standing: our attention to them is always relative to our plans and projects and preferences. This is to say that the elements of another which we are to attend to may be determined by the project in hand, and in this way purpose licences an abstraction from attention to another as an individual, such that the attention required by purpose may amount to no more than assessing their rôle in attaining one's end. This analysis sat somewhat uncomfortably with the story of a choice between a vocation and one's family which Williams used to illustrate it, but I argued that this simply showed the limitations of purpose as a means of properly describing and then pronouncing on the justification of Gauguin's actions.

3. The Relation of Action, Self and Other in Ethics

3.1 Introductory Remarks.

We have examined what I have termed a three-fold relation between the nature of the self, the delineated subject matter of ethics, and the view or vision of the other, and I have said that in each writer discussed, each of these conceptions, however they are presented, has played a part in shaping each of the other two conceptions.

What I now want to briefly note is that the *type* of relation between the self, the subject matter of moral reflection, and the other is not the same in each writer. I want to reflect on the relationship between moral action, self and other in each writer, and to discern a difference in the sorts of relations drawn by Williams and Gauthier on the one hand, and by Fried on the other.

We might put this matter differently. I have consistently noted that all three writers identify choice and action as the subject matter of ethical reflection, and yet I want to suggest here that just as significant as the identification of the subject matter of ethics is the *way* in which moral action as the subject matter of ethics is *connected* with the place of the other and the nature of the self. In doing so, I shall hope to say more about the possible relationship between attention and action, and the place of action within a re-worked ethics of the kind I shall try to go on to develop.

3.2 Williams and Gauthier: the Contingency of Purpose.

We saw in the last chapter that Williams, against the Kantian, wished to place the particular *purposes* of the agent at the centre of ethics. What is characteristic of the purposive attitude is that it focuses attention upon a certain goal, and then all else becomes relevant simply as it serves that goal. There is then a contingent relation between most of the details of the act and the agent themselves. What I mean is that the act expressed a desire for a certain object, and the precise means taken to that act is simply down to the contingent matter of what will serve that end. The effort spent on fulfilling a purpose is not self-justifying, except that it happens to propel the agent towards his goal, and neither does it express the agent's character or relations, except that it serves his desires (see Stocks (4), p. 17 and *passim*).

It is Stocks' contention that this is a *partial* view of action, and that more is revealed in action, so to speak, by art and by morality. To continue using the vocabulary I have adopted in this thesis, we might say that Stocks feels this is a *narrow* delimitation of the area of moral reflection. Indeed, I would wish to say that this view of action is too narrow because it excludes precisely that relation between the act as subject of evaluation and the other terms of our three-fold relation, the self and the view of others, but this is to anticipate.

Where then might we achieve a fuller view of our actions and of the circumstances and implications of our actions? Stocks' first suggestion is that we gain a more *complete* view of our purposes in art.

Stocks is at pains to note that art does not provide any *new* purpose. Art will take whatever purposes we have, and will transfigure them. These purposes might well be the representation of what we see, but then it might as easily be the riding of a bicycle. What is essential to art, says

Stocks, is not that art brings along a new purpose, but rather that it forces attention to the manner in which we pursue the purposes which we have. If we are riding a bicycle it is probably simply to get from A to B, and yet I may feel an affection for the machine, and delight in the expertness with which I manage it (see Stocks (4), pp. 19-20).

Art then attends to the *details* of our acts, and in doing so it supervenes upon purpose to bring these details, which to the wholly purposive mind are merely surds or remainders, into consideration:

Art endows the despised means, the tools of purpose, with a significance of their own. It necessarily refuses to recognise any irrelevancy whatever; it insists that anything which enters into the process at any stage must justify itself completely on every side of its being. Every scrap of material must be completely used up. This is, of course, an ideal which is not actually anywhere fully achieved, because nothing is perfect and art cannot fully satisfy its own demands; but one can see the tendency powerfully at work as art enters into and dominates the purposes of men. Thus for the artist there are no synonyms. The poet asks the reader to concede, not just that this word or phrase will do, but that it alone will do. The words have ceased to be the mere slaves of purpose. They remain its servants, but make good their right, as words, to consideration. (Stocks (4), p. 24)

Art is not so much the addition of new purpose, nor is it necessarily the *correction* of purpose. Rather art gives us a *fuller view* of the purposive act, and makes the artist identify with the act as a whole as a form of self-expression.

We might say that the domain of artistic reflection and vision is wider and more detailed than the domain of simple purposive calculation. And Stocks claims that the area of moral reflection is wider still, encompassing the attention to the details of the act, including the precise means, and encompassing motive in addition.

Morality, like art, enters into action as an additional principle of discrimination; it makes distinctions of value which without it would not be made. But we have already said that it does not override or supersede the discriminations effected by purpose. If this is right then it follows inevitably that the morality, like art, must operate by giving significance to detail which without it is insignificant, by setting differential value on features which to purpose were indifferent or of equal value. (Stocks (4), p. 27)

Again, morality is not adding new purposes, but attending to a greater range of implications and meanings within the purposive act. "What morality approves or rejects, in part or as a whole, is a concrete purposing, not in general or in respect merely of its direction, but as worked out in its full detail and in every detail of it." (Stocks (3), p. 94)

What are the elements of the purposive act which morality most notably illuminates and which purpose ignores? That is to say, what should we take to be the extent to which the area of moral reflection extends beyond the limits of the purposive view? Stocks suggests that:

The whole history of ethics suggests that any sound analysis of moral judgments will find at work in them not merely a conception of the dignity of human nature, of its proper organisation and deportment, as something to be maintained by the agent in all his actions, but also of the relation of man to man in society and in a spiritual kingdom, perhaps, to which religion alone gives entry. (Stocks (3), pp. 94-5)

4. The Criticism of Gauthier, Fried and Williams Restated

4.1 A Purposive View of Action: Williams and Gauthier.

My criticisms of Gauthier, Fried and Williams have so far been that they do not make room for the attention of the good man to others, and I have related this to their assertion that choice and action rather than vision or attention are the subject matter of their ethics. I now want to suggest that what is problematic in Williams is not so much the bare fact that choices and action are central to moral reflection, but the *way* in which action is represented. Williams's conception of the subject of moral reflection is that it is not simply action, but *purposive* action, and choices or judgments made in the light of our purposes. But purpose sees only a *contingent* relation between such action and the other, that is, action as purposefully conceived *does not embody a vision of others*. This is in effect a restatement of my criticisms of the last chapter.

What may be more difficult still for Williams is the fact that the act when seen purely as a purposive instrument reveals no conception of "the dignity, organisation and deportment of the self". Williams has emphasised the "set of desires concerns or, as I shall often call them, projects which help to constitute a *character*" (Williams (2), p. 5), and yet it is Stocks' contention that *character is not revealed by the purposive account of action*.

Williams sees a man's desires and projects as being a central part of his character, and in tracing the effect of our projects on our ethical decisions, he takes himself to be showing the rôle of character in ethics. Character is seen in ethical action because elements of character determine the ends of that action. However, what this approach misses is the possibility that character might be seen less in the *ends* of the act and more in the *manner* in which it is pursued. That is, character is revealed in just those elements of the act - the precise manner of its performance - which purpose ignores and sets aside.

We can return again to Stocks' analogies with art to see the limitations of Williams's view. The gifts and the artistry of the artist are seen not in the mere fact that he pursues the purpose of representation, but in the way his art supervenes upon that purpose. His artistry is expressed in the way in which he cares for the precise manner in which he represents the world, in the fact that only this way will do, and the difference between the poet and the plain man lies not in the fact that only one of them is driven to express his feelings, but in the manner in which he expresses them. Similarly the difference of character between the good man and the bad is not seen simply by seeing *which* purposes issues from his character, but is more properly *expressed in the manner* in which he pursues those purposes. Stocks says: "The act and the character shown in it are coexistents, not antecedent and consequent; and means and end, cause and effect are equally inappropriate to their relation." (Stocks (5), p. 69)

With regard to Williams then, my criticism is not simply that he has defined the subject matter of ethics as choices and actions, rather than attention to others. Rather it is that he has given a wholly purposive account of that action which is the centre of his ethics, and that his interpretation renders the relation between action and others and between action and the self a contingent one. Action in Williams does not in itself bear witness to the relation between individuals, does not embody the agent's perception of others and his relation to them. Rather, others can be removed from a justificatory account of an action if they are not the desired end of that action, or if they are not required as means to that end. Action does not, in Williams, appear to be shaped in its detail by an awareness of the presence and standing of others. Furthermore the self, the character of the self, is not reflected in the details of the act; the agent does not shape each aspect of the means to ensure that it is a fit expression of that character. Character is seen as the starting point of an action, and perhaps the construction of a character might be its goal, but the details of the act bear no witness to the calibre of the person who shapes them.

The same is the case with Gauthier. Gauthier's individual acts in order to maximise his utility. This will most likely lead to a contract, against which his actions will be judged. There is no room in Gauthier for actions to reflect an individual character, nor is the agent's account of his relation to others any part of the evaluation of the act. Prior to a moral contract, action is purely purposive, and can only be evaluated as it serves the intended aims of the agent. Where we are governed by Gauthier's 'Morals by Agreement', the act is evaluated against a contract, and yet this is not a contract which embodies and codifies right relations between individuals, but simply a contract which contingently serves their ends.

4.2 Self, Other and Action in Fried.

In Fried the presentation of the relation between self, action and other is quite different. Fried's account of ethics is precisely that actions are evaluated as they embody relations between the agent and the other. This, for instance, is his account of the wrong of harm: "direct harm describes a wrongful relation between two particular persons." (Fried, p. 41) To this extent there is a closer and more revealing account of the relation between the subject matter of Fried's ethics, intentional action, and the other terms of the three-fold relation, the self and the other.

Whilst I consider this to be a very significant strength of Fried's account, this does of course stop short of my wishing to endorse every detail of it. Action in Fried reflects and embodies the nature of the self and an account of the relations between that self and the other. This self and the possible relations to others are nevertheless given a particular interpretation within Fried, as we have already seen. In so far as our acts are analysed in terms of right and wrong we relate to others as individual instances of a type (rational creatures) to a type (rational creatures), and even outside right and wrong, relations between individuals are represented as *choices*; relations are willed as part of a process of individual self-development, rather than perceived and accepted. The place of others within our lives is again constrained by Fried, for others are placed in ethics as the object of our *choices*, rather than the ends of individual *attention*.

The restatement of my criticism of Gauthier, Fried and Williams would then be as follows. It remains the case that none of them give an account of the place of others within ethics as being that of an end of attention. Gauthier and Williams exclude the possibility of such an account by making central to ethics an action which may be related to contracts or to projects, but which says nothing of others as individuals. Fried does give a central place to an action which embodies an account of others, but this is an account of others as rational creatures, or as objects of choice.

My aim in the second part of this thesis is to present an account of others as the fit end of a loving attention, and then to construct a theory of ethics, be it of contemplation or action, which embodies an account of others as such.

4.3. The Relation Between Perception and Action in Ethics: Attention to Others.

This leads us to a re-evaluation of the relations between what I have been calling perception and action in ethics. In my critiques of Gauthier, Fried and Williams I made constant note of the way in which perception, or a developing knowledge of others, was excluded from their philosophy, and action and choice was made central. No serious account of ethics could argue that we simply reverse this procedure, and place perception and knowledge at the centre of ethics to the exclusion of all consideration of action. Rather my wish is to argue that coming to know others as individuals as such is important in itself, and where action is important too, we must have a full account of the perception of others which is *embodied in* that action, and included with this is an account of the relation of others to the self.

Stocks says:

It is after all a plain fact that any process carried out by human muscles under the direction of human intelligence is a partial expression of the nature of the agent and of the relation in which he conceives himself to stand to other persons and to the rest of the world in which he lives. (Stocks (4), p. 31)

Sometimes the relationship which an action embodies is indeed by far the most striking thing about it. We might take an example from Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*:

Just beyond the threshold of the drawing-room she stopped short, the reason being that she had received an impression. The impression had, in strictness, nothing unprecedented; but she felt it as something new, and the soundlessness of her step gave her time to take in the scene before she interrupted it. Madame Merle sat there in her bonnet, and Gilbert Osmond was talking to her; for a minute they were unaware that she had come in. Isabel had often seen that before, certainly; but what she had not seen, or at least not noticed - was that their

dialogue had for a moment converted itself into a sort of familiar silence, from which she instantly perceived that her entrance would startle them. Madame Merle was standing on the rug, a little way from the fire; Osmond was in a deep chair, leaning back and looking at her. Her head was erect, as usual, but her eyes weren't bent upon his. What struck Isabel first was that he was sitting whilst Madame Merle stood; there was an anomaly in this that arrested her. Then she perceived that they had arrived at a desultory pause in their exchange of ideas, and were musing, face to face, with the freedom of old friends who sometimes exchange ideas without uttering them. There was nothing shocking in this; they were old friends in fact. But the thing made an image, lasting only a moment, like a sudden flicker of light. Their relative position, their absorbed mutual gaze, struck her as something detected. But it was all over by the time she had fairly seen it. (James, p. 376)

What the above quotation portrays is a scene which is described purely in terms of action or behaviour, but not with an eye to its purpose, for there is very little purpose to be seen here, but for the way in which it embodies and displays a perception of the other and of the relationship between the two. One might say that the scene is an encounterⁱ, and it is itself a peculiarly personal response to the reality of another. The action is only understood within the context of an ongoing relationship, of course, and it is this which leads to Isabel's discovery, for knowing much of Osmond and Madame Merle's history, she reads off it at once the intimacy of their former relationship.

It is to avoid a sharp distinction between action and the perception of others' character and weal and woe that I shall more commonly talk of *attention* to others than of perception in trying to construct my own account of the relationships between self and other in Part II.

5. The Aims of Part II Restated

I said at the beginning of this chapter that it is my aim in this thesis to reconsider the place of others in the life of a good man. In particular I was at pains to see whether others could not be seen to play an important rôle within ethics as an end of our attention and as a perceived presence. I have argued all along that the reason why others as objects of attention play such a peripheral rôle in much modern moral philosophy is to do with a larger, three-part relation

between the conception of the self, the area of moral reflection and the other within ethics, and the section above has been devoted to looking at the two different types of relation which have been drawn between these three elements in the philosophers under examination.

We can now see more clearly what a response will entail. It will involve firstly an account of others as fitting into our life as an end of a just attention, which in marked contrast to the accounts looked at above will be attention to an individual as an individual. This will take up the majority of the second part of the thesis. I shall then need to consider how this impacts upon the other two terms in the tri-partite relation of self, area of moral reflection and other. The above sections should begin to clarify the sort of relation which I will draw between these three elements of moral theory, and in particular how the place which I want to give others will shape the subject matter of a re-worked ethics. I shall want to argue that the subject matter of ethics may be both the good man's vision and also his action, and that to appraise these *is to see that they give proper place to others as an end of our just attention*. Finally I shall ask whether an account of the attention we give others should force us to reconsider the accounts of the nature of the self from which Gauthier, Fried and Williams began.

What I wish to do now is to give a brief outline of the form which an account of the place of others in the life of a good man might take. It draws from Stocks' account of affection, which is an account of the relation of the self to another as an end of attention as an individual. This account will mark the conception of individual relations which will form the basis of the next part of the thesis, and which will there be developed at length.

6. Stocks on Desire and Affection

One form of our engagement with others, beyond the way in which they fall under some legal or quasi-legal obligation, and aside from the use they may be to us in furthering our ends, is that we may have some form of emotional attachment or loving response to them. Stocks divides these attachments into two rough categories, namely desire and affection.

Stocks' account of desire and affection continues his analysis of our perception of objects and events according to their individuality, or according to their general qualities. What Stocks terms desire is that familiar form of want which attaches to things for their general qualities. When we desire something, what we desire is of course an individual, but it is desired as a fine example of its class. We desire a Volkswagen Golf, and if we cannot have the one in the showroom, then another, delivered just as quickly and of equal quality, will do just as well.

Discrimination between one instance and another is at most a matter of degree: this is more eatable or drinkable than that. The impulse at once fastens, without remorse or regret, on that which is placed higher on the scale. Desire is essentially transferable or vagrant as between individuals of the appropriate kind, and its valuations are necessarily relative. (Stocks (2), p. 40)

An account of those things which we desire and the relative strength of those desires will be quite adequate to inform our purposes. In contrast to this stands affection, the contemplation of and attention to the irreplaceable individual as such:

Thought, which is the creature of human interest, responds to affection as it responded to desire. In obedience to desire...it abstracts and generalises. In response to affection thought dwells on each observed particular, grouping and uniting them, not by classification, as they exemplify certain types, but by the principle of individuality, so that they are seen to build up a relatively independent and self-contained system, which retains in some sense a single character through all its successive phases. Nothing is omitted or discounted, but some features are felt as more characteristic than others; as in all systems there is subordination, which gives ample opportunity for doubts and hesitations, as for differences of interpretation. If the observer will think individually at all, he must needs frame his own hypothesis, form his own view of the character observed; and this will be done by forcing a certain emphasis and rhythm upon the various appearances....A man's growing knowledge of his friend or of

his country does not proceed by revolutionary discoveries - such surprises as occur are apt to seem much less surprising in retrospect - but cumulatively, by constant watchfulness and an unending readiness to learn more. It is an account which in the nature of the case must never be considered closed, and there can be no finality in judgment. Progress is marked only by gradually increasing in understanding, by greater confidence in interpretation and prediction; but doubt is never quite excluded, and an absolute 'knowledge' is not even conceivable. (Stocks (2), pp. 44-5)

Affection, then, is an attention to individuals as such. As illustrations of affection as a form of attention, Stocks notes that affection is essential to biography, and cites Boswell's Johnson as possibly the finest of all biographies, with an attention to the detail of a character born out of affection. Science, by contrast, has no room for affection, being concerned with classes and abstractions (see Stocks (2), p. 49). He continues:

In morality the importance of affection will probably be readily conceded. It will be agreed that the right attitude to other persons within the scope of one's action is to treat them as persons, existing in their own right, rather than as instruments of desire or as particular instances of a class (child, shopkeeper, servant, etc.). That is the sense of Kant's injunction to treat persons as ends in themselves, not merely as means. It will also be agreed that affection creates this attitude to persons. (Stocks (2), p. 51)

The above forms a quite different account of the attention of one person to another than was found in Gauthier, Williams and even Fried, for all that an account of respect for persons is at the heart of his theory. My procedure in the next part of the thesis will be to develop this account, and to identify the relationships in which such an attention is found. I shall need to construct a new account of what morality consists in, and to argue that this account gives a loving attention to others its proper place within human life.

The study of the forms which love takes, and of how it enters into human perception and action, has a long and venerable history. I wish to turn in the next chapter to two accounts of the forms of love and the relationships between them, before fashioning my own outline of what an account of ethics based around love should involve.

ⁱ This is the term which Peter Winch uses in a similar account of an example from Elizabeth Bowen's *Death of the Heart*, in Winch (3), p. 143.

Part II

Chapter 6

Eros, Agape and Philia: The Theological Study of the Loves

1. Introductory Remarks

1.1 An Outline of Part II.

The first part of this thesis was devoted to looking at the place others may have in the good man's life as described by three contemporary moral philosophers. I argued that not only did others not feature as ends of our attention within their moral philosophies, but that they were prevented from doing so by the construction of these ethical theories, which stressed choice and actions in a way which failed to embody the agent's vision of others as individuals.

In contrast to this approach, I want in this second part of the thesis to argue for an account of ethics which is illuminated by an account of others as an end of our attention, and I have already suggested in the last chapter that love is the form of attention which attends to others for their own sake, and as individuals.

This procedure will have two discrete elements. Firstly I wish to locate forms of loving attention to others as individuals within human life, and to explore their nature. I shall explore various accounts of the way in which individuals contemplate and attend to each other within loving relations, concentrating upon friendship and compassion. Secondly, I wish to explore the relationships between these particular and often highly personal loves, and our wider relations with and moral duties towards others more generally.

I want to repeat here that this second discussion will not take the form of arguing that the more contemplative relations I describe are more important than duties of fairness or impartiality, *nor* do I wish to say that the balance between helping those we love and being decent to each and every man should swing towards the personal and the private. I am not intending to cut into the debate at that level, although such discussions are important. Rather I am looking to particular loving, contemplative relations between individual – relations in which others are seen justly as centres of importance in and of themselves – in order to inform and illuminate (not push back or replace) more discursive accounts of moral duty and action. An awareness of the reality and the individuality of another as found in a personal relationship or a moment of compassion may change the way we can think of and act towards others more generally, whether we feel affection for them or not. So, in any case, I shall argue.

As a precursor to this process, I shall look at two theological presentations of what we might term the three loves, that is Eros, Philia and Agape. The purpose of this review will not be simply to pay deference to the history of our topic, but to try to use past study of the loves to gain some clarity and understanding of the nature and the diversity of the loves as forms of attention.

I have said that my own method will be to look, first, at the view of the other which is afforded to us in love, and then and only then consider how a picture of the other found in compassion and friendship conditions our wider relations and moral duties. However, the theological accounts I consider first provide not only an account of the nature of the various forms of love, but also an account of the relationships between personal and intimate loves and our duties to all. These two components come together in these accounts, and I shall argue that their descriptions and their unifying theory impinge upon each other in significant ways. Some elements of love that are either raised by these writers, or else raised in objection to them will be adopted and pursued in

my later argument. However, I shall argue *against* the method which these writers use to relate the loves together, and to show the significance of personal loves, such as friendship, to our wider duties. Indeed, it is my claim that it is their attempts to unite all the loves into a single system that lead the writers in question to distort, as I see it, the nature of the various kinds of love.

In Chapter 7 I shall, as stated, temporarily leave the discussion of the relationships between loves behind, and continue to focus upon the natures of different forms of love. Drawing upon some of the elements of love found in Chapter 6, but leaving others aside, I shall present a re-worked account of the loves, examined separately from each other, and in an ordinary, non-theological context. That is to say, where Chapter 6 is devoted to Eros, Philia and Agape or Caritas, Chapter 7 will discuss simply friendship and compassion.

As Chapter 7 develops, I shall discuss and clarify important aspects of friendship and compassion as I have described them: their open or ‘endless’ quality; what I shall call the ‘dynamic permeability’ of love; love’s uncondescending nature. I shall look at the ways in which those general aspects of the loves explored in Chapter 6 are incorporated into the examples of love I discuss, including the way in which not only the other, but also one’s self is enlarged and protected within friendship and compassion.

In Chapter 8 I shall return to the issue of the relationships between particular instances of friendship and compassion and wider moral duties. I shall begin with an attempt to interpret the way in which our attention to others in friendship and compassion conditions our understanding of what another human being might be to us. I shall argue that the idea of a human being is conditioned by love, and that this does not represent a return to seeing others as a kind, a response of which I was critical in the first part of the thesis, but that responding to another as an individual, as a proper, intelligible object of love is part of what it is to recognise another as a

human being. Furthermore, I shall look at the way in which this idea of others as individuals, as intelligible ends of our love, conditions our relations with others *outside of* the loves of friendship and compassion. It is in this way, which sharply contrasts with the methods of Aelred and D'Arcy, that I shall try to show how my discussion of love may change our interpretation of our wider moral acts.

In Chapter 9 I consider some examples of particular moral duties, understood in the light of my discussion of love. I shall look at what we may *never* do to others, even those with whom we have no friendship, and perhaps struggle to feel compassion for; I shall look at the light this understanding of others casts upon acts of non-obligatory, direct altruism; and I shall grapple with duties in which we *are* explicitly required to treat people as they fall under a type, that is duties of fairness, and situations in which justice requires us to be impartial. I shall, in considering justice, argue *both* that justice may encompass *more* than simple impartiality and fair dealing, and that when fairness and impartiality *are* what justice requires, its nature and its seriousness are still changed and deepened by the account of individual relations that I am giving.

As I have said earlier, throughout these examples I shall not be arguing that those virtues which involve attention to a single individual are more important or take precedence over duties of impartiality, or that duties of impartiality should be taken less seriously. Rather I shall argue that our whole understanding of a range of virtues and vices is changed by the understanding of others that I have outlined in the thesis up to Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 also bears on the question, raised in Part I of this thesis, as to what the proper subject matter of ethics might be. The chapter is intended as a worked example of an ethics in which the subject matter is actions, thoughts and gestures which embody proper relations between individuals.

Finally, in Chapter 10 I shall draw together the themes of the thesis, and shall expand upon the way in which the self, as well as others, is enlarged and retains its integrity within love.

1.2 An Outline of Chapter 6.

As I said above, my aim in this chapter is to examine two contrasting theological interpretations of love. I have argued briefly in the last chapter that love is a mode of attention to others for their own sake, and as individuals, and yet many different passions can be loosely termed love, as is illustrated by Stocks' distinction between desire and affection. In looking at two theological approaches to the varieties of love, we shall usefully adopt a three-fold classification of love as Eros, Philia and Agape, and can draw upon generations of study into their nature.

Perhaps we should define the terms Eros, Philia and Agape straight away. However, these definitions must be provisional and tentative, for, as we shall see, different writers have interpreted them in different ways, and found them to be present in different areas of human life. Nevertheless we need a place to start.

Eros is a form of desire. It is a passionate longing for something when its object is absent, and is commonly supposed to be so passionately fixed upon its object that it is careless of the good of the self. (In the more extreme accounts of Eros this carelessness of the self is positively celebrated: the lover desires nothing but communion with their object, and aims for complete absorption into itⁱ.) It is commonly, but not exclusively, associated with romantic and sexual love.ⁱⁱ

Philia is associated with friendship, be that a friendship between men, or between Man and God. I shall use the terms Philia and friendship interchangeably.

Finally, the theological concept of Agape can be taken as the love which man shows to each and every man. It is a universal love, it is offered to all, and is offered regardless of the merits of the other, regardless of whether one finds the other pleasing or desirable. It is closely related to the love of Caritas, and indeed the two terms are often used interchangeably, as they will be in this chapter. Some writers have used the term Agape to cover also man's love for God. The complications of this I shall explore, in part, below.

The accounts of the three loves of Eros, Agape and Philia which I shall study are that of Aelred of Rievaulx in his *De Spirituali Amicitia*, and that of M.C.D'Arcy, in his work *The Mind and Heart of Love*. This will not be a thorough historical study of the theology of the three loves. Rather I want to clarify these conceptions of love, the better to use them and understand them in the rest of the thesis.

I should repeat here what I suggested in Section 1. All of the theological writers who I explore below have both an account of the different *forms* of love, and an account of the *relationships* between them. Put together, this yields a complete account of the loves, including a theory of the relevance of intimate, personal loves to wider relations and duties to all men. Such an account of the nature of personal loves and their relevance to our wider (moral) relationships with all persons is indeed what I am trying to fashion in this thesis. However, I shall take the aims of description and of working out relationships separately as far as is possible. This is because I shall, in fact want to accept some of the elements of love as described by Aelred and D'Arcy whilst rejecting the method by which these elements are connected.

There is admittedly something slightly artificial about this division, because there are places in which the description of the loves which we find in Aelred and D'Arcy seem to be affected and moulded by the perceived relationships between them. I shall make it quite clear where I believe this to be happening. Nevertheless, I wish to keep this distinction between analyzing the elements of the loves and relating them together clearly in view. My chief purpose in this chapter is limited to trying to achieve a clearer understanding of the nature of Eros, Philia and Agape in order to draw upon such accounts of love later in the thesis. My secondary purpose is to observe the way in which the character of one love bears upon wider relations in their work. I want to examine their accounts of how personal relations, particularly friendship, condition their conception of our duties to all men. Their method will be to argue that the loves are most clearly seen when they are seen as approximating to each other, and that duties to others are most clearly seen in the light of the most perfect attachment between men, which is a form of friendship. I shall conclude that the lines of relation proposed have in fact led both writers to distort their descriptions, and my own attempt to see the relevance of personal relationships to wider duties will consciously seek to avoid this error.

2. Aelred of Rievaulx: *De Spirituali Amicitia*

2.1 Why study Aelred?

Aelred of Rievaulx was a Cistercian monk, writing in the 12th Century. His work was popular when he wrote, but later lost this popularity as monastic culture discouraged the personal friendships which were central to his thought. Although there has been a modest revival of interest in his work since the 1960s, he remains a lesser known writer. To see why his work is, to my mind, still of interest and relevance to this thesis, we need to know a little about the nature of the interest which he himself took in our subject.

In the Prologue to *De Spirituali Amicitia*, Aelred tells us that his interest in the subject comes from the experiences of friendship he had as a boy, and that he “delighted in the pleasure of being with my friends more than anything else” (Aelred, Prologue, §1). However, his friendships were unstable, and he was often deceived by the mere semblance of friendship. He later shows that this instability is characteristic of Eros, or carnal friendship, which is moved by attachments based on desire and the mere appearance of good. He found a remedy to this, he tells us, in Cicero’s work *On Friendship*, or *De Amicitia*:

After some time I acquired Cicero’s famous book on friendship...and although this book did not allow me to see myself capable of the kind of friendship it described, I was still glad to have found a kind of principle for friendship, according to which I would be able to control my wandering loves and attachments. (Aelred, Prologue, §§ 2-3)

Aelred’s satisfaction with the work of Cicero was challenged however as he became more deeply involved in Monastic life, and as his religious faith became more and more central to his thought. The Monastic account of friendship (or *Philia*) was that whilst it was certainly more stable and less errant than Eros, it was still to be taken with great caution. Man’s duty was to love God above all else, and then to love his fellow men equally. The patently partial love of friendship seemed a dangerous rival to these duties, and was on this account considered an inferior form of affection. Aelred set out to fashion an account of friendship that could sit comfortably with religious duty and yet do justice to friendship as he experienced it.

This marks the first point of contact between Aelred’s discussion and the aims of this thesis, and the first reason why he makes an interesting and relevant focus of study. As we have seenⁱⁱⁱ, it is a concern of many moral philosophers that friendship is a partial distraction from our impartial moral duties. Aelred took as his task the work of showing that friendship could indeed be reconciled with his duties to God and to all other men.

Secondly, and most importantly, as mentioned above, Aelred, in tackling this problem, undertakes both to describe and analyse the loves, and to work out the relations between them. What he finally produces is an account of the different forms of love, and of the relevance of intimate, personal loves to our wider relations with every man. I hope to learn from the discussion of Aelred partly because the discussion will unpack different elements and conceptions of love, and some of the elements discussed can be usefully adopted and explored in Chapter 7 and beyond, when I construct my own account. However I also believe we can learn a great deal in *disagreeing* with Aelred, and particularly by seeing what I shall suggest is ultimately wrong with his account of the relevance of particular loves to our wider duties, and my own account of this relevance is built, in part, in contrast to the method he follows.

Finally, the notion of our relation with every man brings out another interesting element of Aelred's work and this is its position between two very influential epochs in the history of human reflection on love. Aelred's work is recognisably a descendant, through the influence of Cicero, of the accounts of friendship we find in many Ancient Greek writers. It shares with Aristotle the idea of friendship as a relationship between the virtuous, sharing together a noble life, and the characteristically Greek concern with the similarity of friends and with the benefits of friendship, both in the bestowing of it and in the receiving of it. Yet along side his concern with this form of friendship is a concern with the Christian notion of Agape or Caritas, of which the ancient Greeks had little or no notion.

In looking to an historical study in order to bring out some of the elements which love has been held to entail, Aelred makes an ideal study, for he brings out the contrasts and the possible relationships between two of the most influential and important accounts of love in the history of

ideas. Such a breadth of interest, whilst not unique, is valuable, and is in his work combined with an engaging and lucid style.

2.2 Aelred's Method.

Aelred begins with a number of affections and attachments that seem to pull in different directions. Eros seems to pull towards every semblance of good, and to offer itself too quickly to the service of its object. Philia, which is Aelred's special interest, is stable, but is an exclusive alliance with a friend. This stands in apparent tension with demands of Christian love, or Agape. By Christian love Aelred means *both* the Christian's love and good will for each and every man *and* the Christian's love of God Himself. For Aelred, both of these affections fall within Agape (or *Caritas*). It is not immediately clear that these two aspects of Agape are always consistent with each other: there certainly seems to be a tension between these loves and the exclusive, partial love of friendship.

Aelred is quick to disown Eros, and will not admit that to be pulled away from God by such a form of affection is permissible (See for instance Aelred §§39-41). However, he is not nearly so comfortable with the tension between Philia or friendship, and the demands of Agape. He sets out to show how Philia can be reconciled with the different forms of Agape, how in a well ordered life friendship will be commensurate with the love of all men and with the love of God above all else. More than that, he wants to show how a proper understanding of Philia is the key to understanding all the loves between men, and to understanding how love between men can be a part of the project of seeking God.

2.3 Aelred, Philia and Agape

At first, Aelred's account of the nature of friendship does not encourage hopes of reconciliation between moral and religious duty and the demands and pleasures of Philia. Aelred's account of friendship, itself heavily reliant upon Cicero, brings with it a strong emphasis upon similarity in characteristics and in aims between friends, and it stresses the *exclusive* nature of friendship, the care with which we should choose our friends, and the extreme folly and vice of befriending those of suspect character and divergent aims.

"Friendship", says Aelred "is agreement on both human and divine affairs, combined with good will and mutual esteem." (Aelred, Book I, §11; quoting Cicero, p. 20.) Aelred repeatedly insists upon this uniformity of views and opinions, stating that perfect friendship requires quite perfect agreement^{iv}, and he goes on to recommend a rigorous testing process. (See, for instance, Aelred Book III, §§6, 8, and, especially, Book III, §§61-76).

Such a definition of friendship, drawn from Cicero, can be easily adapted to make Philia compatible with that aspect of Agape which concerns man's love of God, for in loving only those who share our ends we shall never be asked to choose between our love of friend and love of God; rather our love of our friend will strengthen and confirm us in our religious vocation. "Friendship", Aelred tells us, "is a path that leads very close to the perfection which consists of the enjoyment and the knowledge of God." (Aelred, Book 2, §14); and Aelred can paraphrase St. John in saying: "he who abides in friendship abides in God and God in him" (Aelred, Book 1, §70). Indeed, if we find that we are divided between the good and the ties of friendship then we can take it as a sure sign that our friendship is not a spiritual friendship at all.^v

However, whilst this renders friendship compatible with one aspect of religious virtue, and forbids the instability of Eros as he understands it, there remains the problem of the relationship between friendship and that aspect of Caritas or Agape that consists in the love of each and every man. Friendship is exclusive - Aelred makes this point firmly and often - and this forms a clear distinction between Agape and friendship, and sets the difficulties of finding any close relation between the two into sharp relief:

Should we therefore believe that there is no difference between friendship and good will? Indeed, there is a great difference between them. For we have it on divine authority that more people ought to be received with good will than with the embrace of friendship. For the law of grace^{vi} compels us to receive not only friends, but also enemies, with heartfelt esteem. However we say that only they are friends to whom we are not afraid to entrust our hearts and everything in them - to those, in turn, who are bound to us by the same law of faith and security. (Aelred, Book I, §§ 31-32)

It seems that there is little relation between friendship and the love of all which is contained within Caritas or Agape, besides the fact that they both involve good will, for there remains this natural exclusivity built into friendship, which is not present in our wider relations to all men. (See Aelred, Book 2, §19)

Aelred does *not*, however, wish to rest with an easy and still familiar distinction between the two loves, whereby Caritas is seen as a rational application of good will, inspired by duty, and Philia is accounted for as good will inspired by sheer emotional attachment and affection, nor will he place friendship as an inferior form of good will. Aelred has been at great pains to dispel the thought that friendship is driven by a blind affection which contrasts with reason and the pursuit of the good. Indeed, the whole point of the elaborate checking procedure and the rejoicing in a mutual love of the good is that, in making friendship commensurate with the love of God, human friendships can safely be driven by both affection and reason at the same time.

The result of this is to make *friendship* the perfect love, the very *model* of what love should be:

Love from reason alone is exemplified by the love we have for our enemies, which comes not from the spontaneous inclination of our minds to love our enemies, but from our obedience to a divine precept. Love comes from affection alone when a person attracts the affection of others to himself simply because of physical qualities which we associate with the body, for example beauty or strength or eloquence. Love comes simultaneously from reason and affection when someone ingratiate himself in the mind of another through the attractiveness of his character and the delight one takes in his honourable life; the mind urges us to love this person simply because of the merit of his virtue. Thus reason is joined to affection, so that love is pure because it comes from reason, and agreeable because it comes from affection. Which of these sources of love do you think is more suited for friendship? (Aelred, Book III, §§ 3-4)

Aelred's answer is that *Caritas* is a noble response to our duty, but is duty separated from intimacy, knowledge and passion, and as such a lesser form of affection. In friendship the heart and the mind are one and love is seen at its best. When a friendship dissolves, we must continue to love the former friend with *Caritas*, as we would every man, but we offer them less than we did, and something has been lost. (See, for instance, Aelred, Book 3, §§52-53)

Whilst the *quality* of *Philia*, combining heart and mind, is quite perfect, its application is very limited, for there are few we can attach ourselves to in friendship in the certain knowledge that they follow the same path as ourselves. For a picture of a love that combines the scope of *Agape* with the perfect quality of *Philia*, Aelred turns to a picture of the perfection of love in heaven, when all are unified in their love of God. There each man can be open with every other man, and "each one rejoices in the happiness of another as much as his own; and so the happiness of individuals is the happiness of all, and the universality of the happiness of all becomes the happiness of individuals." (See Aelred, Book 3, §§ 79-80)

This is love at its most perfect, at the point where the tension between the goals of perfect and intimate love and a love for all are entirely overcome. It is a love of heart, but is still fully contained within the goal of seeking God. Not even in the best of earthly friendships is this perfection achieved. Nevertheless, Aelred's is a work of systematic theology, and the vision is

put before us in the belief that we see our fallible, flawed loves more clearly in seeing what they tend towards, what they will finally become. As Caritas tends towards friendship so they both approximate towards the love of the saints in heaven, friendship being the greater of the two in being far closer in nature to its ideal.

For Aelred, then, Philia, spiritual friendship, is the ideal love, and Caritas or Agape - that good will which we extend to everyman - is the inferior love. It is part of the character Caritas that it anticipates and looks towards that perfect friendship.

Here we see in Aelred one way of marking out the relevance of close personal loves and friendships to our relationships to all men. The relevance is seen in the picture of a perfect love, within the pursuit of God. Whilst it is often assumed that the perfection of love between men is Agape, Aelred argues that it is in fact a form of friendship. The claim is that not only is our love of earthly friends seen more clearly in the light of this model of a friendship within the love of God, but so too is our duty to all men.

3. Evaluating Aelred

3.1 Evaluating Aelred's Account of Caritas or Agape.

Aelred has shown how a picture of a perfect love between men, placed wholly within the love of God, illuminates and changes our understanding of the affections and duties of daily life. We should evaluate this changed account of these loves, beginning with the good will towards men which is required by Caritas or Agape.

What must we make of Caritas, when it is seen in the light of the picture of Philia described above? Caritas is left as a more limited love that we offer those we cannot (on earth) give this fuller friendship to. Caritas is therefore an inferior love to the love on which it is modelled, but it is offered in the hope that one day all shall be united in the same aims, and that Caritas and Philia will be one and the same.

Let us accentuate what is positive and interesting here. Aelred has performed a neat reversal of a common approach to the relation of morality and friendship, an approach which seems to deny friendship its due. This common approach is to argue that friendship is a biased, emotional form of love, inferior to undertaking moral duties, perhaps even a half way house between complete egoism and a genuine and proper regard for other men. For Aelred, the familiar bond of friendship is the more perfect love, it is this that the Christian pilgrim should aspire to, and what we offer others in Agape is but a pale shadow of it.

Aelred's argument has an appeal, and much of that must lie in what we might term the exoneration of friendship. However, this exoneration is at a cost, as the reversal of conventional wisdom simply leaves Agape as being imperfect in itself. I said above that the conventional justification for friendship is that it is an *approximation* towards true virtue, an inferior form of impartial morality, and it might in time progress to such a state, might be transformed into its nobler cousin. Aelred's reversal of the relation between the two loves seems to leave us with the same problem with Agape: any one instance of Agape, of compassion for an individual who we either dislike or do not know, seems good in so far as it resembles the perfection of love in a universal friendship, but being different it is still defective in itself. This seems to me to be just as great a difficulty as the suggestion that what we do for family and friends is to be celebrated simply as it approximates to impartial duty or Caritas, Agape, compassion.

Must we, in being compassionate to another, bear the hope that such relations must one day be resolved into intimate friendships? Must we feel that such a gesture falls short of the perfection it aims at, a perfection that our estrangement on earth frustrates? This seems to be the message of Aelred. And yet consider the donors to Band Aid.^{vii} Their acts of compassion and concern for each and every man in need do not seem to be *imperfect*, to be an *approximation* to an undoubtedly better relation. They were not an approximation to *anything*, and were no less decent for that.

This is, I think, a difficulty with Aelred's account of Philia. It reveals a weakness with his method of relating personal loves and wider duties, for the method by which Aelred relates intimate and universal loves seems more the cause of a distorted description than of an illumination. An alternative account of compassion and friendship examined individually and aside from a unifying theological account must wait until Chapter 7, but my suggestion here is that Aelred's account of Agape or Christian love for others is somewhat distorted and depreciated by its relation to Philia or spiritual friendship.

Having looked at the way in which Aelred's account of Agape or Christian love for others is moulded by its relation to Philia, I want now to evaluate this account of Philia for its own sake, and to suggest that it is itself moulded by a relation to another love.

3.2 Evaluating Aelred's account of Philia: Richard Wollheim.

Not only is Caritas properly seen, on Aelred's account, in the light of this perfect friendship within the love of God, but so are the friendships we form on earth, which are the chief focus of his study. The difference between friendships on earth and their model is that whereas the saints are all united in their love of and pursuit of God, on earth this is not so. Our friendships may not,

here and now, be universal, and their limited scope is something we should be always aware of if we are to keep our affections within the ultimate project, which is a pilgrimage towards God. This leads Aelred to insist upon a rigorous checking procedure, verifying that friends are united in their wider aims, as central to friendship as the good man practices it.

What friends have which others lack is, according to Aelred, a unanimity of ends and desires, an agreement on all matters, earthly and divine. Such unanimity is essential, for only when such unanimity is in place may we entrust our affections to another and become their intimate in the sure knowledge that this relationship will draw us nearer to God rather than distract us.

This unanimity and conformity of opinion is quite central to Aelred's account of friendship, and is as we have seen, central to the definition of friendship which he takes from Cicero^{viii}. Aelred insists: "Each party should esteem the same things - that is, their unanimity should be dear to them." (Aelred, Book I, §15)^{ix}. And yet I want to suggest that this aspect of Aelred's account of friendship is not in itself uncontroversial.

In criticising Aelred's account of friendship I shall draw upon some passages from Richard Wollheim. The element of similarity between friends, which Aelred finds in Cicero and develops as unanimity and agreement, is part of a venerable tradition of seeing friendship as an alliance towards the good. This tradition is upheld by most of the ancient writings on friendship and stretches back at least as far as Aristotle, and is even found in as strikingly modern a thinker as Montaigne, and yet Wollheim takes issue with it.

Wollheim denies that a friend is an ally for the sake of the good, and denies too what is often asserted alongside this claim, that the friend is the supreme critic. Wollheim's discussion of friendship comes in the context of Freudian enquiries into the feelings of persecution and

alienation which can come from forms of introjection and projection. In this context he asks: what is the good of friendship to a person?

Wollheim asks us to consider not so much what friends do for us, in terms explicit actions and their results, but what they are to us, the place they have in our lives. What they are not, he says, are replicas of ourselves, not allies as such, and certainly not critics. What are they then? Wollheim has two suggestions, of which I am particularly interested in the first.

The first consideration is that a friend is one who perceives the singularity of another and accepts it, resisting his urges to control and manipulate. Perceiving the acceptance of our friend, we are strengthened and reassured. A second way of being a friend to others is in carefully regarding the way in which internalised representations of ourselves might sustain or frighten and humiliate others.

Thus Wollheim virtually reverses the venerable account of a friend as one who loves only those whom he resembles, and criticises and corrects any divergence from their common path.

The essence of friendship lies, I suggest, in the exercise of a capacity to perceive, a willingness to respect, and a desire to understand, the differences between persons. Friendship lies in a response to the singularity of persons, and a person's friendship extends only as far as such singularity engages him. (Wollheim, p. 276)

Aelred, as we have seen, was insistent that friends were to be adopted only in so far as they met certain criteria, whereas Wollheim's emphasis upon acceptance seems to require a greater openness. Does this mean we should be indiscriminate in our adoption of friends? Wollheim is, of course, in no way committed to that, and at first friendship seems again to be distinguished by its tendency to come and go according to our affections.

Love and friendship differ in their origins. Love, as we have seen, does not presuppose an attitude on behalf of the lover towards his beloved. It is a response - a response, not the response - to a felt relation: initially to the relation of total dependence, and then to whatever relation we come to substitute for it. By contrast, friendship must require an attitude. Being a response to the singularity of others, it is possible only with those whose singularity we are able to respond to appropriately. There are various ways in which this might be impossible for us. In some cases we cannot see what the person is really like. In some cases we can, but we are not able to respect what we see. And in some cases the effort that understanding the person would demand of us is too much. These, then, are the limits of friendship, and these limits are in effect fixed by our attitudes. Hence we choose our friends, and we choose them for what we take them to be, which, if it is to be a case of true friendship, must be an approximation to how they actually are. Friendship cannot be based on deceit, lies, or even on excess of error. (Wollheim, p. 279)

In insisting that we choose as friends only those we are able to respect, esteem and, Wollheim may not seem to take us far from Aelred. However, he continues:

But once we have chosen our friends, then friendship in certain respects assimilates itself to love. The pressure of friendship itself brings it about that the very attitudes that initially selected our friends for us drop out of the picture. We accept our friends, once they are our friends, for what they are or what they make of themselves. If they change, this will make no difference if the friendship is well established. (Wollheim, p. 279)

Aelred is certainly not unaware of the importance of acceptance to a friendship. However, even whilst arguing for the good of acceptance and tolerance, Aelred is committed to insisting that true friendship is found only when it is a relationship that leads each party towards God:

once a friend has been accepted, he must be so tolerated, treated, and agreed with that, *as long as he has not permanently departed from that foundation of friendship which we have agreed on*, he will belong to you and you to him, as much in temporal as in spiritual matters, so that there will be no difference between you in affairs of the soul, the affections, your wills and opinions. (Aelred, Book III, §6-8, my italics)

This condition is unwavering in Aelred, as it must be. It is his account of how friendship can be valued without becoming the idolatrous distraction from the love of God that the monasteries always feared that it was, the very challenge to friendship that he set out to resolve.

The accounts of friendship found in Aelred and Wollheim are fashioned against the very different backgrounds of a systematic theology and a moral philosophy based upon the insights of a

Freudian account of the mind. What, from the perspective of this thesis, is so valuable in the perception of the differences between ourselves and our friends, and the acceptance of change and the ability to move beyond those criteria by which our friends were originally accepted?

It is, I think, the thought that we ourselves are the terminal point of our friend's affection, that they do not look past us towards a greater goal. This is part of what I want to call being loved as an individual, so that if we change, and no longer suit the purposes that we once served or no longer bear the qualities which originally attracted our friend, then our friend, and their love, will change to accommodate us. They will accommodate this change because their love attaches primarily to us, and not simply to a fixed role that we might play in their lives. I do not wish to deny that there may be limits to this, or to deny that there may be times when it is impermissible to remain attached to a friend.^x

What I do want to register concern at is the thought that these moral limits may be framed by an overarching purpose, leaving a pre-designed space in our lives which the other must fill. When moral limits are drawn in in *this* way, we miss the importance to us of a certain plasticity and openness in our friend's love. Why is this plasticity so important? It is because the willingness to accept change in our friend, and the acceptance of the differences between us, are signs that it is *they* upon which our affection rests. It is a sign that we take interest in their lives as a whole, and not simply as they serve our purposes. It is just this that Aelred is forced, at the limits, to deny.

It is a denial that Aelred makes with some discomfort. When challenged by his interlocutors about the extent of his love for an errant friend Aelred defends him quite movingly, and in the quotation above he is keen to allow as much divergence from the initial criteria of unanimity and like-mindedness as is possible without allowing oneself to be drawn from the fundamental

principles of seeking God. However one cannot portray *this* as celebrating that tolerance and acceptance which assures one's friend that they are the end of our attention, whilst applying reasonable moral limits to what we will commit ourselves to in the course of such a relationship. For Aelred has been explicit in saying that we *must* look beyond our friend to the place that they have in *another* relationship, our evolving relationship with God.

Drawing closer to God is our main purpose, and Aelred sees all other relationships through their place in this one overarching purpose. As I hope to have shown in looking at Williams, such a purposive perspective does not illuminate the ability of affections to draw our attention to an individual as an end of our attention.

In rejecting a purposive account of friendship I am not saying, absurdly, that we may never involve our friends in our purposes. Rather I am saying that there is, I believe, a more basic contemplative relationship between friends, which we need to consider aside from our purposes. This relationship does not come out in a wholly purposive account such as Aelred's, although there is plenty of room for purposive behaviour once this contemplative relation has been acknowledged.

I shall explore how friendship can involve such a contemplative perception of another in the next chapter. In doing I so shall draw on the lessons of this chapter both by consciously moving beyond Aelred's teleological approach to the different forms of love, and by elaborating further on this positive element of friendship which has been introduced in Wollheim's discussion.

Before moving onto a different account of Eros, Agape and Philia, that of M.C.D'Arcy, I will pause for a moment to reinforce the point that we see in Aelred's account the workings of another form of love, which we shall discuss further below.

3.3 Philia and the Rational, Contemplative Love of God in Aelred.

Aelred's starting point, and the reason for his grateful adoption of Cicero, is the need to purge Friendship of Eros. This is a concern of theology generally, and is related to a concern of many moral philosophers. The claim is that the influence of Eros, and this need not be a sexual form of Eros, is the influence of desire over duty, or inclination over a rational appreciation of one's true good. It is particularly a worry that we too much abandon our interests to the influence of another. Of those who submit to this tendency Aelred says: "I would call these people not so much fools as insane." (Aelred, Book 2, §44)

Philia is not Eros, so how then do we account for it? For Aelred the answer is that Philia is affection strictly bound within the rational pursuit of God. The rational pursuit of the Good, which for Aelred is the pursuit of God, is the controlling principle of Aelred's account, the love to which all other loves should be subordinated.

Friendship is made a movement towards that love, close enough for a warm and intimate affection to live within the bounds of a pious and rational love of God. Caritas, a relationship to all men, can only remain within the bounds of this controlling love at the expense of any intimacy and unity, and is therefore somewhat imperfect. It is a love that springs simply from a rational apprehension of one's duty.

What might draw us to unite ourselves with another regardless of our own good is Eros and carnal love, the tendency to be drawn by the attractive features of another and abandon ourselves to our desires, and this must at all moments be restrained by the rational love of God (which we might note in passing bears a good deal of resemblance to the rational Eros of Plato.)

We have seen that this seems to involve distortion. Caritas becomes an inferior approximation to friendship. Friendship in its turn an approximation to the love of saints, wholly contained within the rational contemplation of and search for God, and so seems to look past the individual as an end of our attention.

M.C.D'Arcy takes the same problem – of how a love might avoid the excesses of a seemingly untrained and unconstrained love of Eros and of the rational, somewhat Platonic love, which seems always to look beyond its immediate object to its own ultimate good. His solution is different: drawing from other theologians such as John Burnaby and Martin Buber, he identifies the element of *mutuality* in friendship or Philia as being the perfect form of love. Philia, when defined by mutuality, is free of the waywardness of Eros and uncontrolled affection and yet properly focused on its object as an end of our attention.

Aelred works hard to show how the loves can be ordered so that they lead us towards a virtuous life, but at the cost of distorting the way in which others are seen in love. D'Arcy, I think, gets rather nearer.

4. M.C.D'Arcy: *The Mind and Heart of Love*

4.1 Introductory Remarks

I want to introduce one more thinker into this theological discussion, and that is the more recent writer, M.C.D'Arcy. D'Arcy's work *The Mind and Heart of Love* is a discussion of Eros, Agape and Philia that takes in a wide number of thinkers and theologians, and I include discussion of it because his stress on the concept of mutuality as it enters discussions of friendship. In this section I shall briefly sketch the background to D'Arcy's discussion of mutuality. I shall go on to

discuss his account of mutuality in Section 4.2. In Section 4.3 I shall discuss some difficulties and ambiguities, which once more stem from the temptation to model one love upon another.

D'Arcy's discussion of Agape and Eros covers many of the same concerns as Aelred's (although he does not discuss Aelred specifically). It is, however, introduced in a slightly different context. Aelred's concerns were the stability of our attachments, and the ways in which they might impede our pursuit of God, or might act in concert with that noble love. D'Arcy is more concerned with what we might call the *emblematic posture of the self in love*, and whether it is ultimately to be seen as self-regarding or other-regarding. This emphasis on the image of the self and of the other seems at first to bring us some way closer to the perspective on love that I want to take in this thesis.

D'Arcy identifies an apparent paradox. On one hand it seems simply common sense that we seek out and attach ourselves to that which will bring us good. In this we seem, in loving, to be bent on attaining our own good – though this may be a very enlightened self-regard, and entail simply the pursuit of virtue rather than more earthly profit. And yet, on the other hand, is not the emblematic picture of love that of giving something away? We seem in love to give up our preoccupation with ourselves in focussing on the object of our affections, and to make some sacrifice of oneself for the sake of another. Should love be seen as self-regarding or sacrificial? D'Arcy traces this tension through the study of Eros and Agape, and warns us that we must not be either too self-effacing in love, nor must we overlook the value of the other. Let us begin with the first of these warnings.

The claim that love must regard the good and the dignity of the self is made in connection with the traditional account of Eros. D'Arcy's discussion follows the work of Denis de Rougemont in

his work *Passion and Society*, but we have seen a similar account of Eros in Aelred's *de Spirituali Amicitia*.

D'Arcy's chief concern in considering the traditional notion of Eros is that this love is too forgetful of self, too keen to give itself up to the other. We may, in affection, become enraptured. Such is the image of love which is celebrated in the Manichean and Cathartic religions and which is identified by Christian theologians as Eros. We may become too much attached to the object of our love, too careless of self, and to D'Arcy this qualifies as an undignified and dangerous disowning of our self-control, autonomy and virtue. D'Arcy is particularly alive to the fact that it seems to be below the *dignity* of the self to be a slave to our desires, to give our self up to the object of our affections. He worries that we do not value ourselves properly if we simply give ourselves up to our desires, as the unrestrained Eros would have us do.

Although de Rougemont is D'Arcy's chief source in this section of his work, such an account of the dangers of Eros is familiar from Aelred. Aelred repeatedly warns of the propensity to follow one's unrestrained affections (and this need not mean simply our sexual desires). Aelred's chief concern was that this is simply dangerous. Such a love is:

Not undertaken with forethought, nor approved by judgment, nor ruled by reason; rather it follows the impetus of emotion and is carried away through life's highways and byways.
(Aelred, Book I, § 41.)

However, there is in this quotation not only a concern for the well being of the soul, but also a tone of contempt that one could hold oneself so cheap, and this comes close to D'Arcy's concern with what I have called the emblematic posture of the self in love, a concern for the dignity and self-worth of the lover. We heard this contempt in his statement: "I would call these people not so much fools as insane." (Aelred, Book 2, §44)

The common solution to this problem has been to declare Eros reckless, and to argue that we should instead be governed by a more rational love, which is identified as Agape. This love is a more careful, and crucially, more *rational* marriage of the self with its object, and brings all our affections into conformity with a proper love of God, and in so doing with the best interests of the virtuous self. This, as we have seen, is Aelred's response.

D'Arcy, considering the issue from the perspective of the emblematic posture of the lover towards the beloved, is not convinced that this flight to Agape is wholly satisfactory. His concern is that this careful, rational Eros, seeking its own greater good in all its engagements, is too mindful of the self, and too set on the greater good of the self.^{xi} I have argued for something similar in my criticism of Aelred's account of a friendship contained within just such a rational ordered love of God. My complaint was that such a love seems to value the other for the good their attachment leads to. This does not seem to capture the emblematic posture of one to another in love and friendship, as I sought to bring out in the work on Wollheim, and as I shall pursue further below.

D'Arcy is uncomfortable with the extremes of Eros and of Agape, and with the picture of the relations between the lover and the beloved (which need not mean sexual lovers, but may mean friends) that they imply. He certainly believes that each of these two loves brings out important *elements* of love, but also dangerous tendencies within them. Above all he suspects an unnecessarily sharp antithesis is too often drawn between them, and looks for a love that admits *neither* the overlooking of the other *nor* the demeaning of the self. This is the use of D'Arcy's work to this thesis.

The account of love that D'Arcy wants is an account that does justice both to the value of the self and to the value of the other. It is a love in which we do not look past the other to our greater good, thus reducing them to a means, albeit means to a very virtuous end. Nor is it a love in which we too much abandon the true good of the self in an undignified surrender to our untutored affections. His solution comes from basing his account of Philia around the notion of mutuality, an element of friendship which he finds in the work of John Burnaby and amplifies with passages from Martin Buber, and which stresses that a mutual love by its nature forbids either the self or the other to be overlooked.

4.2 D'Arcy, Mutuality and Philia.

Burnaby's account of friendship appeals to D'Arcy for its ability to avoid the worst excesses of either Agape *or* Eros, reason *or* passion, self-interest *or* self-abandonment. The key to this balance within friendship is the insistence that friendship is *a meeting of persons*, a *mutual and reciprocal* encounter, in which *neither* party is overlooked or loved simply for their place in a greater whole.

In this account of friendship the integrity and standing of both parties, as individuals, is enhanced by the relation, and neither party is absorbed or sacrificed to it. What ensures that this is so is that it is the very *essence* of friendship to be mutual and reciprocal: it is a *relation between persons*. D'Arcy summarises the matter thus: "Friendship cannot exist between a person and a thing; it is a special relationship and the love which is given and taken in it is like no other." (D'Arcy, p. 107); and later says that "in true love, where Philia dwells, there is no possibility of a one way relationship". (D'Arcy, p. 113)

John Burnaby describes the reciprocity of love thus:

A man has seen that which is good, and seeing it has delighted in it. His delight is acceptable, and what is accepted is a gift; he must ask the giver why should anything have been given to him. The only answer to that question is love. He sees that the gift of good can be nothing but the expression of love, and that love itself is greater than any or all of the gifts in which its activity is displayed. If greater, then more to be desired; and if he can desire above all things the gift of love, if he can truly cast out of his heart all that is contrary to love, then love will be given to him, and he will have power to return it to the giver. In such a supreme good there is supreme delight, and the delight itself is radiant, "diffusive of itself", creative. (Burnaby, p. 310)

What this difficult quotation implies is that within friendship it is the *communion with another* which is the chief delight of the co-subjects. The love of friends is a spontaneous expression of one's personal esteem, gratitude and desire, and yet neither the self nor the other is incorporated into any larger and more important purpose, but the value of the relationship is explained in terms of the delight each party takes in the relationship itself. The goods we receive through friendship are chiefly valuable to us as they embody and extend to us *another's* love.

This central emphasis upon mutuality and reciprocity leads D'Arcy to borrow from the work of Martin Buber in amplifying this distinctive feature of Philia: "Love does not cling to the I in such a way as to have the Thou only for its 'content', its object; but love is *between* I and Thou." (D'Arcy, p. 116. See Buber, p. 64). The love which D'Arcy seems to envisage here does not drive us on to some other goal, but rather its value lies in the mutual, level encounter of two individuals.

This then is the distinctive contribution that D'Arcy, influenced by Burnaby, finds in Philia: it is a relationship *between* persons, a relationship of 'I' and 'Thou'. Nothing could be more stable and less threatening to the integrity of the self than this relation whose essence lies in mutuality and which ceases to be itself if it once forgets that it is simply a communion between persons. Of course this idea requires a good deal of unpacking, and we will return to it in Chapter 7.

4.3 The Reconciliation of the Three Loves in D'Arcy.

There is, however, a difficulty in D'Arcy's work that we should acknowledge before moving on. This difficulty stems back to the theologians' aim of reconciling all of our attachments together, so that they may be commensurate with each other in a well-ordered life, and the practice of relating our attachments to each other with our attachments to God. Rather than take up a further exploration of mutuality and draw out the differences between this love and other loves, as I propose to do in Chapter 7, D'Arcy states that the aim now is to *reconcile* this love with those he has just distinguished it from:

We still lack a theory which embraces the various aspects of love and brings them into a consistent pattern; we still want to know how Eros and Agape are reconciled with one another without loss and how they can be joined up in Philia. (D'Arcy, pp. 113-4)

As was the case with Aelred, it is in the image of a divine love that D'Arcy sees the possibility of reconciliation, in this case the love, the friendship, between Man and God.

Man's relationship to God, D'Arcy argues, exhibits the marks of both Eros and Agape. We do indeed abandon our self-possession to God: we do allow ourselves to be moved, and moved *entirely*, by the object of our affection. And yet in doing so, we are told, we secure our greatest good, and what the rational mind would recommend for us. So much is orthodox Christian doctrine, that we lose our self only to gain it more securely:

It is in this reciprocal love that losing one's life is saving it, that to give is to receive, that death is swallowed up in victory. And that language, as is only fitting, is the language of persons, of 'I' and 'Thou'; we have passed away from the philosophy of objects, from pantheisms and monisms. Persons do not die when the love is mutual; they live more fully each in the other's love. (D'Arcy, p. 246)

Here is D'Arcy's solution as to how Eros, Agape and Philia can be combined: within the structure of a Christian theology we can fulfil in full our desire both for self-possession, and the desire to reach out of ourselves to another, and the result is a relation between persons.

It is, of course, not the business of this thesis to take on the apparatus of orthodox Christianity, nor indeed to argue with it either. But what is very pertinent to our onward discussion is that D'Arcy sees this as a form of friendship, indeed *the very model* of friendship. For D'Arcy is happy to acknowledge that both Eros and Agape have a place in human life: in isolation they are dangerous, but in combination, joined together in Philia, they are complementary and fulfilling. It is in this relationship, this friendship between man and God, that D'Arcy sees the image of a love that reconciles Eros and Agape, and this love is a form of Philia.

How precisely does this relationship to God qualify as Philia as well as Eros and Agape? It is a relation between persons who do not absorb or overlook each other because it does not involve either self-will or self-abandonment to the exclusion of the other, but combines them both; it does not involve simply passion or simply reason, but the two together. The result is a stable and mutually affirming relation of persons. But we should note a serious ambiguity here. Philia, in its theological context, reveals itself not so much as an utterly *different* love to Eros or Agape, but as *a combination of both loves*, reciprocally performed by both parties. Philia involves self-will *and* self-sacrifice, passion *and* reason, for we give ourselves up to God, and receive what we most desire, and we act out of a passionate love for him, but theology teaches us that this is also the rational and only way to the attainment of our highest good. When D'Arcy says that Eros and Agape are "joined in Philia", it transpires that what Philia is is simply the circumstances in which Eros and Agape can be exhibited simultaneously, in the knowledge that one's love will be returned.

When we return to the relations between human persons, however, this analysis of friendship is disquieting. We saw in the earlier discussion that *Philia* is stable and does not lead to the absorption of either party, and that this stability lies in the essential *mutuality and reciprocity* of the relationship. Nevertheless there is an ambiguity here: for we might envisage a mutual transfer of love and respect between self-possessed and self-esteeming individuals, who support each other in their esteem; or, we may suppose that both parties, in placing their affections, abandon themselves to each other, and that their good and their own self-esteem is *wholly* dependent upon the other being mindful of their interests and on their receiving back from the other a just, appreciative attention which tells of their worth and value.

In man's relationship to God, and particularly from man's side of the relation, something akin to the latter would seem appropriate. It is fitting, it seems, for man to abandon himself utterly to God, and for him to base his entire worth on the fact that God first loved him. He is 'lifted up' in this relation, given a new dignity, itself entirely deriving from God's love, and this satisfies the proper desire of man for his own true good (see D'Arcy, Chapter 10, *passim*). In love between men, however, the situation seems different: can it really be that the emblematic posture of friends is one of utter self-abandonment to the other? And what can we consider to be the worth of the love that we offer, if our only sense of self-worth and value derives from the other's love? Indeed, how can the other believe that their love dignifies *me*, if they have no sense of *their* value, outside of my love?^{xii}

However, in wanting to model the friendships between men on the love between Man and God, and in doing so draw all the loves together into one coherent pattern, this seems to be what D'Arcy commits himself to. The more like the love between man and God our friendship is, the greater its perfection, and that seems to imply that a friendship is better the deeper the commitment of one to the other, the more mutually reliant the friends are:

The law of love exhibited in personal friendship is really a foretaste or prophecy of a state of love in which all is well. No love can be so sure in this life as to pledge itself without reserve. Even in marriage there are settlements to be made with the contract, and a child may be undeserving of its mother. We go beyond the evidence because of a faith whose strength and source we do not always comprehend.... we *act and imitate a love which suffers from none of our limitations*; we aspire to be loved by one whose love breaks down the last reserve of the self, so that we can belong utterly to him.... It is in the perspective of divine love that all the strange behaviour of the self and its oscillation between its two loves are understood. (D'Arcy, pp. 325-6, my emphasis)

D'Arcy's work has, then, begun to closely resemble Aelred's in crucial respects. The relation between man and God, D'Arcy tells us, is a picture of a perfect friendship; human friendships are an *approximation* to that, a "foretaste or prophecy", falling short of the ideal. The difficulty, as D'Arcy describes it, is that although we are tempted to offer ourselves fully to others, we cannot be sure that they will reciprocate (see D'Arcy, p. 322). In this circumstance the rational, self-possessing aspect of man's character which Aelred championed must take precedence over any self-abandoning tendency, for we must never allow our integrity and personal dignity to be sacrificed in handing ourselves over to an untested friend (see D'Arcy, p. 324). We are to entrust ourselves to others only as far as our knowledge of their character and their tendency to reciprocate are known to us.

As such, friendship between men is an approximation to the perfect friendship seen between man and God, and although it does reduce to a combination of Eros and Agape^{xiii}, it is not the free and wholehearted expression of both that we find possible in the worship of God.

At the last, then, D'Arcy insists that friendship between men must be resolved into Agape and Eros, and so it must also be an imperfect relation, and approximation or imitation to another love.

Although D’Arcy does not dwell upon the consequences of all of this for our duties towards other men generally, he suggests that the actions of a good man towards others generally *must also* be understood as a tentative move towards this balance of self-giving and self-regard which is fully exercised in Philia between Man and God. When we show a good will towards others we are moved, it is implied, by a mixture of self-interest and self-regard. Because we are not saints and so are not united in our aims, that element of self-regard that protects our virtue and our integrity “acts as a brake upon the love of others, upon the tendency of the anima^{xiv} to trust itself and its experience independently of reason.” (D’Arcy, p. 324) As practical advice, loving others within the restraints of a self-regard which safeguards integrity is a noble aim. However, D’Arcy is not offering simply advice here, but an interpretation of decent behaviour towards others as a constrained, tentative move towards the form of divine Philia he has sketched.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Reconciliation of the Three Loves in D’Arcy and Aelred

I said that Aelred and D’Arcy were to be studied for two reasons (See Sections 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2). The first reason is that they would unpack some influential accounts of the nature of love, which would serve to frame the account I wanted to construct; and to draw attention to particular elements of love, which we would discuss further in later chapters. The second reason is that perhaps Aelred in particular would demonstrate one way of showing how an understanding of personal intimate loves involved in relationships such as friendship conditioned and changed our understanding of wider duties and wider instances of good will. What I hope to have shown is that this second issue – the relating of loves together – impacts upon the first – the unpacking and describing of loves. For what seems to have happened is that the images of love are altered to accommodate each other.

We saw in the first half of this chapter the method by which Aelred hoped to show the relevance of friendship to our wider duties and good will towards others. This was to try to illuminate all other loves in the light of a perfect friendship, one which was fully commensurate with the love of God. Earthly attachments were understood as approximations to that perfect love which lived wholly within the love of God

I turned to D'Arcy's account, and its emphasis upon friendship as mutuality and encounter, when it seemed that Aelred's solution did not do justice to love as a meeting of individuals valued for their own sake and attended to as ends of our attention in themselves. Yet D'Arcy, it seems, has ultimately followed the same method as Aelred in that he has wanted to show the loves to be commensurate with each other. Only in the friendship between God and man are the loves completely reconciled, completely 'joined up in Philia', and so he too has accounted for loves that fall short of this perfection as *approximations* to that more perfect love.

Both D'Arcy and Aelred have, then, given us an account of one or other of the loves as being resolved into, or approximating to, another love. Furthermore, I have argued that in both cases it appears that the character of love as we experience it is distorted in the process. In looking at Aelred we saw how Agape was made an approximation to a perfected Philia, and how Philia was changed and distorted by the need for it to be a part of the rational, contemplative love of God, a love which was contrasted with an irrational, romantic and passionate Eros. And we have seen above how D'Arcy's account of Philia is analysed into two other loves, Eros and Agape, and how a human friendship is treated as an approximation to that unreserved combination Eros and Agape found in Man's friendship with God

In summary, I want to claim that Aelred's account of Agape is distorted by his account of Philia, which is in turn distorted by his account of a rational Eros; whilst D'Arcy's Philia is distorted by a model of friendship which reduces to the combination of Agape and Eros together.

There is of course a reply to the suggestion that human loves are presented in Aelred and D'Arcy as pale imitations of a love of God. That reply is that these are indeed *theological* accounts, and present the world not simply as it is, but in the light of how it *should* be. Perhaps this could be better put by saying that that their account of how the world *is* is an account of it as lying *between* its fallen state and its redeemed state; and of course this teleological presentation is quite proper given their theological perspective. For an exercise in systematic theology to portray the loves as *approaching* one another is simply the outworking of this philosophical approach: to see a love clearly is to see it as tending towards that which would, in a theological perspective, constitute its perfection.

I have referred to the effect that this process of resolving one love into another has upon Aelred and D'Arcy's accounts as being a form of distortion, and this of course registers a marked difference of approach on my part. It should be clear from the criticisms I have made that I do not intend to take this theological approach 'on board' in the ensuing chapters.

The purpose of this thesis from this point on is to clarify what the loves may come to in an ordinary and familiar social context. I shall explore the possible ways in which others can be present to us, and to see how this might alter our understanding. I shall seek to construct a quite different account of the relationship of friendship, and also compassion, to wider duties and to our thoughts and actions with even those for whom we feel no affection. In the following chapter I shall outline an account of the loves of compassion and friendship embedded in just such an ordinary social context, and it is hoped that the ability of this account to illuminate some

overlooked aspects of a good life will serve to illustrate the merits of adopting a more modest perspective than the aims of harmonising the loves which are found in Aelred and D'Arcy.

The change of perspective, of course, in no way precludes us from usefully examining the ways in which the general elements of love drawn above are incorporated into, or precluded by, compassion and friendship as I describe it in the next chapter. I want to pick out in particular two elements of a proper love, one which is championed by D'Arcy, and one which came out in criticism of Aelred, and was briefly explored in the discussion of Wollheim.

5.2 Elements of a Proper Love in D'Arcy and Aelred

What are the elements of the discussion above which we most need to address when looking at an account of friendship and compassion outside of a theological context?

I should like to raise, for future reference, one central issue brought out in D'Arcy's discussion, and one more from the account of Aelred. The central point that is raised in D'Arcy's discussion is his insistence that love, at its best, is a *mutual* relation and a *reciprocal* relation. Mutuality suggests that love is valued for its own sake, and not for the external benefits that might arise from it. However, we have seen an ambiguity in D'Arcy's discussion, for mutuality might mean the meeting of two self-possessed individuals, or it might mean a co-dependence of one upon the other, each being dependent upon each other for their own greater good. I have only briefly explored this idea above and it will merit further discussion in the next chapter. The discussion will also force us to address an issue I have raised before, that in considering the attention which we should give to others, and the ways in which our love can properly recognise and affirm them as individuals, we must stand ready to account for the way in which *we* might receive standing

from others, how our reality as individuals might be affirmed by another, and how, in D'Arcy's somewhat ambiguous phrase, we might "receive ourselves back" from God and from friends.

An aspect of the discussion of this chapter which re-emerges in D'Arcy's work towards the end, and which is central to Aelred, is the question of whether love for others for others might be wholly contained within a greater purpose, or within another love. Aelred seems bound to claim that it is, and this relationship is our ongoing pilgrimage towards God. I have resisted this claim, and suggested that it overlooks the quality of love that accepts and embraces change in others, even to the point of being prepared to change ourselves. I shall discuss this further in Section 3.2 of the following chapter, under the heading 'dynamic permeability'. Some caution is needed in this: I shall do nothing to suggest, absurdly, that such change may go beyond the bounds of moral acceptability, nor need my claims entail the equally extreme view that friendships should never end or fall apart.

I move now to a consideration of compassion and of friendship in the context of ordinary social relations.

ⁱ See D'Arcy, Chapter 1, *passim*

ⁱⁱ The variety of interpretations of the loves means that, in the case of Eros, a caveat is needed. In some writers, Eros has been associated with the very *rational* love found in Plato. This love shares the image of a self which despises its current (earthly) form, and in contemplating its objects (the forms of the rational world) desires to escape its current form completely. See D'Arcy, Chapter 2, *passim*.

I shall in this chapter associate Eros with its passionate, un-Platonic form. The possibility of a different interpretation will, from time to time, be pointed out in footnotes. This seems the best way to do justice to the variety of interpretations of Eros and Agape that have been influential in theology, without allowing the chapter to become unnecessarily complicated and difficult to follow.

Nothing which is of crucial importance to a fair and accurate understanding of the arguments I present in this chapter will be relegated to footnotes.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Chapter 1, Section 3.1.

^{iv} For example: "Will we therefore not agree that whenever people are in perfect agreement about divine and human affairs and have the same desires along with good will and mutual esteem, then they have attained perfect friendship?" (Aelred, Book I, §13). See also Aelred, Book I, §15.

^v "For love is abased and unworthy of the name of friendship if in its name we demand something base of a friend". (Aelred, Book II, §39)

vi The Latin for "Law of Grace" [caritatis lege] is similar to that for "feelings of good will" [gremio caritatis]. See Mark Williams's notes the text, Aelred p. 108, note 19 (Williams's Latin). I understand by that a charitable and compassionate love for each and every man, akin to the concept of Agape as it is applied to all men.

vii I owe this example to Tim Chappell

viii "Friendship is agreement on both human and divine affairs, combined with good will and mutual esteem." (*Spiritual Friendship* I, §11, taken from Cicero, *De Amicitia*, p. 20, and discussed above, Section 4.3)

ix See also Aelred, Book II, §19, and, again, Aelred, Book I, §13.

^x See Chapter 7, Section 3.2.

xi This concern is drawn in part from the work of Anders Nygren. Nygren's account dwells on the appearance in Ancient Greece, and in particular in Plato, of a love that is a form of Eros, in that it aims for something it lacks. However, rather than being emotional and unordered, Nygren's Eros is the very image of rationality. This rational love looks to be just the same sort of love which Aelred and indeed de Rougemont champion as the righteous alternative to the wayward emotional Eros they describe.

In stark contrast to de Rougemont's worry that the self was depreciated in Eros, Nygren's concern is that this careful rational Eros, seeking it's own greater good in all its engagements, is too careful of the self, too slow to make a Christian sacrifice. With this enlightened, rational love Nygren contrasts an Agape in which the Christian is inspired to love the other not by the rational apprehension of his greater good, but by the inspiration of God.

Nygren and De Rougemont's accounts of Eros and Agape therefore come to be near opposites of each other.

xii This issue is discussed more fully in Chapter 7, Section 3.3, and owes much to N.J.H.Dent's discussion of Rousseau in his book *Rousseau*.

xiii Or we might rest with simply saying that Philia is a combination of self-giving and rational self-serving, rather than a combination of Eros and Agape, given the disagreement amongst D'Arcy's sources as to whether self-giving is a component of Eros or Agape, and the same with rational self-serving. D'Arcy has sought more to transcend these two terms than to resolve the question of their strict definition.

^{xiv} The concept of the anima is extensively used in D'Arcy's work, and refers to the emotional, outwards-looking and giving element of our nature. The counterpart of this concept, is the more reserved, self-interested and strictly rational animus. D'Arcy leaves the task of discerning the relationship of these concepts to the varying accounts of Eros and Agape largely to the reader, and any such discussion would be out of place here.

Chapter 7

Compassion and Friendship: The Loves Reworked

1. Introductory Remarks

We have seen in the last chapter how the loves of Eros, Agape and Philia have been characterised, and how this characterisation has differed with the attempts of various theologians to create a system which can reconcile the three. My criticism of these writers has concerned the ways in which their accounts of the character of the loves have been coloured by the systematic arrangement which they have sought after.

What I intend to do in this chapter is to look at the loves outside of any attempt to systematically unite them. That is, instead of contrasting Eros with Agape and Philia, I shall look at compassion and friendship, as examples of the sort of affection which J.L.Socks contrasted with desire.

Again our purpose will be to identify forms of attention of one individual for another; ways in which we might, through affection, *encounter* others. I shall not, at first, be concerned to show the relevance of particular affections to our wider moral duties: this will be the aim of Chapter 8.

In Section 2 I shall discuss examples of compassion cited by Rodger Beehler in his book *Moral Life* and an example drawn from George Eliot's *Middlemarch*; and then descriptions of friendship from Oakeshott's essay "On Being Conservative" and a passage which we have seen before from Wollheim. I shall say a little about what I take to be the most striking features of the loves as

they are presented. In Section 3 I shall draw out some common features of both these loves, and the forms of attention that they constitute.

During the course of these two sections I shall widen the terminology which I have so far been using. Whilst I have talked of treating others as individuals, I shall find it helpful to talk of recognising the *reality* of another as an individual, and I shall develop the notion of love as an *endless* form of attention. This expansion of the language which I want to use is intended only to develop ideas which are by now familiar, and do not signal any radical change of direction.

In the fourth section I shall consider again those elements of love which I drew from the theological discussions of Chapter 6, and I shall look at the extent to which those elements are present in the accounts of compassion and affection which I give here. I shall take up again the question of whether the self is to be abandoned or given over to the other in compassion or friendship, and shall argue that in fact the integrity of the self is retained and enlarged in a proper love, be it of compassion or friendship.

We shall, I hope, see in what follows a form of attention to others which contrasts with the forms of attention which were suggested, either by default or with some care, in Gauthier, Fried and Williams; that is, I wish to develop an account of our attention to others which is not an attention regulated by purpose, nor an impersonal attention to the other as an example of a kind.

2. The Reality of the Other as an Individual: Types of Love

2.1 Compassion and Remorse: R.J.Needham's *A Writer's Notebook* and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*.

I want to begin with as simple an example of compassion as I can. It is discussed in Beehler's book *Moral Life*, and is taken from R.J.Needham's *A Writer's Notebook*. Here is Needham's own description:

It happened in Calgary some thirty years ago. I was rushing along the street to catch a train when a little girl walking in front of me dropped the bottle of milk she'd been sent to buy. The bottle broke, the milk spilled, the child started to weep. I went by and got my train. I have never forgotten that incident, never forgiven myself for my failure to stop and give the kid the price of another bottle. I should have known then what I know now: that there's always another train. (Beehler, p. 24, from Needham, p. 9)

The elements of this example which I want to draw out are relatively simple ones. The incident excites Needham's compassion, and makes the girl an object of his compulsive attention. This does not happen at once, but it soon does and his compassion is seen not in action, but in his remorse at his inaction.

Compassion requires that we attend to another as an individual, and in this case this attention should have taken the form of some simple act of help, a few cents for another bottle. Not having done this, Needham attends retrospectively, in a form of remorse, in which he continues to dwell compassionately (although not, I think, obsessively) on the suffering of the child, and the inadequacy of his response. His attention is later, as it should have been then, drawn away from a concern with the details of his own life, to that of another, by a pained awareness of her distress.

This attention is an attention to an individual, as is clear from the remarks he makes later in regret: "There is always another train". He could not have comforted himself with the thought that there is always another little girl to help, and that if one does not help this one, one can help the next. Needham was not called to help *a* little girl as such, but *this* little girl, and part of what he would have done for her, if he had stopped, would have been to treat her as an individual, as unique and a focus of a far more compulsive attention than the other details of his day.

Beehler notes that Needham could only feel the compassion he did because he knows, as we all do, about the girl's likely environment: about families, about the shortage of money and the exasperation it brings, or about the strong desire to complete a task well, and notes that this must be accompanied by caring about her. Certainly, those details form an ineliminable part of the context of Needham's reaction: without them we could not see that compassion was called for here, or better, we would not be sure that his reaction to her was appropriately called compassion at all. To say that a care "accompanied" this knowledge seems to be a bad choice of words here, however, for it might suggest that caring simply *goes along-side* the thoughts and speculations about the girl, whereas in fact it serves also to shape them and to provoke them.

Needham is moved to speculation on the life of the girl, and this speculation and understanding is itself a *pained awareness* of what she must be feeling: it is not an ordinary awareness *accompanied* by an emotion. The girl becomes the focus of a familiar sort of *contemplation*, rather than simply another detail of his day. The life of the girl forces itself upon Needham in a quite different manner in his compassion, and the contrast between the force with which he felt the pain on reflection, and his uncertain response and responsiveness at the time, is the reason for his regret.

One might say, expanding our terminology, that it is only in this pained awareness that Needham feels the *reality* of the child in her suffering, where by the 'reality' of the child I mean to indicate simply this ability of others to act as objects of contemplation, and to draw our compassionate attention to themselves, for their own sake, and not as accidental or useful features of a scene interpreted in the light of our current purposes and interests.

This notion of beholding the reality, (or, perhaps, the *presence*), of another individual, is something I shall want to develop in the next chapter. I shall there discuss the ways in which our mode of engagement with the world, and our attitudes and demeanour towards it, shape what we can be said to apprehend. I shall simply say for now that the pained awareness of the child's suffering - an awareness which could have been more cheerful, but still concerned, had he reacted more immediately - seems compulsive and necessary: we might say that the reality of the girl demands something of us, namely a compassionate attention and caring response.

We might have another example from *Middlemarch*. The example is a complicated one, and is certainly not a simple case of compassion, and yet this is partly what draws me to it, for it illustrates the many, less obvious and more alloyed forms in which compassion can be found.

It will be as well to say in advance that one obvious and complicating feature of this example is that it is a *picture* of a person, and not a person 'in the flesh', which falls within a loving attention. However, many of the reactions of Dorothea towards the picture are extensions of our reactions towards people, notably of course loving reactions, and in this changed context some important features of relations between people are thrown into sharp relief. The passage I have in mind is as follows:

Each remembered thing in the room was disenchanted, was deadened as an unlit transparency, till her wandering gaze came to the group of miniatures, and there she saw

something which had gathered new breath and meaning: it was the miniature of Mr. Casaubon's aunt Julia, who had made the unfortunate marriage - of Will Ladislav's grandmother. Dorothea could fancy it was alive now - the delicate woman's face which yet had a head-strong look, a peculiarity difficult to interpret. Was it only her friends who thought her marriage unfortunate? or did she herself find it out to be a mistake, and taste the salt bitterness of her tears in the merciful silence of the night? What breadths of experience Dorothea seemed to have passed over since she first looked at this miniature! She felt she had a new companionship with it, as if it had an ear for her, and could see how she was looking at it. Here was a woman who has known some difficulty about marriage. Nay the colours deepened, the lips and chin seemed to get larger, the hair and eyes seemed to be sending out light, the face was masculine and beamed on her with that full gaze that tells she on whom it falls that she is too interesting for the slightest movement of her eyelid to pass unnoticed and uninterpreted. The presentation came like a pleasant glow to Dorothea: she felt herself smiling, and turning from the miniature sat down and looked up as if she were again talking to a figure in front of her. (Eliot, p. 266)

Whereas the loves seen in the last chapter were placed in no closer context than the journey of a man towards God, here there is a tightly constrained context, and the precise nature of the feeling of Dorothea towards the person in the picture is determined by that context. When we explore that context we find that we do not have here any simple example of compassion, but a complex emotion which nonetheless contains the marks of compassion within it.

The similarity of the details between Dorothea's life and Julia's life condition a sense of *companionship* in the above passage, and this is emphasised in the text. Dorothea has herself made an unhappy marriage, to a Casaubon, and is increasingly occupied with thoughts of Will Ladislav, a fascination which develops into love and a second marriage. However, these seem to me to be details which form the background for something further, something which is not *simply* a feeling of companionship, but a more complex form of affection. What kind of affection? It is the affection of two people who walk the same path and find mutual sympathy easy. It has an element of friendship, perhaps even a sisterly quality. It also has, I think, an element of compassion within it.

Although this is not in any literal sense a compassionate encounter between individuals, it has a similarly animating attention to details, a similar awareness of variousness and of possibility, that

comes along with an alloyed form of compassion. We might also note, what will be explored further later on, that in so animating the image with her love, Dorothea becomes aware of herself as part of a human world in which she might have companionship, and might benefit from the same compelling and compelled attention herself.ⁱ

Again, Dorothea's personal experience is needed to understand the plight of the woman in the picture and to feel an appropriate quality of compassion and sympathy, but the shape of Dorothea's attention is still guided by a form of love, and it is this love which impresses upon her the reality of a woman, and of her distress, even when she is only presented with a likeness, and could never meet the original.ⁱⁱ

Having considered these examples of compassion, I think it best to widen the discussion of what it is to attend to another in a way that recognises the presence or reality of another, which marks an encounter with another. These examples above show compassion in distress to be a form of attention which is demanded of us by human beings, but our engagement with others is wider and more various than that, and I want now to turn to accounts of friendship as a form of loving attention.

2.2 Friendship: Oakeshott and Wollheim.

I shall return to the elements of a true compassion below, but first I want to discuss friendship, seen in an ordinary context, and in doing so I shall take a fragment on friendship from Oakeshott's "On Being Conservative":

There are relationships...in which no result is sought and which are engaged for their own sake and enjoyed for what they are and not for what they provide. This is so of friendship. Here attachment springs from an intimation of familiarity and subsists in a mutual sharing of personalities. Friends are not concerned with what might be made of one another, but only

with the enjoyment of one another; and the condition of this enjoyment is a ready acceptance of what is and the absence of any desire to change or improve. A friend is not someone who one trusts to behave in a certain manner, who possesses certain merely agreeable qualities...he is someone who engages the imagination, who excites contemplation, who provokes interest, sympathy, delight and loyalty simply on account of the relationship entered into. One friend cannot replace another; there is all the difference in the world between the death of a friend and the retirement of one's tailor from business. The relationship of friend to friend is dramatic, not utilitarian; the tie is one of familiarity, not usefulness; the disposition engaged in is conservative, not 'progressive'. (Oakeshott (2), p. 177)

The reference to the "sharing of personalities" might suggest some insistence upon conformity of character. Certainly friendships might be, to a point, made more likely and more enduring if the friends involved have similar interests, but we should note Oakeshott's emphasis upon accepting friends and not wishing to change them. This is of course, reminiscent of Wollheim's emphasis upon acceptance, and of the perception of singularity in friends (see Chapter 6, section 3.2).

Wollheim said:

once we have chosen our friends, then friendship in certain respects assimilates itself to love. The pressure of friendship itself brings it about that the very attitudes that initially selected our friends for us drop out of the picture. We accept our friends, once they are our friends, for what they are or what they make of themselves. If they change, this will make no difference if the friendship is well established. (Wollheim, p. 279)

This assimilation to love is instructive. Once a friendship has developed, we lose our sense that our reactions to another are a simple matter of discretion and choice, however typical and characteristic a feature of the beginning of a friendship such discretion and freedom might be. I do not think that the idea that we shall continue to attend to our closest friends as long as we are enjoying it is an idea that lasts: soon we attend to them for their own sake, and must, for their sake, attend to their weal and woe, be pained at their distress and happy in their fortune, and take an active interest in both.

Should we say that we attend caringly in our friendships not so much for the other's sake but *because they are a friend*? I think this is close to a mis-statement of the matter. We *might* attend to another in this spirit, and we sometimes *must* compel ourselves to act on just such a motive, if anger or distaste get in the way of a friendship. However, this is a duty which appears in a particular context, and is not to be taken as the emblematic relation between friends. The character of the act is changed when the thought that this is my friend plays such a rôle in our attention: more usually we simply attend out of love. When we attend out of love, if we *are* drawn to say, as we might, that we helped another because he is our friend, this locution does no more than to point to the *context* of our care - an ongoing relationship in which a love of other for their own sake is quite natural. It is this more spontaneous attention, which *takes the others' distress or joy as being in itself a compulsive reason for attention*, which I see as the most significant and illuminating form of care and attention in friendship, without denying at all that a more deliberate and explicitly conscientious form of care is sometimes called for.

This sense that attention is required, is compulsive, is common to friendship and to compassion as we saw it in the Needham example. I want to further consider the character of these two loves, focussing upon the open-ended, potentially endless character of attention, what I shall call its 'dynamic permeability', and the importance that compassion and friendship be uncondescending.

3. Further Exploration of the Loves of Compassion and Friendship

3.1 The Other as a Focus of Unlimited Attention.

The Needham example shows how one particular loving reaction, compassion, can and should provide a compelling sense of the reality of the other as an individual and as having a claim upon our attention and care. It provides it for a complete stranger, and it does not weaken the

significance of the example, I think, that the occasions in which the reality of a stranger strikes us so compellingly are apt to be limited in number. Such a sense of another as a compelling end of attention comes with a developed friendship too.

I want to explore further some of the elements of such a love, a love which is compulsive and in which we feel the reality of another. One quality of such love which I want to focus on particularly is the sense that such a love is endless, unlimited. Some comments of Stocks', which we have seen before, give a sense of what I mean.

A man's growing knowledge of his friend or of his country does not proceed by revolutionary discoveries - such surprises as occur are apt to seem much less surprising in retrospect - but cumulatively, by constant watchfulness and an unending readiness to learn more. It is an account which in the nature of the case must never be considered closed, and there can be no finality in judgment. Progress is marked only by gradually increasing in understanding, by greater confidence in interpretation and prediction; but doubt is never quite excluded, and an absolute 'knowledge' is not even conceivable. (Stocks (2), pp. 44-5)

It is this sense that love involves an "unceasing readiness to learn more", and that its account of the other can, by the nature of the case, "never be considered closed", that "absolute 'knowledge' is not even conceivable" that I want to explore. And I want to say that within the relationships I have discussed, compassion and friendship, such an openness is an essential characteristic of love.

In wondering what it is that is so important about leaving our attention to the other unlimited and open, we might look at what the opposite might involve. That is, we might look at what is crushing about an attention which is meticulous, receptive to details, but always suggests that its reading might one day attain finality.

The paradigm of what repels us [in the idea of *studying* men scientifically] is to be found in the common situation of the child who is *understood* by its parents, hemmed in, anticipated and lovingly circumscribed, thoroughly taped. (Trilling, p. 219)

Trilling talks of the effect this has on the child, "finding it easier and easier to conform internally and in the future to the parents' own interpretation of the external acts of the past...yielding to understanding as never to coercion." (Trilling, p. 219) I am more interested at this point in the fault in the sort of attention given by the parent in the first place, a *limiting* of the other, a denying of an element of the "otherness" of their child. There is, perhaps, a glimpse of it in this passage from Henry James:

"You will never understand Henrietta"

"Excuse me; I understand her perfectly. I didn't at all at first; but now I have got the point of view. I am afraid, however, that Bantling has not; he may have some surprises. Oh, I understand Henrietta as well as if I had made her!" (James, p. 191)

One wouldn't want anyone to think that they understood you in this way; that "the point of view" was singular; that it reflected how *you* were as object and said nothing of your observers, of their nature, interests and their and their ability to observe justly; that surprises were not to be expected except by those who were unfamiliar with you, in the way that foreign traffic systems might surprise people until they mastered them. However, the final line is the most revealing, I think. The sense of knowing the other seems to take away, rather than to acknowledge, the otherness of the other, their independence and life and individuality, or rather to grant a limited degree of it upon a condition, a consoling sense of possession. It does not admit that others set us a challenge, and that understanding them is a hard and never ending task.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ralph Touchett has, in the passage above, succumbed I think to the temptation to crystalise the other into a particular form, and it makes one feel briefly magnificent, but denies the otherness of the other, that they have an independence from you, that they are real, and might teach you and surprise you. Most importantly, they might demand a certain individual attention of you, and shape the way you see the world, on pain of fantasy, rather than being shaped by you and your vision of how things lie. (The sense of magnificence must ultimately be undermined by this.)

I should make plain what, in the context of the thesis, these examples are intended to achieve. They are intended to show the sorts of injustice which are involved in denying someone to be the subject of an endless, open attention. They do not protest at someone who, in a particular instance, has no *time* to attend, or even at someone who, finding themselves remote from another, would find it absurd that they in particular should make that particular other a subject of intensive study. They are intended to protest at the suggestion that what knowledge one has is sufficient in degree and in kind, and that no further consideration would be necessary however much time were available and however intimate one became. They suggest that the sense that one has the other *taped* is always an injustice. The point of doing so is to suggest that we do not merely indulge ourselves in granting an affectionate regard upon the other, but respond to them as the rightful claimants upon such regard: we have changed our conception of them to incorporate this claim for such an open regard.

It is also important, in order to be fair, to note that the examples I have used above do not directly contrast the impersonal philosophy which I identified in the first section of my thesis with the philosophy I am intending to construct. They contrast an open loving attention with a mean attention. I am not identifying an impersonal moral philosophy with a meanness of vision. The relevance of these examples to my philosophical claims is that an impersonal philosophy could not see this sort of meanness as a fundamental injustice to the other.

Of course, the context will determine whether this attention need be *ongoing* or not. In Needham, the fact that his compassion comes out in remorse does demand that he has a lasting attention: had he reacted sympathetically at the time he need not have dwelt upon the issue. This question of the *duration* of attention is not the same as the 'endless', open *nature* of attention. A sense of the reality of another leads to an acknowledgment of differences, and a sense that we can never

stop attending to others *in the spirit of drawing the line and thinking: I have seen all I need to see - I have the measure of them.* To say that love is endless is not to suggest a timescale, but to say that attention will be open and generous for as long as the relationship endures, which need not be long in all cases, and as long as the relationship is indeed a loving one.^{iv}

3.2 Dynamic Permeability.

The above reflections take us on to another closely related element of love, which is perhaps particularly evident in friendship. This is another aspect of the peculiar way in which others can affect us and can, in certain forms of love, draw our attention to themselves as objects of an individual attention and as terminal objects of our thoughts and interest.

The element I am thinking of is the importance of a certain sort of acceptance, what I might term ‘dynamic permeability’, borrowing from Amélie O. Rorty in her article “The Historicity Of Psychological Attitudes”. Rorty Says:

There is a kind of love – and for some it may be the only kind that qualifies as true love – that is historical precisely because it does not...rigidly designate its object. The details of such love change with every change in the lover and the friend. Such a love might be called dynamically permeable. It is permeable in that the lover is changed by loving and changed by truthful perception of the friend. (Rorty, p. 77)

Rorty is chiefly interested in this permeability because it implies that certain psychological attitudes must be understood historically to be understood properly. Such relational attitudes:

are not states identified by the functional relationship between the subject and some object....Although for some purposes it may be convenient to treat such attitudes as states, they arise from, and are shaped by, dynamic interactions between a subject and an object. (As slides of frozen cells stand to a living, working organism, so do psychological attitudes construed as states stand to phenomena of dynamic interaction.) (Rorty, pp. 73-74)

As I have said above, my interest in ‘dynamic permeability’ is in what this notion might reveal about the way in which others draw and hold and mould our attention.

I want in particular to highlight two elements of this dynamic permeability: the ability of others to draw our attention as a whole person, and not simply for some quality they have, which comes out through the way in which friends may change and yet love persist; and the way in which people change us through love, which is another aspect of the response of one individual to another.

I gave some introduction to this thought in the discussion of Aelred of Rievaulx, and it is further seen in Wollheim's remark that if our friend changes this will make no difference if the friendship is established, and that the attitudes that led us into the friendship may drop out of the picture. This is clearly an element of love which has some limits: I do not wish to deny that there are framing moral limits to what we can commit ourselves to for the sake of friendship, and my objection to those limits in Aelred's account concerned only the purposive way in which they were framed. (See Chapter 6, Section 3.2). Nevertheless, it will be granted, I think, that we are generally tolerant of change in our friends, and that this tolerance is something which we very much wish our friends to show to us. What is the significance of this, and what is its relevance to the thesis that I am developing? My claim is that it is a symptom of truly loving an individual as such, rather than simply some facet of their character, or the rôle they play in our lives.

There are many ways in which we might worry that this is not so. If we know that a friend is very struck with our intellectual gifts, and greatly relishes our conversations about philosophy, then we will very likely be pleased. But if we feel that the relationship would be terminated pretty quickly if we grew tired of philosophy, or lost our quick wit, then we might feel that we were loved for our gifts rather than for ourselves: in this context, such a distinction would be, I think, real, relevant and pressing. Of course, we might continue the relationship knowing this, and might even call it a friendship – there seems no reason to deny it the name. But if we do not

deny it that name we must recognise that friendships come in different types, and with different natures, and this is not the sort upon which we could invest too much of ourselves. Certainly it would not illuminate the way in which we, as an individual, can draw another's attention for our own sake, and as a terminal, compulsive end of our attention.

Let us take another facet of a true friendship, which is the preparedness not merely to accept change in a friend, but also to change with them. I might hope that my friend is, in a certain manner, prepared to change as I change. For instance, as my interests change, so his interests are changed, attending to new things precisely because they are (now) my interests. This willingness to be changed by another is, I want to argue, a further element of the peculiar way we may affect each other in friendship and love.

I shall try to bring this out using, at first, an example not of us changing in ourselves, but of our 'replacing' a friend who has been lost.

Having lost a friend, either through the dissolution of the friendship or the death of the friend, the remaining friend might reasonably miss not only the friend they lost but also the friendship. Perhaps many of their best qualities were developed by, and were displayed within, that friendship. Now their friend has gone, they cannot share a delight in film; they are not needed to care for their friend; they do not get to plan trips and share memories.

If we were to become friends with this person soon after, it is quite conceivable that we may find cause to worry, as the friendship progressed, that our friendship too closely resembled the friendship that was lost. Perhaps we find that we were offered the same love that they offered their former friend. That is, perhaps this friend seems too keen to care for me when I am really

less vulnerable than his former friend, and is forever planning trips. Further than this, I might feel that these elements of our friendship are pushed to the fore somewhat artificially.

This is a concern that the friend's love will not change in quality, because its nature is determined by the position it holds within *his* life, and he does not want to change that life on our account. And so this failure to change the quality and nature of the friend's love is a failure to truly attend to us. Instead, we are asked to receive a love which does not fully accept our reality, that we are different to others, and that we must be acknowledged within friendship as the individuals we are, even though this demands something of those who love us.

I think it is clear that a similar concern may arise when we do not replace another friend, and so mark a change of co-subject in that way, but change within ourselves, develop, grow, alter in our interests and our concerns. When someone really loves us their love is derived from a lived engagement with the particular person who we ourselves are, and is not one left over from their own biography. A true love is not fixed by the details of just one character, or by one set of plans, and a true friend is not asked to inhabit a pre-prepared space within another's life. A friendship is a dynamic relationship between two individuals relating to each other as such, and honestly perceiving each other as such, or else it is a sham.

This is not the requirement that a friend commit himself to following the other to the ends of the earth, whatever they become and whatever they ask of their friend. Indeed, precisely because the love is historical and is allowed to change, it is always somewhat uncertain, and we can never say how the friendship will evolve in advance. To assert that the relationship could never die, that the love will retain its particular quality come what may, seems precisely an attempt to mark in such limits.

What is important to love is that as long as it endures it is responsive to the reality of the two individuals engaged in it. This is part of the way in which friends invite us to a certain form of contemplation and a certain personal engagement, simply as a natural part of the relationship entered into.

3.3 Uncondescending Love.

When we react with compassion it is vital that we act with an uncondescending compassion, for an uncondescending compassion asserts that the other is our fellow, an equal, whereas a condescending compassion, one which asserts our magnificence in helping the other, is an injustice to the other, and recognises the other as our inferior. So too in friendship the demeanour of friends asserts a certain equality - we react to each other "on the level". Condescension can change compassion from a reaction in which the reality of another is affirmed in an open, loving attention into a means of diminishing and limiting another. In Dickens' novel *Little Dorrit*, when Edward Dorrit becomes jealous of his brother Frederick, he takes the opportunity to express precisely the wrong form of compassion: "Greatly broken" said Mr. Dorrit, "Greatly broken. My poor, affectionate, failing Frederick! Ha. Even taking into account what he was before, he is - hum - sadly broken." (Dickens, p. 641)

Compassion of a condescending sort can simply emphasise that whilst you yourself are strong, the other is broken and failing by comparison. Such compassion does not attend openly and without bias (Frederick is not *so* broken as his brother likes to imagine), and is not at all affirming of the other. It is only Frederick's affection for his brother, and some naive and exaggerated regard for his brother's social prestige, which prevents this condescension from provoking its typical response, which is resentment.

However whilst we are wrong to diminish others in a condescending compassion, we are wrong too if we are too keen to diminish ourselves, and this opposite fault is to an extent found in Frederick. This underscores the lesson, discussed in Chapter 6, Section 4.3 and amplified below Section 4, that for love to be an encounter between two valued and valuable individuals, neither party must abandon themselves before the other. To do so is self-defeating in two senses - it diminishes the self, and by doing so diminishes the worth of the love which is offered (see Dent, Chapter 4).

That we should meet each other as valued and valuable persons is an element of friendship that D'Arcy attempted to bring out. He tried to meet this requirement by supposing love to approximate to an act of *both* self-regard *and* abandonment. What is proposed here is that in love we value ourselves and the other, and *neither* seek to use the other as a route to one's betterment, *nor* allow ourselves to be abandoned to the other.

4. Recapitulation: the Lessons of Aelred and D'Arcy

How does the picture of the loves of compassion and friendship I have sketched above incorporate or reject the elements of love that we drew from Aelred and D'Arcy? I want here to return to the issues from Aelred and D'Arcy that, in Chapter 6 Section 5.2, I highlighted as demanding further discussion. I hope that the issue drawn from Aelred and Wollheim, that of dynamic permeability and the problem of containing a relationship wholly within another love or purpose, has been adequately dealt with above (Section 3.2). I shall now address further the question of mutuality and the role it plays in not only friendship, but also, I shall argue, compassion. I shall finish by again noting the difference in method between on the one hand Aelred and D'Arcy, and on the other myself.

The central issue that was investigated in the discussion of D'Arcy was that of Mutuality, the idea that love is a meeting of persons, valued as such. In such a love, neither party was 'looked past', attended to only for their place in a wider purpose. Neither did either part recklessly abandon themselves to the other, as a wild Eros might^v.

I want to explore this matter a little further, and this will entail addressing rather more directly a matter which I have so far only referred to in passing. I noted in the Introduction (Chapter 1, Section 3.2) that my own positive contribution would, at first, concentrate instead upon what *others* might be to *us*, and would not *initially* consider what effect this reciprocally had on our own sense of self. The concept of mutuality brings this reciprocal effect to the fore.

I have argued that others are, in love, present to us as valued individuals, worthy of such an open and generous attention. I have noted through a discussion of Wollheim that such an attention may be affirming and supporting to another's sense of self.^{vi} I must now begin to consider more explicitly our own sense of self, and how it is affected by our loving engagement with others. I shall say something here in response to D'Arcy, and this will be further elaborated in Chapter 10, Section 2.

D'Arcy's account has the virtue of explicitly raising the question of what effect our loving of others has upon our sense of self, and he finds the self apparently diminished in some loving relations. In the wild Eros which de Rougemont describes, and which seems to bear a close resemblance to the Eros which Aelred fears, we seem to offer ourselves too quickly and too readily to the first appearance of good in another, and D'Arcy finds this not only to be a practical danger to the self, but a gesture which diminishes the self by its very nature. That is, in some of the accounts of love which D'Arcy considers, the effect of the love of another is that the *other* is exalted and affirmed, whilst the dignity and worth of the self is too quickly forgotten^{vii}. This of

course contrasts with a rational contemplation and search for God, in which the proper good of the self and its enlargement and perfection are always in view, and guide us in our loving, at the cost, perhaps, of never properly engaging with the other.

D'Arcy sees *Philia* or friendship as the perfection of love, a love between persons, in which *neither* is absorbed or overlooked, and consequently mutuality and reciprocity are central to D'Arcy's conception of friendship. However, as I noted in the last chapter, Section 4.3, and above, Section 3.3, this leaves an ambiguity, for he might be envisaging a mutual exchange of love between self-possessed and self-valuing individuals, or he might envisage a love in which both parties hand themselves over to the other, and in which their entire sense of self-worth and standing comes from the other. In this second conception of friendship, mutuality or reciprocity is the *entire and sufficient* source of a person's sense of self, and as human friendship is to mirror as closely as possible our relation to God, it is this second account of friendship which D'Arcy appears to endorse.

I want to repeat the argument, stated very briefly in the last chapter, that the self *cannot*, properly, be devalued in loving another; to emphasise that our loving relations can be the source of much of our sense of self-worth; and to argue that such reciprocity is a feature of compassion as well as of friendship.

It is self-defeating in every sense to denigrate oneself, to lose one's sense of one's worth in loving another, because that robs us of any sense that the love we offer is itself of worth. The affection of another human presence, of a free and dignified person able to bestow their love on what is genuinely good, is a great comfort, and may indeed elicit our affection in gratitude. But we cannot bestow anything of value, nor expect to receive anything of value in return, if we present ourselves as being below the sort of attention and esteem that anyone might be grateful to receive.

This is not, however, to discount the extent to which a mutual loving encounter can affirm and enlarge one's sense of self and of one's value. Our unconditional love of another, our taking them seriously as an individual, important as such, will naturally be a source of strength and affirmation to another, providing that we have not lowered our selves as discussed. Where love is reciprocal we should expect that the mutual exchange of affection will enlarge *our* sense of self too.

We cannot, of course, enter into a friendship simply to have our self-possession enhanced, for if another perceives that our love of them is conditional upon a return, then it will no longer be the generous, open love which we value, and being fraudulently presented to them as such can be counted upon to inspire only resentment and anger. Both conditions - valuing the self, and expecting but never demanding a return of love - must be met for love to be a mutually enhancing process:

it is the mutual level encounter and freely given recognition of people valued by each other and valuing themselves that keeps faith with the real character of the deeds and responses which connect them, and makes possible the unconstrained self-expression of each in the relation. (Dent, p. 138)^{viii}

When these conditions are met, however, the mutuality of love and the reciprocity of affection need not be limited to friendship. In Aelred and D'Arcy, reciprocity is identified only with *Philia*, whereas *Caritas* (or *Agape*) and *Eros* are seen as one-way relationships.^{ix} However, Rousseau suggests that in compassion or uncondescending pity we may sense a return affection too.

In the affectionate response of compassion, when we are most attentive to another for their own sake, we are aware of the figure we cut in their eyes: rather than imagining that another just must see us as a competitor or rival, which Gauthier takes as axiomatic, we will attend justly and

closely to the reality of our presence for others. What we hope (but not demand) to find coming back at us, and indeed usually do find, is another form of affection. That affection is gratitude, being fondly received by another as a significant, benevolent and welcome presence in their life, and having one's kindly acts towards them justly attended to and acknowledged, rather than phantasized according to their vanity.^x

Such interaction with others may give us a sense of the self as being enlarged and affirmed in accepting others' love which might challenge and go beyond the accounts of the life of the self given by Gauthier, Fried and Williams, and I shall explore the extent to which this is so in Chapter 10, Section 2. What is important to note is that here a sense of self comes from an attention to others, whereas I showed in the first part that a more common construction in ethics is to defend a conception of the self, and to then see what this implies for our treatment of and attention to others.

5. Concluding remarks

In Part 1 of this thesis, I discussed the place of others in the moral philosophy of Gauthier, Fried and Williams. I concluded that, on their account, others entered our lives as instances of a type, albeit as individual instances in Fried, or that they entered our lives as they were the point of our purposes, or furthered or hindered those purposes. I wanted in this chapter and the last to find within human life a different sort of relation, a relation of *attention* to each other as *individuals*, and following Stocks I explored various forms of love.

Of course, these loves enter our lives in particular contexts. That is, we have seen love to be the appropriate and spontaneous bond between us when we witness each other's distress, or are established in a friendship: we must now consider the relevance of this to our wider relations.

Let me firmly rule out two ways in which this might progress. Firstly, the ensuing argument will not concern the *balance* in a good life between attending to others and acting purposively. I will not be saying that our lives are dominated by purpose, that this is a bad thing, and that the pendulum should swing back in the favour of attention and contemplation. I am certainly not saying anything so crude as that contemplation is good, and purpose bad, far from it.

What I want to say is that the contemplative view of others conditions our purposes and actions, shows them up in a new light. But here again I must rule out one way in which this might be thought to happen, which was that taken by Aelred and D'Arcy. I am not saying that friendship, or indeed compassion, is the very model of human action and interaction, and that we should aspire to it in all our acts. I am certainly not arguing that moral duty should *resemble* friendship or compassion, or that we should attend to others *as if* they were friends (or as if they needed our pity!).

How then does what we learn within the loves of compassion and friendship condition what we see as our duty to others outside of friendships and outside of the tending to others' distress? My argument in the next two chapters will be that our relation to others in friendship and compassion, in which we see the reality of others, *changes our understanding of what another human being can be to us*. We therefore enter into our purposes with a changed understanding of the value of the individuals that we meet and that play a role in our purposes. Others have a reality that grates against the thought that we may perceive them *simply* as a means – against the thought that they are simply the road upon which our purposes may travel. I am, in effect, arguing for a form of respect for individuals, but one different in nature to that fashioned by Fried, following Kant.

The argument, to repeat, is that love changes our conception of others, and reveals a value which conditions our attitude to them even where there is no compassion called for and no friendship established. The way in which reactions of love can indeed change our sense of others is explored in the following chapter: some exploration of its impact upon moral life is undertaken in Chapter 9.

i See Chapter 9, Section 2.4, and Chapter 10, Section 2. I have already briefly made reference to this issue in Chapter 6, Section 4.2.

ii A tangential point might be made here. The similarity of the details between the two women's lives leads to Dorothea's sense of walking the same path as the woman in the miniature, and makes sympathy and compassion easy. I think that we might even describe this as a case of seeing oneself in another. Both of these two senses are central to Aristotle's account of friendship, and of course we have seen the importance to Aelred's account that friends walk the same path, and be as similar to each other as possible - that is as close as possible to finding in each other a replica of the self - and this is unsurprising as Aelred's account is itself an indirect descendant (via Cicero) of Aristotle's account.

It is I think an interesting feature of the quotation from *Middlemarch* that such similarity and closeness does indeed engender feelings of affection, compassion and friendship, and yet there is no sense that the feelings towards the other are conditional. We may admit that similarity of ends may play a rôle in engendering the companionship which Dorothea feels towards Aunt Julia, without suggesting that the affection must in its nature be conditional, and must extend only so far as the similarity is maintained.

iii Another example comes from Sartre's *Nausea* (see Sartre, pp. 96-104). Sartre's character Antoine Roquentin discusses the way in which the presence and reality of another is obscured and dismissed by a professional who dismissively classifies him as an 'old crackpot'. Although Sartre's account of what the presence and reality of another comes to, and his views on the possibilities for relations between men, are very different from those I am offering here, he captures the same sense in which the presence of another can be controlled and contained by the assertion of a closed, and utterly adequate knowledge of them:

'An old crackpot' - and Doctor Rogé thought vaguely of other old crackpots, without being able to remember any one of them clearly. Now nothing Monsieur Achille can do will surprise us: because he's an old crackpot! (Sartre, p. 102, his emphasis.)

Sartre particularly highlights the way people use abstract ideas to defeat the ability of others to surprise us. Interestingly, he like James associates this mean, controlling form of knowledge with the sense of having made another: "doctors, priests, magistrates, and officers know men as thoroughly as if they had made them." (Sartre, p. 100)

Stocks tells us that "a ruler or official might show great knowledge of men in the sense that he had an unerring instinct for putting the square peg in the square hole and the round peg in the round hole...and yet

he might have little interest in the men as individuals and little knowledge of them in that sense." (Stocks (2), p. 49) Sartre shows how the more general form of knowledge may be used to cut off the possibility of engaging someone as an individual.

iv We might contrast this 'endless attention' with Gauthier, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 3.2. There others are susceptible to a simple and verifiable judgment - of their nature, of their status, of their moral goodness - against a pre-determined account of what they should be. I discuss this issue again in Chapter 9, Section 2.3.

v Or indeed the sacrificial Agape which D'Arcy finds in Nygren. See footnote viii to Chapter 6.

vi On this last point, see Chapter 6, Section 3.2.

vii Of course, in D'Arcy's completion of the Christian story the self is not finally forgotten, for it is exalted by God. However, de Rougemont's Eros, and indeed Nygren's inspired Agape, involves abandoning thoughts of the self.

viii That we must be self-possessed in loving others and cannot, logically, derive all our self-respect from a mutual encounter with another, suggests that some sense of standing must derive from some other source. The suggestion of Rousseau, I take it, is that such sources might include an awareness of one's genuine usefulness (and that sense may itself be enhanced in acts of friendship and compassion, as we recognise in the relief of another's pain and in their thankfulness our ability to be a source of genuine good to others). Perhaps other sources of such self-possession might be the more sacrificial love of parents and family, or even the love of God: it is not the aim of this thesis to argue that a theological account of the loves must be irrelevant or irreconcilable to an account of friendship between men, only that the latter cannot be too closely modelled upon a sacrificial relation with God.

ix Indeed, it is commonly suggested that any thought of a return for one's generosity or compassion must corrupt the sentiment one offers. Such a thought appears to be expressed in the following quotation from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: "charity, if it is to be inexhaustibly serene or loving, must have made the sacrifice of every reward to be looked for in human gratitude or affection." (Teilhard de Chardin, p. 63) I want to say that we must sacrifice the demand for gratitude, and perhaps this is all Teilhard de Chardin wishes to assert. Indeed, it would not be a proper charity which was offered in the hope of triggering a grateful response, even where such a response is not demanded. However, where charity is primarily offered for the sake of another, I do not see why we must sacrifice the hope that gratitude might follow it: indeed, far from being especially serene to do so, it seems to ignore the full potential for goodness in the other, to deny that the other has something to give to you.

x This argument owes much to Dent's discussion of Rousseau's work on pity, in his book *Rousseau*.

Chapter 8

Other Human Beings

1. Introductory Remarks

In the last chapter I discussed the way in which we might attend to others, in compassion, and in friendship. These forms of attention are found within a particular context - the pain of others and particular kinds of ongoing relationships - and this raises the question of what relevance such reactions have to wider moral relations.

I shall argue that our reactions to each other in love change our sense of what another can be to us, and that this changed sense of another is expressed in the way we engage with and attend to each other *outside* of relations of love. This chapter will discuss the relationship between our attitudes and reactions and our conception of what it is we react to, drawing heavily upon Peter Winch's article, '*Eine Einstellung zur Seele*', and in Section 4 I shall focus upon the way in which what we learn in one context may condition the way in which we view others in other contexts through a discussion of Cora Diamond's 'Eating Meat and Eating People'.

2. *Eine Einstellung zur Seele*

2.1 Recognising Pain and Recognising People.

Winch wants to investigate, using passages from Wittgenstein, what our recognition of others as conscious human beings, and our recognition and belief in their pain, beliefs, doubts etc. consists

in. We might begin by calling to mind an immediately appealing picture of what this consists in. In this picture, we *ascribe* to another certain states, which is to believe in something or other going on behind their behaviour, the absence of which would make their behaviour a charade. And it is, so we might think, on account of their having these particular states that we accept the *general* proposition that they are genuine, conscious human beings, and not some sort of automaton.

Winch wants to reject both the account of the relation between the particular beliefs and the general belief, and, more importantly to this thesis, the account of what this latter belief comes to, that is, the account of belief as a simple *ascription* of a property or state. I shall turn to this second matter now, and return briefly to the first in Section 2.3.

2.2 Belief, Recognition and Attitude.

Winch finds in Wittgenstein an account of what belief in another's pain amounts to, and of what the recognition of another as a conscious human amounts to, which shows up how little we understand of that belief if we simply account for it as some simple form of ascription of properties to another. It is Wittgenstein's suggestion that we should look to the demeanour and attitude which we take to those in pain, and to other people in general, to get a proper characterisation of the belief.

Supposing we begin not with a belief in a person's status as a conscious human being, but with the particular belief that they are in pain. Wittgenstein's discussion of this will help us understand how he finds attention to attitudes and demeanours the key to understanding the more general belief. Winch quotes from *Philosophical Investigations*:

I tell someone I am in pain. His attitude to me will be that of belief; disbelief; suspicion; and so on.

Let us assume he says: "It's not so bad." - Doesn't that prove that he believes in something behind the outward expression of pain? - His attitude is proof of his attitude. Imagine not merely the words "I am in pain" but also the answer "It's not so bad" replaced by instinctive noises and gestures. (Winch (3), p. 141; from Wittgenstein, I, §310, p. 103e)

Wittgenstein is not suggesting that our recognition of pain is an attitude *rather* than a belief, as if we had a secure paradigm of what belief comes to which does not involve attention to the demeanour and attitudes of either party (see Winch, p. 142). Rather he is telling us that if we want to know what the belief comes to then, in Winch's words:

we should not allow ourselves to become hypnotised by its verbal expression ('He is in pain'), but should look at the whole range of behaviour, demeanour, facial expression etc. in which such verbal expressions are embedded, and with which they are continuous, which give the words their particular sense and by some of which indeed the words may often be replaced. (Winch, p. 142)

The proper characterisation of the belief requires us to attend to the reactions of both parties. It is not enough to characterise the belief as some sort of simple ascription to one party by another of an event which lies 'behind' the cries or the protests. Wittgenstein could be paraphrased thus:

stop and look at what his attitude does actually consist in, [and] perhaps you will be surprised at some of the subtleties and complexities involved; and when you have noticed them perhaps you will be less inclined to suppose that their significance must depend upon something below the surface of which they are just symptoms. (Winch, p. 142)

The attitude *is* the belief, and to see what makes the belief *that particular belief* we must pay attention to the attitude. Furthermore, a full and proper attention to the attitude will encompass the demeanour involved in the attitude, the context in which it is situated, and the attitudes and reactions of the person to whom this whole attitudinal response is directed.

Such an attitude, in all its detail, plays a similar rôle in the recognition of another as a conscious human being: "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul [*Eine Einstellung zur Seele*]." (Winch (3), p. 140, from Wittgenstein, Part II, Section iv, p. 178e)

To see what the belief in or recognition of another comes to, it is then essential that we focus upon the attitude clearly, and that means a focus upon the demeanour of the individual, their whole orientation towards the other, within the appropriate context. And Wittgenstein's warning is that modelling our recognition of another, as a human being or as being in pain, upon a simple ascription of properties draws our attention *away* from the attitudes and demeanours that makes our belief or recognition what it is.

What would such an attitude, such a belief about, or recognition of, another be like? We are familiar with both if we look afresh. The reaction to pain might be pity, or perhaps even horror and repulsion. And these reactions are not proof of anything, or testimony *to* a belief in pain, but are the forms of that belief: "His attitude is a proof of his attitude."

Winch gives us an excellent example of the form which a more general recognition of another as a conscious human being, of what an 'einstellung zur seele' might be like, drawn from Simone Weil:

The human beings around us exert just by their presence a power which belongs to themselves to stop, to diminish, or modify, each movement which our bodies design. A person who crosses our path does not turn aside our steps in the same manner as a street sign, no one stands up, or moves about, or sits down again in quite the same fashion when he is alone in a room as when he has a visitor. (Winch (2), p. 146, from Weil, p. 28)

This is not behaviour *consequent* upon an ascription of a property to the other, and it is certainly not the expression of an opinion. It is the *form of our recognition of another human being*, and is drawn from us, quite automatically and instinctively, simply by the other's presence.

Winch calls for us to look at the forms of our recognition of another, and the idea of what we recognise, together. Before exploring the significance of this idea we should clarify the other

question raised in Winch's article, that of the relation between the general recognition of another as a human being, and the specific belief in their pain at this moment.

How are the specific beliefs about a person related to the general reaction to them as a human being? The two come together, and neither make sense without each other. That we have 'eine einstellung zur seele' towards another is a condition of a belief in their pain: we could not seriously attribute suffering to something we could not react to with attitudes such as that described by Weilⁱ. Similarly, should we react as she describes to the presence of another, but then show no pity at all at their pain, this would raise the question of whether they were callous in the extreme, or simply confused. Thus the reaction we have in one context alters what we can meaningfully do in another: I shall develop this idea further as this chapter progresses.

2.3 Love as *Eine Einstellung zur Seele*.

I want to return to the notion of a reaction to a human being as such, to an exploration of the attitudes and demeanours which such a belief may involve, and which are inseparable from a proper account of what the idea of another comes to in our lives.

We have, by this stage of the thesis, seen several examples of this. We might recall the example of an "attitude to a soul" in the exchanges between Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond in Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*, (see Chapter 5, Section 4.3), a passage which focuses closely upon the physical aspects of an attention to others. In this example we see how the *demeanour* of one to another can reveal the sense of an *encounter*ⁱⁱ, how the sense of the *reality and presence* of another can, in a specific context, be read in the physical orientation between persons. This sense of an encounter, of just what the one is to the other at that moment, is what strikes Isabel as "something detected", and in concert with her existing knowledge of the lines of relation between

herself and Merle and Osmond enables her to gather a deeper, and darker, grasp of the context which gives the encounter its particular, intimate tone.

The sense of another human being, of another 'soul', which Wittgenstein talks of in *Philosophical Investigations* is not a specifically ethical sense, but simply that understanding of another conscious creature which is central to the philosophy of mind. This sense of another is conditioned by a host of reactions, in both the first and third person. For instance, we might typically anticipate that another will suffer upon hearing bad news (see Winch, pp. 151-2). In the context of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein is simply looking at the way in which we come to a belief in another mind at all, against the claims of scepticism, and we shall have to look at other sorts of attitude to broaden our sense of what another can be to us.

The passage from Weil is perhaps more closely linked to the way in which we value others. What I mean is that in most contexts such a basic acknowledgment of their presence as a human being is also an acknowledgement of their worth as a human being, and Weil writes powerfully about the cool bitterness with which Homer recounts the failure of the mighty to grant such a basic recognition of human dignity to their foes in the *Iliad*ⁱⁱⁱ. Winch, in his article "Who is my Neighbour?" develops another unifying account of a conception of another and the attitude towards them, drawn from the parable of the Good Samaritan. He explores the conception of a *fellow* human being, and the attitude towards another as one's fellow, and again what counts as falling within this attitude or mode of attention includes much that is a matter of overt action, particularly of course our care for others: "*recognising another as a fellow human being* is in a certain way inseparable from *behaving towards him as a fellow human being*". (Winch (4), p. 156)

The aim of this thesis could be considered to be to examine a specific range of "attitudes to a soul", namely certain kinds of love. That is, I have been looking at attitudes which are in themselves a form of recognition of another as having a presence, and a value. Most of all I have looked at attitudes and demeanours which are typical of the recognition of another as an individual.

Needham's reaction to the distressed girl, which we saw in the last chapter, is one such example, and I emphasised there the internal relation between what Needham attended to - the reality of the girl in her distress - and the manner in which he, belatedly, attended. I wanted to say there, and I repeat here, that it is only in attending to the character of Needham's attention that we can properly understand what it might mean to talk of the girl's *reality or of her presence*, what the force of that way of describing what he beheld might be.

Other reactions do not attend in quite the same manner, and do not reveal the same kind of individuality or reality. Of course I have argued that this is the case for actions in which the other features only as the means to a particular end. In Chapter 9, Section 3, I shall press this point with reference to a particular, malicious reaction, which does not seem to serve a wider purpose, that of the sadist.

The example of Dorothea's attention to the woman in the picture, taken from *Middlemarch*, requires more care, for this is not a straight-forward example. Although faced only with a miniature, Dorothea engages with it in a way which draws much from our engagement with other people, and the parallels draw out much about the relations between us. The incident reveals something about the ideas we have of each other and what conditions them, for it is not simply the conventions of art, but also the compassionate and friendly aspects of Dorothea's demeanour

which condition the manner in which she related, through the picture, to the woman whom it depicted.

In such examples of compassion, another's suffering is an essential part of the context which makes our love of the other the particular form of attention it is. In other cases, though, an historical relationship between the two provides a different context, in which we might find the love of friendship. In looking at such examples I have tried to select, from the multitude of attitudes which we very naturally take to each other and which condition our sense of each other, those which give us a sense of others as worthy of an individual love. We see this form of attention in the love of friends, in the open but often unfussy care which they have for each other, the open interest in their character and fortunes, the willingness to learn more.

2.4 The Changed Conception of Another.

What I have argued above is that the loves which I have discussed condition a sense of another not only having a presence or a reality which commands our interest and sometimes our care, but also conditions a sense of another as an individual. The conception of the other which is seen in love is of an individual, to be attended to as such.

What I wish to emphasise is not merely that loving attention in one particular case may pick out features of the other which a more purposeful, less affectionate love might miss. I might attend more closely to, perhaps, a favourite pen than does the friend who borrows it simply to write with, but this is only a closer attention to something which is nevertheless conceived of as the same type of thing by both parties^{iv}. What must be emphasised in addition is that attention to others in love conditions *a sense of what a human being is*, that is, it gives us a sense of others which is only seen in the light of that form of love.^v

This is a conception of another as deserving of an open endless attention, of someone who we must never tell ourselves we have 'taped', someone who is wronged if we dismiss them as being *simply* an instance of a kind. Furthermore this is not a metaphysical claim: we attend to the reality of another's life, to an individual who is not simply a particular collection of attributes, *in the manner in which we attend to the attributes themselves*.

3. Generality: Recognising Other Human Beings Outside of Friendship and Compassion

I said in the introductory remarks to this chapter that I wanted to argue that the changed understanding of what another might be to us brought about through reactions of compassion and friendship might change the way in which we can properly engage with and attend to others *outside* of the contexts in which those reactions are themselves appropriate.

An instance of reactions in one context conditioning reactions in another is seen in Winch's discussion above. That is to say that the specific reactions towards pain, and the general acknowledgment of another as a conscious human being, come together: the attitude towards a person in pain is one of a series of reactions which goes with having an attitude towards a soul.^{vi} It would go against the grain, seem almost a contradiction, to react to another as Weil describes, and then treat their pain-behaviour as we treat the wriggling of a spider.

I want to suggest that in a similar way, it goes against the grain to find others an intelligible co-subject of our friendship, or to be able, if the context arose, to receive their pain with compassion, and then to treat others with a certain disregard for their claims in other walks of life. And that, again, is not by adopting compassion or some form of friendship outside of pain or familiarity,

but by acknowledging in other walks of life that we have before us a human individual in the sense conditioned by friendship and compassion in other contexts.

Such a discussion of the way in which reactions from different contexts affect each other is found in Cora Diamond's paper 'Eating Meat and Eating People', and I shall draw upon that in what follows.

4. Diamond: Eating Meat and Eating People

4.1 Singer and Regan.

Diamond's article attacks a particular form of argument against rearing animals for meat, and against other infringements of what are seen as an animal's rights. In particular, Diamond wants to criticise the arguments of Peter Singer and Tom Regan.^{vii}

The arguments of Singer and Regan very explicitly want to take our reactions to other human beings and to other animals as being *consequent* to our understanding of what they are, and not as conditions of our understanding having the form it does, and they characterise that understanding in terms of the qualities or interests which we can ascribe to people and to animals.

Regan's and Singer's arguments against rearing animals for meat and for vivisection are that the practice is akin to racism or sexism. Their account of racism and sexism is that it involves a denial of equal rights on the basis of irrelevant characteristics; on the basis of sex or colour. 'Speciesism', in Richard Ryder's phrase, is said to work in the same way: other animals have equal, relevant capacities (Singer and Regan are thinking mainly of the capacity to have interests) to our young and many of the mentally disabled, and yet we commonly treat them in much

inferior ways, and subject them to what we would never subject our young to. The only obvious difference, according to Regan and Singer, between our young and disabled and the higher animals is simply that one group is human and one is not, which strikes Singer and Regan as being no more a relevant distinguishing characteristic than colour and sex.

I said in my exposition of Winch above that Wittgenstein warned that modelling our recognition of another, as a human being or as being in pain, upon a simple ascription of properties draws our attention *away* from the attitudes and demeanours that makes our belief or recognition what it is. Diamond's objection to Singer and Regan is precisely that they draw attention away from the most luminous features not only of our relations to animals, but also our relations to each other.

Diamond at once draws our attention to a feature of human relations which seems clearly relevant to the issue of eating meat, and which Singer and Regan sideline, which is that we do not eat our dead. To account for this as being consequent to the ascription of certain rights and interests to each other which killing another for meat would infringe upon misses certain striking facts: we do not eat those who die of natural causes or accidents, where their flesh is in good condition, and we do not eat amputated limbs. We have, in fact, a revulsion at such practices, which are only carried out either in desperation or under a particular religious interpretation, and this comes with a strong sense that *a human being is not something to eat*. Similarly few vegetarians would eat the flesh of a cow which dies accidentally, and for the same reason: for a vegetarian, *an animal is not something to eat*. Now what Diamond wishes to explore, and what Singer and Regan obscure, is what conditions and holds in place such an understanding of what an animal *is*.

4.2 Wider Reactions to Animals and Human Beings.

A sense that an animal is or is not something to eat comes along with one's whole sense of the difference between animals and people^{viii}. This is not the same as enumerating differences between animals and people, where that means simply enumerating properties: it has more to do with the place people and animals hold in our lives.

We saw above (Sections 2.2 and 2.3) some of the reactions which condition our understanding of another human being. Diamond focuses upon some more reactions which bring out the differences between an attitude to another person and an attitude to an animal. Our sense of what it is to behold a human is conditioned by such things as the difference between giving a person a funeral and giving a dog one. Similarly, a child is something to be named, not numbered: not so a cow.

Such reactions are interdependent with the conception of what a human being is, and what an animal is. "Animals - these objects we are acting upon - are not given for our thought independently of such a mass of ways of thinking about them." (Diamond, p. 476) Of course the most direct way in which we learn and express the belief, if we hold it, that animals are indeed something to eat whereas humans (even those with cognitive capacities lesser than the animals in question) are certainly not is around the dinner table, where WE eat THEM: We are around the table and they are on it (see Diamond, p. 470).

What is very important to note is that Diamond does not present this last, and most direct reaction as a 'stand-alone' reaction, relevant only to our sense of whether an animal is to be eaten, and wholly adequate in itself to establish the fact. The idea that a human being is not something to eat takes hold amongst a whole network of reactions, which condition our attitude to others as being

something precious, something of importance and standing, and our revulsion against the idea of eating others is just one such reaction. That is, it contributes to the sense and the precise nature of the preciousness and importance which others have for us that we do not eat them when they are dead, and it would by the same token be foreign to that sense of preciousness to eat our dead despite all our other reactions remaining intact. We do not eat our dead, unless we have some religious interpretation of what we do, and we do not leave our dead to decay where they fall, unless they are to be disgraced in a very extreme manner. These reactions are *not* held in place by some appeal to what a human being is which *is itself based purely upon the ascription of properties and interests*: rather these reactions condition our sense of what a human being is, and each individual reaction is, so to speak, held in place by the others.

Whether we can see animals as something to eat is not simply established by the customs of the dinner table, for although these customs do play a rôle in conditioning our sense of the difference between people and animals, the ritual itself will seem out of place if it is not consistent with our wider sense of the difference between people and animals. It is in this inter-relation between reactions that Diamond sees the possibility of a better account of the disgust vegetarians feel at the notion that an animal is something to eat.

Diamond wants to show how a better form of vegetarian persuasion might go. She wants to show that we can, without using Singer's arguments, explore the sense that an animal is not something to eat, and this can only be achieved by showing that 'the difference between animals and people', the differing sense of what we have before us, is not so great as we might like to think, not great enough for the idea of an animal as something to eat to take hold.

The argument of the vegetarian, for Diamond, is that in fact our attitudes to animals are inconsistent and contradictory, and that this must be brought to our attention. For instance, whilst

many countries use cruel farming methods, literature reveals that we may feel pity for animals without sentimentality, and even a sense of fellowship, a sense of an animal as a *fellow creature*. And of course this sense of fellowship comes with yet other reactions; the sense of the *indignity* of some circus practices, the conception of a hunted animal as a respected enemy (see Diamond, p. 175).

In the context of the idea of an animal as a fellow creature - which involves to some extent the extension to animals of reactions born between people - at least *some* of the practices which go along with our meat-eating rituals cannot stand alone so easily:

It does normally, or very often, go with the idea of a fellow creature that we do eat them. But it then characteristically goes with the idea that they must be hunted fairly or raised without bad usage. The treatment of an animal as simply a stage (the self-moving stage) in the production of a meat product is not part of this mode of thinking; and I should suggest also that the concept of 'vermin' is at least sometimes used in excluding an animal from the class of fellow creatures. (Diamond, p. 175)

Here Diamond *finds room for critical argument against existing practices*, through attending to the ways in which the conception and sense of another person, and of an animal, enter our lives, rather than turning away from them as Singer and Regan do.

Whether such an argument can settle for everyone the question of whether an animal is something to eat is another matter. Some find themselves called to a more robust sense of pity and care for animals, which leads to the idea of an animal as something to eat becoming untenable. It is not important to this thesis to argue the point that animals are or aren't to be eaten. Rather I want to stress the way in which the whole notion of eating animals might be thought to be shown up by the broader conception of an animal which is held in place by quite other, wider reactions towards them. What is important to note is that *that is where we must look* to decide the issue, for we

must look honestly at all our reactions to animals and to others, and to see whether they are contradictory and inconsistent.

4.3 Friendship, Compassion, and Wider Reactions Towards Other Human Beings.

I have discussed Diamond's paper in order to try to bring out the way in which certain reactions join together in conditioning an idea of an animal or of a human being, and in doing so can be found to be either mutually supportive, or discordant, or downright contradictory. I want to claim that in this way compassion and pity, in shaping our sense of what another can be to us, shape, and are shaped by, other reactions.^{ix}

This claim is central to the closing stages of this thesis. It is the claim of this chapter that our reactions in one context, and the idea of another which comes with those reactions, alter our sense of what we are doing in another context. Therefore, if we react with compassion to another we have a changed conception of what another can be. When we meet another human being, who is not in pain, I want to say that our understanding of the ways in which we should attend to them are changed, and our account of what it is we do if we treat them poorly is changed, even though the pain is not there and compassion is not called for.

4.4 Friendship and the Idea of a Human Being.

Now that I have outlined the way in which reactions of love might alter our moral reactions, it might be asked if friendship can really perform this rôle. I have argued that love alters our sense of what another human being might be, in a way that emphasises that we must attend to another as an individual.^x Yet we have seen that the exclusive nature of friendship is commonly emphasised in philosophical discussions of that love, and so we might ask whether friendship

really reveals the sort of attention that this thesis requires. Does friendship tell us something about what it is to behold a human being *simply as a unique individual, valuable in and for themselves*, or does it not rather reveal certain human beings as favourites, valued in a manner which contrasts with and separates them from the worth of any and all individuals as such? Does friendship tell us only about the ways in which we might attend to some sub-class of people, but nothing about the reactions which shape our conception of an individual as such?

I want to claim that this latter worry is unfounded, and that this makes good my claim made earlier in the thesis (Chapter 2, Section 4.2) that the emphasis upon partiality and impartiality which runs through philosophical discussions of love might be neutralised^{xi}.

Were this a treatise on harmonising the loves, seen as potentially conflicting attachments, then the question of partiality versus impartiality would be central. But as I argued in chapters 6 and 7, this is not such a treatise, but an attempt to examine the way love changes our perception of and attention to others. And what I want to say is that friendship shows us an individual in their individuality, and not as part of a class.

Although we will properly take a greater interest in those we find engaging and convivial when moving towards a friendship, the nature of the established friendship is between an individual and an individual as such. This is shown by the manner in which, whilst the individuals may change, such that they would not be likely to seek out each others' friendship if they now met for the first time, with their history together established and their affections fixed and matured, the friendship may still persist, changing as the friends themselves alter and grow (See Chapter 7, Section 3.2).

In the light of this I want to say that the background of friends, the history between them, *forms the context* in which we might love another as an individual. Outside of such a relationship a

gesture cannot be taken as an act of such friendship *in the same way that* outside of another's pain or misfortune a gesture, thought or word cannot be taken as embodying a genuine compassion.

When we meet someone with whom we do not have the background of a relationship of intimacy and friendship, and whether or not a friendship appears likely or desirable, our understanding of the ways in which we may engage with them are altered by other experiences of friendship, without the need to imitate friendship in this instance; *in the same way*, when we meet someone who is not in pain, however immune to deep suffering their life might appear, our sense of what we behold is altered by other reactions in other circumstances, and that changed understanding does not require us to imitate compassion, which would be absurd.

The reason why I consider the issue of partiality and impartiality to be a secondary issue in this thesis is that the issue of partiality focuses upon whether another actually is or is not a friend. It is the changed sense of what another person may be to us - *be they an actual friend or not* - which I want to focus upon in this thesis.

To clarify this idea of a relationship changing our sense of another, let us return again to a passage from Diamond's article. Diamond says she realised watching some Greenpeace workers with rescued dolphins that her idea of those we could have a friendship with had been too narrowly constrained. She saw, I suppose, bits of behaviour and gestures and modes of inter-relation which bore at least some of the marks of friendships as we know them, when she had not thought such a fellowship possible. However, the ascription of friendship here is not *simply* a matter of seeing the relevant behaviour and interaction. Diamond has argued that we can, to an extent, afford "the extension to animals of modes of thinking characteristic of our responses to human beings." She does not, of course, simply mean that we can credit them with cognitive capacities that we might have thought peculiar to ourselves, but that we might relate to them in

characteristically human ways, and with thoughts found in human relations. "The idea of an animal as company is a striking kind of case; it brings out that the notion of a fellow creature does not just involve the extension of moral concepts like charity and justice." (Diamond, p. 174) When we see a whale as a fellow creature, there is the chance that we will see our relationship with them as a friendship. And I think the contrast here is not between friend and non-friend, but friend and 'friend'. Before the particular interaction which is, in Diamond's assessment, just about enough for the ascription of friendship, *other* reactions prepared the possibility of a friendship, rather than a 'friendship'.

I should imagine that Diamond sees enough differences between humans and animals to think that in some cases it would be right to place scare quotes around the term 'friend' to distinguish the two and emphasise their differences: I should want to say that anyway^{xii}.

That people can intelligibly be the co-subjects of a friendship conditions our understanding of them, and the contrast we should mark is not friend and non-friend but between those who could, in different circumstances, be a friend and those who could only ever be a 'friend'. That someone may be greeted as a friend lives alongside other reactions to them as an individual. There are people who are so degraded that they do not draw from us 'eine einstellung zur seele', and it goes with this that few can react to them with genuine uncondescending compassion. Simone Weil describes those denigrated in this way by the brutal exercise of might:

this indefinable influence of human presence is not exercised by those men whom a moment of impatience could deprive them of their lives even before a thought had had the time to condemn them. Before these men others behave as if they were not there; and they, in turn, finding themselves in danger of being in an instant reduced to nothing, imitate nothingness. (Weil, p. 28)

When we receive a man like this, they could only be a 'friend' and we could only have 'compassion'. Of course, much more is denied the denigrated than the thought that they are to be

attended to as individuals, for as Weil describes them they are offered no standing at all. What I want to say is that the ability to see someone as an intelligible co-subject of our friendship is one of those reactions - even to non-friends - which comes with giving them a certain place in our lives, a certain standing, a certain reality.

5. Moral Responses

In the next chapter I want to discuss some of the ways in which our moral responses and moral reactions to others might reflect the sense of another's reality which is found in love. I shall not be arguing that the love which we have seen in the contexts of friendship and of compassion should be extended beyond those relationships. Rather, to repeat, I shall argue that our understanding of what constitutes decent treatment of and proper attention to others in quite other connections is conditioned by a sense of what another must be to us which is itself conditioned by love. A decent and just engagement with another in other walks of life is not unaffected by what we learn about others in love, but this does not amount to an argument that we "act and imitate" a love in one situation, which in truth belongs to another.

The following chapter will be a discussion of some of those things which a moral engagement with another might, and in some cases must, entail in the light of what we have seen about the reality and presence others have for us in love. And, of course, the reactions of love, firmly embedded though they are in our relations of compassion and friendship, will be affirmed and enforced if we can demonstrate the coherence of our moral responses with the account of another individual which they imply.

ⁱ "His not being an automaton is not a generalisation *from* his states of consciousness at particular times, so much as a *condition* of his having (*or not having*) any states of consciousness at particular times." (Winch, p. 146)

ⁱⁱ Almost, we might say, a spiritual encounter. See again Winch's reading of a similar example in Winch (3), pp. 142-3, taken from Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Weil, *Passim*, discussed further in this thesis in Chapter 9, Section 2.1.

^{iv} And this distinction marks a departure from Stocks, who, describing the general features of affection, is keen to draw out similarities between the affection shown to other people and the affection we have towards familiar objects, and dwells less upon the differences. See Stocks (2) p. 43.

^v Again, wholly purposive reactions do not reveal this sense, and I shall argue in Chapter 9 that certain malicious reactions, which on one level are clearly leveled at individuals, do not capture this sense either.

^{vi} Winch addresses the inter-relation between particular and general reactions to others explicitly:

typically, when we ascribe a state of consciousness to someone on one occasion, we take it for granted (it goes without saying) that he has other states of consciousness on other occasions. And this 'taking for granted' is *part* of what Wittgenstein would have included in '*eine Einstellung zur Seele*'. (Winch (3), p. 146)

^{vii} Diamond cites as examples of this form of argument Singer's *Animal Liberation* (New York, 1975), and Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds, *Animal Rights and Human Obligations* (Englewood Cliffs, 1976).

^{viii} Diamond is happy to use the terms 'people' and 'human beings' interchangeably in this context.

^{ix} Aurel Kolnai, in his paper 'Deliberation is of Ends' (Section 4), gives some useful additional examples of the ways in which we consider the 'fittingness' of one reaction in the light of other reactions. He notes, for instance, that:

a man with dominant spiritual interests may control his penchant for gluttony not merely because in a consequential sense it is apt to interfere with his studies but because he is pained by a sense of essential incompatibility between these two passions. (Kolnai, p. 50)

Although we may sense that our reactions are different in spirit "up to the point of logical contradiction", often it is not so extreme. Rather, much of our self-control is conditioned by a sense of the way in which differing reactions "are mutually jarring, unsuited, discordant, exhibiting a relation of contrariety". Where I have emphasised differing reactions to a common object, Kolnai emphasises the contrariety between differing ends, but I am not concerned with this difference here, so much as the form of discordance between our moral commitments and the ways in which they interact.

^x Nor need we attend to another *as an individual instance of this class - human being*, in the way in which Fried prescribes attention to others as individual instances of rationality. Rather, attending to another as an individual is one of those reactions that condition the sense which 'human being' has in this context.

^{xi} For the emphasis upon impartiality in the philosophers I have discussed see the following: Gauthier's stress on impartiality is critically discussed in Chapter 2, Section 4.2, and is most clearly expressed in his own work on page 6 of *Morals by Agreement*. The issue of impartiality and impartiality forms part of the background to both Fried's and Williams's work, see especially the discussion at Chapter 3, Section 5.5 and Chapter 4, Section 2.2 respectively. Reconciling partial loves to a love of God and a love of all is the key theme in Aelred's *De Spiritualis Amicitia*; Chapter 6 constitutes a rejection of this approach.

A discussion of the way in which I believe impartiality *should* enter into ethics follows in Chapter 9, Section 2.5.

^{xii} Indeed the use of scare-quotes to make the point is not drawn from the original article.

Chapter 9

Moral Responses

1. Introductory Remarks

As I explained in the last section of Chapter 8, the purpose of this chapter is to explore those elements of our lives with others which fall outside of compassion and friendship, elements which fall within an ordinary sense of what is morally right and proper, and which are illuminated by the sense of another as a real individual which I have been developing in the last few chapters.

What follows is by no means intended to be a comprehensive list of virtues and vices, nor do I claim that there is no way of showing actions to be good or bad outside of the discussion of the last few chapters. Rather, having argued that others should be something more to us than simply a contracting party, an instance of rationality or an element of a purposive plan, but are importantly an end of a contemplative attention as individuals, I want to show that this possibility conditions our sense of what we owe others in morality.

Having argued in Part I of this thesis that modern ethics has too narrow a conception of the subject matter of ethics, I now want to show it capable of discussing and illuminating thoughts and gestures which embody an attention to others as individuals; to show that morality concerns and helpfully explores relations of individuals as such. To this extent this chapter may be read as an account of the middle term from that three-part relationship of self, domain of moral reflection, and conception of other which I explored in Part I of the thesis.

I shall then, in what follows, examine some familiar moral reactions and draw out the ways in which these reactions embody or deny a recognition of that reality which is central to compassion and friendship, although it should be clear that I do not wish to argue that compassion or friendship are themselves necessarily required in such circumstances.

I shall also, finally, address a possible objection. This thesis has involved much discussion of the ways in which the particular, loving forms of attention to others found in friendship and in compassion. It has explored the ways in which these forms of attention change our understanding of others, of their value and individuality, and looked at the ways in which, I believe, this in turn conditions the way we may treat and attend to those to whom we do not stand in relationships of love.

This may raise a concern. Am I assuming that all forms of attention to others for their own sake are benign? Does my thesis fail to distinguish between benevolent and benign forms of attention, or, worse, find itself forced to include the cruelest forms of sadism and obsessive hatred within a revised account of the proper relationships between us. In fact, I do not believe that there is any such difficulty for this thesis, and I shall make this case out in Section 3 below. Before that discussion I shall turn to those moral reactions that exemplify an awareness - or a denial - of the reality of others as individuals.

2. Moral Responses

2.1 The Denial of Another's Reality.

In considering a wider range of relations between persons we might start by looking at the sorts of actions which *deny* the reality of the other as an individual. It is a minimal requirement of our relations with others that our actions and words do not convey a denial of their reality: such a denial is, so to speak, categorically wrong.

What does denying the presence or reality of another come to? Elizabeth Wolgast notes that, in certain situations we will react as if others are not around, and will *not* pay to them the form of attention which Weil highlights and which I discussed in Chapter 8, Section 2.2. On a very busy street, others may turn aside our footsteps just as a street sign does, and Wolgast wants to say that "there need be nothing disrespectful of the humanness of others" in this.ⁱ

We might agree with Wolgast that it is, of course, true that in the context of shopping on Oxford Street on the last Saturday before Christmas, a bump or two from a stranger means something very different from what a barge of equal strength might mean if one was taking an aimless stroll along the same road on Christmas Day.ⁱⁱ On Oxford Street, a shove does not necessarily mean acting as if another does not exist, or exists simply as a lump of matter. However, done with force and with no backward glance it certainly could do.

To bump into someone with force, and not acknowledge the incident, would be to suggest that they existed in the manner in which a street sign exists: it would be to deny the reality of the other, to deny their presence. Such a denial can, of course, be deliberate. We might look for instance at this passage from Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*: it is interesting not least for

the way in which it contrasts with Osmond's and Madame Merle's demeanour, first mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 4.3:

Isabel started; she felt herself beginning to tremble. He had a way of looking at her through half-closed eyelids, as if he were thinking of her but scarcely saw her, which seemed to her to have a wonderfully cruel intention. It appeared to recognise her as a disagreeable necessity of thought, but to ignore her, for the time, as a presence. (James, p. 437)ⁱⁱⁱ

We must, of course, attend to the background of this scene to understand it properly, to the uneasy relations of Osmond and Isabel, his attitude to her which considered her as a trophy, and not as a partner, the way in which Isabel is manipulated; indeed we must consider their love, which is real, although distorted in all these ways. In this background the gesture is cruel indeed, for how insignificant is the woman who exerts no presence even upon her husband, who she loves; and yet it is not a *flat* denial of her reality, for the anger which drives Osmond to the gesture is itself a sign that, at another level, he feels her presence keenly.

Osmond denies Isabel's presence not only by his gesture of indifference, but by the conspicuous denial of the positive attentions of an intimate, and to deny another compassion or friendship when the context merits it is indeed to suggest that they no longer possess the presence to command such attentions (consider the first two by-passers in the parable of the good Samaritan). We have seen that we may deny another's presence by treating them simply as a physical object in our way, and it will be unnecessary to enumerate many more examples, but we might think also of the way in which people may be treated as simply an economic resource, with no autonomy and nothing to say, which is a feature of a slave society, and of industrial society at its worst.

The most extreme way in which the presence of others can be denied, which clarifies what is wrong in the gestures we have so far seen, and yet shows them to be in most cases no more than

gestures, is seen in Weil's article, 'The *Iliad*, poem of might', which I discussed in the last chapter. Weil's article discusses a poem which is one long illustration of the savage manner in which the reality of another can be denied. Indeed, in the *Iliad* the denial of another's reality is not a gesture made in anger, but indicates that the sense of another's reality has been lost altogether. This comes out in a passage I quoted earlier^{iv}:

This undefinable influence of the human presence is not exercised by those men whom a movement of impatience could deprive of their lives even before a thought could condemn them. Before these men others behave as if they were not there; and they, in turn, finding themselves in danger of being in an instant reduced to nothing, imitate nothingness...These are not men living harder lives than others, not placed lower socially than others, these are another species, a compromise between a man and a corpse. (Weil, p. 28)

Homer tells of men who, infatuated or transfixed by sheer *might*, have lost sight of the reality of others, or of themselves, as human beings. Amongst the many other ways in which we might deny the presence of others, to act as if they were a compromise between a man and a corpse, perhaps one is to accept the degradation of others without the bitterness which Weil notes in Homer.^v

2.2 Non-Obligatory, Direct Altruism.

What I have argued above is that what is shocking in certain forms of contempt is that they deny the reality of others as individuals worthy of attention as such. What I now want to argue is that the good of non-obligatory acts of kindness and generosity can be illuminated by the account I am working out.

Lawrence Blum gives some examples of direct altruism which he wants to say are instances of good action, a good which is not accounted for in terms of universalisable duty, but simply the *direct gesture* of one individual to another. One of Blum's typically simple and effective

examples, which seems to exemplify sympathy and generosity, is of a man who is walking along the street and sees another man trying to dig his car out of the snow, and stops to help (see Blum, p. 87).

In what does the goodness of this act lie? Certainly it is not a matter of universal moral duty: the man has no duty to stop, and he need not consider that anyone else walking past must stop. He need not hold any opinion at all about the man twenty feet ahead of him who did not stop, for he is not legislating for all similarly positioned moral beings, he is simply reacting as one individual to another, and it is in this personal gesture that the goodness of the act lies.

But we must still know what it is in this gesture which is particularly significant. Blum wishes to emphasise that it is a decision to put the other before himself; that it is an act of altruism instead of selfishness. I would emphasise the manner in which the agent *attended* to the other: the agent noticed the other; he cared; and he attended to him in his difficulty, for his sake. That is, what we have in such acts as this is simply another form of attention to others as individuals, important in themselves.

This is not simply a trivial similarity between such acts of care and what we learn in love: I want to argue that compassion and friendship do indeed help us to pick out what is good about the act, and to illustrate this we might compare this account with the accounts which Gauthier and Fried might give of such an act.

Gauthier's account, as I explained in Chapter 2, interprets behaviour in a very different manner to the theory I am building, and highlights different aspects of an act as being of significance. The gesture would, in Gauthier's terms, be evaluated to see whether it fell within a rationally maximising strategy, which includes costly actions prescribed by a rational contract. Should an

act fail to fall within such a strategy it is given up as irrational. These two interpretations - the fulfilling of a gainful strategy and irrationality - exhaust the interpretations which Gauthier's theory leaves us: there quite simply is no room in Gauthier's account of morality for another person to distract us from our own gain unless it is to comply with the terms of a tacit contract, and no way in which Gauthier can account for this as a proper and natural recognition of their worth, to be connected with a sense of their reality as individuals. In Fried there is of course room for other individuals to cut across our plans, but such an act is given one of two quite different interpretations: either it must be an obligatory response, as a rational moral agent to a rational moral agent; or it must be as part of my own self-willed development as an individual. It is clear that this case does not fit either description.

It is precisely that element of voluntary kindness which escapes Gauthier and Fried that we are most grateful to receive. Along side the simple fact that we have our car dug out from the snow is the thought that another person attended to our difficulty for no other reason than that *we are worth caring about*. That is, we are treated as being worthy of attention, and this attention is simply the recognition of ourselves as individual human beings, and is not just the enactment of a general moral duty, or a part of a trade.

This sort of act, as opposed to Needham's example of the girl in distress over a broken bottle, let alone cases of injury, is a discretionary act. He is not acting as any human being *must*, his act is not a basic requirement of the recognition of another human being. If he walked on, he would not be treating the other as a non-person: why shouldn't he walk on? But it is not amazing that he stops either, and this is where we learn from instances of love: we learn that other people are the sort of thing which can and might, properly and spontaneously, draw our benevolent attention as individuals simply in recognition that they are real individuals.

The good of being the subject of an individual sympathy and generosity is to be perceived and aided in a way which asserts your existence as a moral presence; it is to be received as a fellow human being, and there is a pleasure in being so received at the discretion of another. Someone might choose to receive you in this way, and if they do so it is a good to you, a willing - not a grudging - acknowledgment of your being, and it is a sign of goodness in them too.

We might note here that this act of sympathy and generosity might well have an affirming and strengthening impact upon the agent himself. As I noted in relation to compassion in Chapter 7, Section 4.2, such an act, affirming the reality and presence of the other, opens up new possibilities for a mutual relation, however brief. A very natural reaction to the agent's generosity will be that form of affection which is gratitude. Such a reaction, *coming from one the presence and reality of whom we have just recognised*, is affirming to the agent: it is a part of what I have been calling the recognition that we live in a human world, and of the way in which a full sense of our own reality is interdependent with the generous acknowledgment of others' reality too. It is the start of a sense that others may not be merely competitors in the struggle to maximise utility, nor *simply* a limit to our will, but might be a source of strength and affirmation.

2.3 Tolerance and Acceptance.

I have been trying to show the relevance of this thesis to some of the virtues and vices with which we are familiar, to show how they may be illuminated by what we learn of each other in love. I want here to connect what I have been saying to two general characteristics of the good man: in this section I shall discuss what is often described as tolerance, but which I think is better termed 'acceptance', and in the next section I shall discuss justice.

What I have to say about tolerance and acceptance draws from some comments of Iris Murdoch's on the virtues of the artist, particularly the novelist:

There is in these novels [Scott, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Tolstoy] a plurality of real persons more or less naturalistically presented in a large social scene, and representing mutually independent centres of significance which are those of real individuals. What we have here may be called a display of tolerance. A great novelist is essentially tolerant, that is, displays a real apprehension of persons other than the author as having a right to exist and to have a separate mode of being which is important and interesting to themselves. We may decide later that 'tolerance' is too mild a word for this capacity at its highest. But 'tolerance' is a word which links nineteenth-century literature with Liberalism. Here one may see the Liberal spirit at its best and richest, disporting itself in literature, and not yet menaced with those elements of Romanticism which later proved, if I am right, so dangerous. (Murdoch (6), p. 271)

I think that 'tolerance' is in fact not so much the wrong word as a word with some undesirable connotations. There is, or can be, a suggestion in the notion of tolerance that in being tolerant we *allow* the other to live as they do, that others are allowed a defined and pre-determined place in the world, and that in tolerating others we *let* them diverge from the life that they should live.^{vi} This, of course, is the controlling and conceited attitude which Murdoch opposes, the attitude displayed by Gilbert Osmond in the example from Henry James which I discussed in Chapter 7, Section 3.1.

We might more happily term such an attitude 'acceptance', and what it reflects is "a respect for the individual person as such, however eccentric, private, messy, and generally tiresome he may be." (Murdoch (6), p. 275)

The virtue which Murdoch ascribes to the great novelists is echoed in the acceptance of real individuals in social life. Such acceptance is another form of the recognition of the reality of others, and consists in a constant effort to overcome, and to see as inappropriate and vain, the desires we have to insist that others live as we would have them live, an overcoming of the desire

to moralise, a hard-won realisation that one is not ordinarily in the position to condemn or to judge.^{vii}

This acceptance is quite unlike a *mutual right to self-assertion*, which is, I think, the way in which Fried wishes to argue for tolerance. Acceptance is not the thought that although one has a right to self-assertion one must recognise that right in others too: rather finding in the presence of another individual a limit to one's legitimate self-assertion is itself a form of recognition of the reality of another, one which is consistent with the lessons we learn in affection, and which might very well require considerable effort.

We might expect that acceptance and tolerance are quite foreign to Gauthier's maximising individual, and I should say that they are. However Gauthier *is* struck by the fact that the rational pursuit of maximised personal gains is best served in a contractarian society which makes a good deal of room for each and every individual to pursue and attain their own aims in life. Indeed, Gauthier ends his book with a chapter called "The Liberal Individual", in which this result is explained and celebrated. However, this is not a sign of an attitude towards others which is accepting, or which lays aside its desires in recognition of the other's right to exist. For Gauthier, others remain susceptible to a simple and verifiable judgment - of their nature, of their status, of their moral goodness - against a simple account of what they *should* be (see Chapter 2, Section 3.2). For Gauthier, if we are liberal individuals this is the happy result of historical circumstance, and he is too much a Hobbesian to forget that we might in other circumstances take another turn:

Historically, the individual has emerged, both practically and conceptually, in an environment in which there has been a strong correlation between the pursuit of individualised interest and a continuing increase in the provision of goods and services to all....But we lack the expertise to form a sensible expectation about the prospects for the continuation, much less the improvement, of these circumstances favourable to liberal individuality. (Gauthier, p. 354)

The markets dictate that at the moment it is in everyone's interest to allow a good deal of individual freedom in the pursuit of ends, but this is perhaps only a temporary regulation by market forces of a mutual war which is now policed but is not necessarily over. This is not at all the same as the virtue of acceptance which I have argued for: Gauthier's Liberalism allows a tolerance of a wide range of actions from other people, but I do not think that this is the same as accepting the person themselves.^{viii}

This virtue of acceptance, which I intend to cover much of what is commonly referred to as 'tolerance', bears many similarities to the virtue of justice. I want to explore how an ethics which emphasises the quality of our attention to others, and which draws from our experience of love, brings out some often overlooked elements of the virtue of justice.

2.4 Justice.

I want to highlight here a conception of justice drawn from Stocks, and which is a part of his work on affection:

I have argued that [the field of human behaviour] is in general covered if we supplement desire by affection; if, as complement to the attitude by which things are significant only in their general character, we recognise another attitude in which things are individually significant. If unregulated human intercourse is more decent and tolerable than Hobbes suggested, that is because he willfully and paradoxically composed his man of desire alone; the same passion, he said, was called desire when its object was absent and love when it was present. We have only to introduce affection into the picture - *i.e.* to insist that love is different in kind from desire - to set some limit to competition and bring some order into social relations. For affection makes each man and home and place an individual centre different from every other, and when thus fixed by affection they are in certain important aspects removed from competition. The basis of order, and so ultimately of justice, is that things and persons should have each its assured place. (Stocks (2), p. 48)

I want to suggest that this account of justice should characterise much of what I have wanted to achieve in this thesis. To treat another as though they were *simply* of a kind, to display an indifference to the details which make their history and character particular to them, perhaps even

to the point of being prepared to entertain and accept false accusations about them, is to deny what we learn in affection, that each person is a real individual, whose nature cannot be properly grasped without an unending and individual attention. To disregard the real individual nature of others is in some contexts a form of injustice. To deny that they are the sort of creature that *could* command an individual and intent interest is always an injustice. What we owe others at the least, and what is a component of acceptance, is a form of agnosticism, a realisation that there is much we cannot, in our present relationship to another, possibly be privy to.

The injustice which I have spoken about is of course not confined to the passive adoption of this particular attitude, for such an attitude is embodied in action whenever we act with a disregard for others' deserts, when we only half attend to others' legitimate claims and rights and in some cases their needs.

If abstaining from injustice is refusing to think or act with a callous disregard for the truth about other individuals, there is also a positive virtue in freely and voluntarily taking the trouble to see others accurately and fairly. It is a good to another to be so received and is another form of recognition of their presence as an individual. Such a virtue requires us once more to free ourselves of the pleasures of moralism, and to put aside our desires. It is not the same as compassion or friendship - it does not require such a context - but it is more than sheer acceptance, for it takes the trouble to know the other as they truly are.

To illustrate this virtue, and the effect which it can have upon another, let us return again to *Middlemarch*. In the passage below, Dorothea is assuring her friend Lydgate that she does not believe false accusations against him, and is enquiring into the real nature of events:

"Tell me, pray", said Dorothea, with simple earnestness; "then we can consult together. It is wicked to let people think evil of any one falsely, when it can be hindered."

Lydgate turned, remembering where he was, and saw Dorothea's face looking up at him with a sweet trustful gravity. The presence of a noble nature, generous in its wishes, ardent in its charity, changes the lights for us: we begin to see things again in their larger, quieter masses, and to believe that we too can be seen and judged in the wholeness of our character. That influence was beginning to act on Lydgate, who had for many days been seeing all life as one who is dragged and struggling amid the throng. He sat down again, and felt that he was recovering his old self in the consciousness that he was with one who believed in it. (Eliot, p. 724)

The presence which Eliot talks of here is not simply the presence of another individual as such, not *simply* the presence which Weil talks of, but is the presence of another coloured by a sense of their generous and just attention and sensibility. This just attention is indeed alloyed with compassion in this case, and might even be considered the form which her compassion takes, although it need not be like this: we may, for example exercise justice in acknowledging the true nature of the successes and virtues of those we feel mainly a jealous dislike, and in laying aside the temptation to qualify and diminish or depreciate their success.

It is, I think, worth remaining with this example to explore three further, related points before moving on. Firstly we should see how *simply attending to another*, simply viewing them justly, is a good to others, one which can not easily be recognised in a moral philosophy which revolves around explicit choices and actions. What Pierre Teilhard de Chardin called "the mere act of being present...just quietly being there"^{ix} is not to be despised: it is indeed an act of sorts, and it is worth so much to Lydgate, for it is an act of generous attention and is a confirming presence.

But secondly, the value of a simple presence should not be taken to confirm any easy division between presence or attention on one hand and action on the other. We might note to begin with that Dorothea is offering to publicise Lydgate's innocence, and her attention would not be what it is were she willing to act in ways which seemed to tolerate that injustice which she professed to despise. Furthermore, the novel deals directly with the lack of opportunity for Dorothea, trapped in a difficult marriage in Victorian England, to express in action either her sense of justice or her

compassion. Dorothea longs to do some good in the world - to provide some decent housing for the exploited and downtrodden local workers perhaps - and it is clear that the good works she dreams of are a simple extension of the just and compassionate attention which she offers to those around her, and which contrasts with the distorted and self-serving vision of so many other characters in the novel. What she wishes to do in action is what she does here by her quiet presence: to give people their due.

Within her marriage, Dorothea finds that her just and compassionate attention is neither received nor returned by her husband Casaubon, whether this attention is in the form of an active participation in his work or simply a just and generous view of his situation and difficulties. Casaubon is described as a man who shrinks from pity - he will neither accept it or offer it - and a just view of his failing projects and self-serving illusions is more than he can bear. The point of sketching these further details of the novel is partly to criticise again any suggestion that attention is easily divided from action. These passages also serve however to illustrate a feature of both the loves which I discussed briefly in Section 2.2 above, and which was touched upon in an earlier discussion of *Middlemarch*^x. This is the *reciprocal effect* which the exercise of love - and the frustration of one's love - has upon the first person self. It is Dorothea's limited scope for compassion and justice which leaves her with that sense of both the world and of herself as being dead, diminished, unreal, which we saw in the earlier quotation:

Meanwhile there was the snow and the low arch of dun vapour - there was the stifling oppression of that gentlewoman's world, where everything was done for her and none asked for her aid - where the sense of connection with a manifold, pregnant existence has to be kept up painfully as an inward vision, instead of coming from without in claims that would have shaped her energies. - "what shall I do?" "Whatever you please, my dear": that had been her brief history since she had left off learning morning piano lessons and practising silly rhythms on the hated piano. Marriage, which was to bring guidance into worthy and imperative occupation, had not yet freed her from the gentlewoman's oppressive liberty: it had not even filled her leisure with the ruminant joy of unchecked tenderness. Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made herself one with the chill, colourless, narrow landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight. (Eliot, p. 265)

Dorothea's distress comes not simply from the fact that she is shut away from the world of action and events, but also from the fact that what interaction she is afforded is expected to be so mannered, to involve taking and not giving, and gives so little room for compassion and justice within that interaction. Her 'moral imprisonment' makes a fine contrast with the conception of freedom which is central to Gauthier's account, in particular.

It is when we react to the world with not only love but justice that we find ourselves a member of a human world, an individual amongst individuals. In such an attitude we sense the reality of others, we feel the imperative need to attend to them, as individuals in the wholeness of their character, and in their weal and woe, and it is upon this that the possibility of being received as one whose presence is welcomed by and needed by others, depends. In adopting an attitude which leaves aside for a time the efforts of the self to assert itself and to adopt the quite different virtues of acceptance and justice, we do not threaten to abandon or compromise the interests of the self; rather such a sense of the just attention and service which others might command in us is the condition of a truly free and vibrant life.^{xi}

2.5 Applying the Universal to the Particular.

The form of justice which I outlined above is of course a form of attention to an individual as such, and not as being of a particular type or part of a social group, and I have looked at an example of a personal relationship in illustrating this form of justice. We might, however, wish to do justice to a number of individuals, as Dorothea does in wanting to provide housing which is fit for the local labourers and their family. Such an action could take different forms: one could imagine that it might seem to an individual a matter of class divides, and of the championing of

one group within society as such. In Dorothea's case there is no trace of this: it is a matter of justice - again alloyed with compassion - for a number of individuals.

There are however differences which we should recognise between the justice rendered to Lydgate within a personal relationship and that rendered to the disenfranchised labourers of Middlemarch. Most notably, whereas in the case of Lydgate Eliot emphasises the importance of being judged in the *wholeness* of our character, Dorothea's proposed benevolence to the poor cannot involve considering them each individually. Her desire is simply to render justice and compassion to people in one particular regard - their living conditions and the suffering they cause them, and the demeaning status and subhuman being which it confers upon them. Furthermore, this indignity and suffering is only properly understood in the context of Victorian social life and its inequities and prejudicial social divisions. That is, to understand the injustice which each individual suffers in this case, we must at some point consider them as a part of a social group.

I want to say that such acts of justice as the ones Dorothea proposes to enact should still, at least in some cases, be seen as being informed by a recognition of the reality of others as individuals. Such an interpretation is warranted in this case because what is seen in a social and not a personal context - that the labourers are manipulated and disenfranchised tenants and are victims of complacency in the middle classes - is important and requiring of action because the individuals which suffer it are not *simply* members of a social class, but are individuals to whom justice in every area of life is due. And we can be sure that Dorothea's attention to the labourers' plight is indeed motivated by the thought that each of these people, suffering the plight of the members of a social group, are severally and separately owed justice, because her concern for them emanates from the same elements of character which motivated her attention to Lydgate.

I am arguing here that the sense of justice which I am developing does not only inform our relations to those with whom we might have a personal relationship, but might inform what we owe to large numbers of people, known to us primarily as they constitute a group. In the case of the disenfranchised workers we may not be able to fully understand what we owe a series of individuals *except* by considering them, at some point, as they fall into a group, and yet having understood their difficulty in such a manner, it remains true that what we owe them is owed to them as a series of individuals. In other cases, when we feel that others have suffered an injustice in being unfairly treated, our first steps to showing that an injustice has been done might precisely be to suggest that they have *not* been treated as an ordinary member of a class or group where they *should* have been. We might term this a sense of 'comparative justice', as opposed to the 'noncomparative' justice which Dorothea offers Lydgate.^{xiii}

There are times when we *must* apply the universal to the particular in our dealings with others; for example in administration, in social work of different sorts, in government. In such a case, to think or act differently and individually towards some individuals without a fully adequate and relevant reason is indeed to act with that disregard for the truth about another which I discussed above, and which constitutes an injustice to an individual, or to a series of individuals. For example, in an administrative context, the relevant aspect of what it is to give someone their due as a real individual is to treat them as you would any member of their class. There are, of course, many more serious examples we could take, for justice requires that we apply the universal to the particular in the contexts of government, of social work, of policing, and other contexts too.

Similarly we may wish to be addressed, in some circumstances, in the formal manner which marks us out as having a certain professional status. On occasion, a more *personal* address, one which purports to take us in the 'wholeness of our character' and which does *not* address us *as* a

teacher, secretary, manager or whatever, might in the context of the workplace be a *slight*, and a form of injustice to that individual.^{xiii}

What I want to say is that in certain contexts we *should* be treated as a member of a class, and yet this does not mean that the philosophical account of what we are owed must be given in such terms, *nor* that the account of justice to individuals as such casts no light upon the way we are wronged if we are not so treated. I think that for us to correctly commit ourselves to an impartial administration for the good of others, to be impartial and apply the universal to the particular because justice demands it, others must at some level be something else to us than simply instances of a universal property.^{xiv}

I argued in my account of Fried that whilst he was clear that we must recognise individual characteristics in others, this amounted to no more than the claim that seeing the particularity of someone is, in some cases, an essential part of treating them as being of a certain kind (see Chapter 3, Section 4.2). What I want to say here is the reverse of this: that *we often need to apply the universal to the particular as something which we owe to individuals as such*.

2.6 Other Moral Reactions.

The last issue I have discussed raises questions about the relationship between the values I have been exploring and other moral values. In the previous examples I have wanted to identify the attention we owe others as individuals as providing the content of the act: Osmond's slight is cruel because it denies Isabel's being as an individual; the help we give strangers is good at least in part because it affirms them as worth individual attention.

In the case of comparative injustice, however, the standards by which our acts are initially judged are not themselves to do with the notion of justice which I have been exploring. These standards might be, for instance, standards of good administrative practice, or legal procedure. Now the full significance of this inequality requires us to remember the claims of justice as Stocks describes them: failing to apply equitable standards is what counts, in this case, as failing to give each individual their proper place.

This, I think, is the model upon which we should base the relationship between a sense of justice based upon the lessons of affection, and countless others values and forms of wrongdoing. The wrongfulness of theft is not wholly derived from the requirement of a just attention, but in terms of the right to property, the usefulness of that convention, and, perhaps the way in which we may identify with our property and consider it an extension of our selves. Any proper analysis of the wrongfulness of theft must incorporate these elements - but such analysis does not take the place of a sense of justice to individuals but informs it: this analysis shows why theft is a failure to acknowledge that "persons should have each [their] assured place" - or rather a failure to grant this particular person their assured and rightful place.

What I am arguing then is that in most cases of wrongdoing, what we owe to others is not wholly derived from the lessons of affection and the sense of justice which those lessons inform, but that the significance and nature of wrongdoing is transformed by those lessons. When one person robs another, then to understand the character of that wrong requires some understanding of the rôle of property in our lives, and the moral principles which stem from it. However, the significance of what happens is not simply that someone broke these norms: it is that a relationship was set up between two or more persons which was inconsistent with the justice we owe each individual, a form of justice which we understand in the light of what we learn from love.

We might remember at this point that this is a result that Fried worked towards in his account of ethics. That wrong acts are wrong because they picture "a relation between a moral agent and the object of his agency, a relation which is inconsistent with the basic notion of respect for persons" is a feature of Fried's work that I praised in Chapter 3 of this work^{xv}. Despite this, of course, my account of the forms of respect that are due to others differs from Fried's, and I argued in Chapter 3 that his account of respecting an individual resolved into one form of treating them as an individual instance of the universal, or is interpreted as an aspect of an individual's self-development.^{xvi}

3. Benign and Malevolent Forms of Attention: the Sadist

So far I have described the forms of loving attention which, I argued, change our conception of another human being, and have now outlined some of the virtues which are commensurate with such an understanding of others and are, I believe, illuminated by it. All of this dwells on the benign and beneficent affects of attention. And yet there are, of course, forms of attention which are far from benign.

It might be thought that the sadist, in particular, provides a difficulty for my thesis as I have developed it. The sadist, it might be argued, attends to others, and indeed does so as the terminal end of his attention. He does not necessarily attend as a means to anything, and he certainly takes a form of enjoyment and delight from attending to others, albeit a delight centred around the pain he causes them. Is my thesis therefore incapable of distinguishing between benign and malevolent forms of attention?

The first part of my response to this comes in the form of the (by now familiar) reminder of the purposes and claims of the thesis. It is not my wish to argue that attending to someone is good, whereas purposefully acting is inferior. I am not proposing that the balance within a good life between doing and attending should be altered, and all forms of attention considered *prima facie* a good thing, and to be promoted all other things being equal (just looking up and seeing that another is there; staring; asking the time...this would be absurd).

The thesis claims that quite particular forms of attention, namely friendship and compassion of certain kinds, condition our understanding of others, and in quite particular ways. This alters the attitudes towards others that we can acceptably take up, and alters the forms of attention our actions can properly embody. This does not mean that we should attend in pseudo-friendship or pseudo-compassion – that much should by now be quite clear. I have outlined above the forms of attention that are, I believe, shown as being either good or impermissible under such an interpretation.

This should, I hope, dispose of the thought that the bare fact that there are malevolent forms of attention is a problem for this thesis. Our enquiry into the relationship between the thesis and forms of attention such as sadism must be made more precise. In what relationship does the particular attention of the sadist stand to the findings of this thesis? Is it easily confused with the forms of attention that I have argued condition our understanding of others in the first place? Or does it fall (unhappily) amongst those forms of attention and action towards others generally which I outlined earlier in this chapter and which I argued are seen to have a positive significance as a result of this conditioned understanding?

Certainly it does not seem that the attention that the sadist gives another is of the sort that I discussed in Chapter 7, the attention which conditions our sense of another's value and

individuality. There I described a form of attention which not only attends to another for their own sake, but in which the imagination moulds around the interests and characteristics of the other simply because they are that person's interests and characteristics, and in which letting our imagination and interests be guided by the other is a form of the perception of and acceptance of the other's reality. It is more than simply letting our attention fall upon one particular person: it is distinguished by the way in which the various attributes of the individual are grouped and perceived, and the way in which a conception of the individual is formed. Some reminders of the passages from Stocks may help here. Stocks says:

In response to affection thought dwells on each observed particular, grouping and uniting them, not by classification, as they exemplify certain types, but by the principle of individuality, so that they are seen to build up a relatively independent and self-contained system, which retains in some sense a single character through all its successive phases.... A man's growing knowledge of his friend or of his country does not proceed by revolutionary discoveries - such surprises as occur are apt to seem much less surprising in retrospect - but cumulatively, by constant watchfulness and an unending readiness to learn more. (Stocks (2), pp. 44-5)

Although the sadist may let his attention fall on one particular individual at a time, he does not attend to them in the manner I have been trying to amplify. The characteristic attention that the sadist provides is of a *meaner* sort than the attention to another found in affection. It analyses, dissects, and leaves aside everything that is not a potential lever for inducing a certain anguish or pain. Rather than having one's viewpoint changed by the other, the sadist views the other from a very particular angle and with a very narrow interest.

Are we then to say that there is *no* relation between the conditioned view of the reality and value of others as seen in love and the reactions of the sadist? I do not think that this is quite true. The sadist's reaction may very well be provoked by an appreciation of the value of another – it is because he perceives value, however dimly, that he seeks to spoil. This is to argue that the sadist

does, in an oblique manner, bear witness to the sense of preciousness and reality that I am trying to bring out, and which has such different roots.

However, this *cannot* be portrayed as a right reaction to the perceived value, for it announces itself to the sadist himself as a desecration, a violation. That this is a violation of right conduct is an awareness that is central to the particular pleasure that the sadist takes in his activity and his attention to others.

I conclude that the relation of the sadist to the thesis I am developing is indeed an interesting one, but that it is in no way a counterexample or a problem case.

4. Concluding Remarks

The heart of this chapter is those examples of moral reactions which I explored in Section 2. I have hoped to show how the sense of another's reality, brought out in friendship and compassion, alters our sense of what we may do, and of the significance of what we do, in other contexts. This reflects the place which others may have in our lives, not simply as contracting parties or as a part of a purposive self-development, but ends of a contemplative attention.

As well as focusing upon the forms which our sense of the reality of other individuals might take, this chapter should serve to clarify a central subject in the first part of this thesis, namely the proper subject matter of ethics. I argued in Part I that most modern ethics focused upon action, choice and purpose, to the exclusion of the way in which our actions, thoughts and words embody an account of our relationship to others as individuals. This chapter is intended as an exercise in an ethics in which such issues are paramount.

As I emphasised in Part I, the issues of the conception of the first person self, the subject matter of ethics, and the conception of the other are linked. As well as trying to emphasise a different conception of the subject matter of ethics, I have begun in this chapter to emphasise the way in which our sense of self might be changed in interaction with others. In the next chapter, which is the conclusion of the thesis, I shall discuss this further, and contrast the account of the self we find in the sort of interaction looked at above with the notion of the self and its life which grounded the ethics of Gauthier, Fried and Williams.

ⁱ Elizabeth Wolgast, 'Primitive Reactions', *Philosophical Investigations* 17:4, 1994. Wolgast argues that the fact that it is *in certain situations* that others affect us as Weil describes us, and that we can think of other situations in which this would not happen and would not signify disrespect, weakens any attempt to place such reactions at the heart of our understanding of and recognition of other human beings.

However, I have argued in the last chapter that it is quite true that our reactions are appropriate to particular contexts, and that we must indeed attend to the context in properly characterising such reactions. I further argued that such reaction may still affect our understanding of another and change our reactions and our understanding of what we do elsewhere.

ⁱⁱ Despite this, I don't think the case is as clear cut as Wolgast suggests: many people find shopping on Oxford Street to be at least *undignified*, and the way in which others are turned, and turn you, into objects is part of this. Indeed, I think that most of Wolgast's examples fail to contrast so clearly with cases such as Weil describes, and I am also not entirely convinced by her attempts to show Weil's examples as being special cases. Wolgast notes that the other person in Weil's example is a visitor and that Weil is wrong to talk of *having a visitor* as being the equivalent of *having others present*. She then suggests as a further example of the way in which we cheerfully and harmlessly ignore each other the fact that we may have no idea how many people were in a doctor's waiting room with us. This is, I think, unfair: whilst we *are* particularly aware of guests, the reactions Weil describes are not merely *manners*, nor are they simply examples of treating someone *as a guest*. Indeed, when someone's response to a guest is properly described as being *mannered*, one of the elements of their performance which we might observe is an exaggerated emphasis upon the ordinary ways in which others affect our behaviour and demeanour. A single person in a waiting room will be enough to affect many of the same changes in our demeanour, in their unexaggerated form.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is striking that a "necessity of thought" is just how Gauthier's rational economic individuals strike each other. He regards this as a morally neutral starting point for moral philosophy: it is nothing of the sort.

^{iv} Chapter 8, Section 4.4.

^v Perhaps another example is this, from the recent war in Sierra Leone:

Sierra Leone rebels trussed up the Norwegian commander with wire so tightly that when he was ordered to climb out of the car he could not move. So the young Revolutionary United Front soldier calmly raised his gun to Knut Gjellestad's temple and pulled the trigger.

"The gun just clicked. It didn't fire," Commander Gjellestad said. "He was about to try again so I asked him to help me out of the car. He put down his gun and lifted me out. It was completely surprising. A few seconds earlier he had been trying to kill me." (Reported in *The Guardian*, May 24, 2000).

Commander Gjellestad is not turned into stone by the proximity of his likely death, and this is partly connected with the fact that he is not quite confronted by *might*: much of the soldier's indifference is very likely due to drugs, for Commander Gjellestad reports that the rebel forces were usually drugged or drunk. Nevertheless, I think it is the sheer indifference to human life which is shocking here; that is we are shocked by the indifference itself, as much as the danger and the distress it brings with it, and as Weil shows this indifference amounts to a denial of the reality of the person the rebel had charge of.

^{vi} I owe this point to comments made to me by N.J.H.Dent.

^{vii} I am not forgetting that real issues arise around how far acceptance should run. It is not obvious that we should be accepting of those who are highly intolerant of others, and to be unmoved in the face of the cruel treatment of others may show an unconcern for the being of the victim which *corrupts* our attitude towards the perpetrator and renders it something quite unlike the decent spirit of acceptance which we are imitating. I am only concerned here to characterise that basic, decent acceptance, and a discussion of its limits, of what might corrupt it, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

^{viii} Indeed, Gauthier is happy to rank completely different cultures in order of supremacy, an order which he argues legitimatises the conscious erosion of one culture by another. The criteria by which cultures are to be ranked include implications for the distribution of factor rent; inheritance and investment. Gauthier claims quite explicitly that in this way, "with the aid of very simple and plausible empirical assumptions, we may partially order differing ways of life in terms of their levels of advancement, and justify the supplanting of a less advanced by a more advanced way." (Gauthier, p. 269)

^{ix} Tielhard de Chardin, p. 121.

^x Chapter 7, Section 2.1.

^{xi} I discuss this theme once more in Chapter 10, Section 2.

^{xii} This terminology comes from Joel Feinberg's article 'Noncomparative Justice'; *Philosophical Review*, 83, 1974.

^{xiii} See, for instance, Goffman, p. 85.

^{xiv} I want to guard against misunderstanding here. My aim in this section is not to say that comparative justice is not important, but non-comparative justice is. And I should certainly not be taken as siding with the partial and particular, against the impartial, as part and parcel of this thesis's exploration of particular, personal loves such as friendship.

I have repeatedly stressed in this thesis that my interest with personal affections is *not* to change the balance within the partial and the impartial within ethics (see Introduction Section 3.1), less still the balance between contemplation and action, purpose or vision. My aim has been to show how the affections change our sense of others, and how this changed sense conditions our thoughts and action towards those we do not have affection for.

One of the ways in which affections change our sense of others is that we can see that certain dismissive forms of action are an injustice to another, even when there is no claim of partiality or inequality to be made. This is the claim I am making in introducing the concept of non-comparative justice. But this does *not* deny that inequality and partiality are often forms of grave injustice as well, as I recognise in Section 2.5.

The relationship between comparative justice and non-comparative justice turns out, in my analysis, to be the reverse of that which is usually assumed, for it is commonly assumed that for there to be an injustice we must find a claim of partiality of inequality with which to back it. However this argument over the

philosophical understanding of where the wrongfulness of (all forms of) injustice lies should not be interpreted as a downgrading of either form of injustice, or as championing one in preference to the other. It is intended rather as a sharpening of our understanding of what injustice amounts to in different contexts.

^{xv} See Chapter 3, Section 4.1. Quotation from Fried, pp. 31-2.

^{xvi} It is, I think, right to note here that I am not claiming that the lessons of affection as I see them must illuminate *every* case which could possibly be described as a moral reaction. There are, no doubt, *some* actions which cannot be helpfully described as setting up a wrongful relation between persons, but which nonetheless deserve the name of a moral wrongdoing. I have in mind a passage from J.M.Coetzee's *Disgrace*, in which the central character David Lurie takes it upon himself to take the corpses of dead dogs from an overstretched veterinary practice to the local incinerator, and to ensure that they have at least the minimal dignity of being lowered into the incinerator one by one, rather than leaving them to be broken up and dumped by the incinerator staff. Lurie finds it amazing that a man as selfish as himself does this, and wonders what he does it for: it is not to help out anyone else; is it for the sake of the dogs, to save these creatures, killed simply because no-one wants them, from this final dishonour?

But the dogs are dead; and what do dogs know of dishonour anyway?

For himself, then. For his idea of the world, a world in which men do not use shovels to beat corpses into a more convenient shape for processing. (Coetzee, p. 146)

I take this to be a case in which someone's moral reactions are altered by a sense that permitting a certain course of action is inconsistent with certain ideals and values, and we might say that Lurie is prompted to care for the dogs through a moral sense. There seems to be no reason to deny that this is a possible and illuminating moral reaction, despite the fact that it is not a case which is obviously illuminated by considering the relation of one individual to another.

Chapter 10

Self and Other

1. Review of the Thesis.

I want in this chapter to review the argument of the thesis, and to return to a theme which has developed as the thesis has progressed, namely what a theory of attention to others might tell us about the good of the self.

I said at the start of the thesis that it was motivated by a frustration that the way in which others can be *present* to us as individuals, that is the way in which the good man *attends* to others as individuals and the way this may change our understanding of our lives with others, seemed to be ignored by much modern ethics. Furthermore I argued that where *implicit* pictures of the good man's attention to another emerged in modern moral philosophy they were often limited and distorted. In Part I of the thesis I attempted a diagnosis of this apparent limitation, taking as examples the work of Gauthier, Fried and Williams, and I argued that the characterisations of the moral self from which these three writers began led on to particular accounts of what morality consisted in, and led on from there to an account of the place others properly have in our lives which left a very constrained place for the idea of attending to others as individuals. Although Fried and Williams displayed a greater concern than Gauthier that the relations of individuals *as such* be properly represented, I argued that they were nevertheless unable to give a proper account of the attention of the good man to another as an individual, unless that relationship was coloured by having a very specific place in one's self-creation.

In Part II I explored another account of the way in which others can be present to us as individuals by exploring the attention which we give each other in various forms of love. I hoped to show that affection and love in compassion and friendship conditioned our sense of others' value and individuality, and in Chapter 7 I focussed upon elements of the forms of attention which are characteristic of friendship and compassion: its endless quality; what I termed 'dynamic permeability'; the absolute requirement that love be uncondescending. This discussion drew on theological discussions of the loves of Eros, Agape and Philia, but rejected the method by which they attempted to harmonise the loves into a single system.

I argued that such a love led to a changed conception of the other, which in turn conditioned more explicitly moral reactions, including reactions to those to whom we feel no particular affection. I tried to show that in this way the experience of forms of love, and in particular compassion and friendship, changed our sense of proper moral relations to others. In Chapter 9 I illustrated this claim by looking at the ways in which a proper attention might inform particular moral responses to others. I further argued that this did not make moral relations a pale imitation of closer, more intimate forms of love. I also tried to show that a concern with the requirements of impartiality need not conflict with the lessons that are learned in the partial love of friendship. The discussion of Part II built towards an account of what it is to be just to another.

Such is the account I have offered of what a proper attention to others might be, and of the ways in which this goes beyond those elements of a moral life which are perceived and emphasised by much contemporary moral philosophy. Part II is in this way chiefly concerned with attention to others; that is, with the way in which others may enter our lives as proper ends of a just attention. However, Chapter 9 has re-introduced the question of the proper subject matter for ethics, and at various points in the thesis I have also discussed ways in which our relations with and attention to other individuals can alter our sense not only of the other but also of the *self*. It is this issue of the

reciprocal effect of moral relations with others upon our conception of the self which I want to pursue a little further here. I want to argue that in at least some of the philosophers I looked at in Part I, a separation from, and potential tension with, others is *built into* their conception of the self and of its good. I want then to argue that the account of the self which is reflected in our proper attentive relations with others stands as a challenge to such conceptions. In this way I want to question whether the images of the self and its good which form the basis of the accounts which Gauthier, Fried and Williams offer us, and from which their account of the proper place of others in our lives are ultimately derived, are indeed sound and complete.

2. Self and Other in Gauthier, Fried and Williams.

There is, I think, in Gauthier, Fried and perhaps Williams an assumption that individuals naturally stand to each other in a position of distance, that the good of one is largely independent of the good of another. It is implied that a moral philosophy must take this as a background, and explore the extent to which such separate individuals might come together, co-operate, and attend to each others' interests without betraying their own.

This is certainly the case in Gauthier, for whom the self is a maximiser. For him, any action and any thought is rational so far as it is directed towards the satisfaction of the self's desires, and any action which, first and foremost and without other reason, attends to another and their good is irrational. Against such a background morality requires investigation for it consists, Gauthier tells us, in the voluntary *constraint* of the self. There is a presumption *against* making another the end of one's attention and action, a built-in tension between the good of the self and the good of others, and moral philosophy must explore the extent to which such separate individuals might nevertheless constrain themselves for others' sake without irrationality.

Gauthier finds in the idea of the perfectly competitive market the most suggestive route to a justification for acting morally against such an unpromising background. In a perfectly free, competitive market the best way to serve one's own ends is to discern and provide for another's desires. Discerning and satisfying the needs of others in such a way leads to the greatest personal utility, and so here an acknowledgment that one stands in a relation of competition with another actually comes together with maximum co-operation. In the absence of a perfectly free, competitive market, the strategies of a contractarian morality demonstrate how co-operation might still be the best route to the greatest possible personal utility.

Although the rules of a contractarian morality show how the good of the self and the good of the other might be accommodated to each other, Gauthier's contractarian rules nevertheless proceed from a premise of separation and of a lack of inherent interest in others' affairs (non-tuism). Taking this separation at all times as a working assumption, Gauthier explores the ways in which this difference and distance between individuals and their good can be used for gain rather than a costly Hobbesian conflict.

With Fried the situation is more complex. The self is not a maximiser, but still has something to fear from the claims of others for attention and care. Fried identifies the self with choice and action: "We relate to the world as human beings as we pursue our purposes in the world, as we act intentionally." (Fried, p. 27) The individual creates a life for himself through his intentional actions, which he freely chooses and for which he takes responsibility. When the claims of others are represented by utilitarianism, the ability of the individual to pursue his chosen purposes is undermined, for one's decisions are already made for one by the balance of suffering and happiness in the world, and one's ability to correct it. Thus Fried introduces his work, in a passage we have already seen, as a cautious exploration of how far the well-being of others might properly claim our attention before the self is undermined:

This is a book about how a moral man lives his life...how far he must take on himself the burden of the world's suffering....We are constrained but not smothered by morality once we acknowledge that there are limits to our responsibility for the world's good and ill, and that we are responsible for some things not everything. (Fried, p. 1)

As with Gauthier's account, morality is conceived of as *constraint* of the self, but the constraint is limited. Fried concludes that we are constrained to attend to others and to respect them as instances of rational choice, for to deny them this would be to deny the principle of free choice upon which our moral personality rests. We may also *choose* to take on certain partial and particular obligations to others as individuals such as those which come with friendship. We may do this *without* admitting the endless claims which the utilitarian might present us with, and without being condemned as biased or unfair, so long as such partial responsibilities fall within the class of a *rôle*. Fried's thought here is that in adopting a rôle we are in fact working personal relationships into the process of self-development which he wants to defend from forms of consequentialist moral theory. Choosing such relationships and the obligations they carry with them is choosing part of the fabric of the self. That is, *these relations of care are not simply an attention to another for their own sake, but are special forms of self-creation*. It is for this reason that they are not ultimately a constraint of the self in the way that the more general claims of others are, and can be freely and reasonably adopted. However, it remains fair to say that the idea of a rôle in Fried operates against the background assumption that the good of the self and attention to others can be expected to diverge, and that the attention to others which morality requires constrains the activity of the self: rôles, which extend beyond the requirements of morality, are forms of discretion and creativity rescued from the claims of the world.

The idea of morality as justified constraint is not pronounced in Williams, as it is in the other two writers I have considered. Williams is keen to show that the purposive projects which are, he says, part of our character, must hold a central place in our lives, and Kantian morality cannot

assume a right to over-rule them. There is no necessary tension between the good of the self and the good of others, and whether attention to others stands in opposition to the good of the self depends upon the projects which are dear to the individual: in the case of Gauguin, there was just such an opposition; in other lives there need not be one.

I want to say that this image of the self as creating its own life, and in doing so being constrained by the claims of others for its attention, is challenged by some of the discoveries of this thesis. I want now to return to some of the examples which suggest that attention to others is *not* necessarily a constraint upon the self, but may be an enlargement and a confirmation of the self.

We might turn first to the example of the frustration of Dorothea Casaubon in *Middlemarch*, which was the second of the quotations from that work discussed in Chapter 9, Section 2.4. Far from finding that she was constrained by excess of moral duty, the fear expressed by Gauthier and Fried, Dorothea feels only the "moral imprisonment" of being always the recipient of service, of having no "worthy and imperative occupation" to free her from "the gentlewoman's oppressive liberty". What Dorothea longs for is brought out in Carol Gilligan's interpretation of another woman: "To her, responsibility signifies response, an extension rather than a limitation of action. Thus it denotes an act of care rather than a limitation of aggression." (Gilligan, p. 38)

The caring attention of a just individual need not be seen as a limitation of her true self, the imposition of rules upon her desires: it might just as easily be the spontaneous and self-approved response of one individual to another. Attending to another may in this way be an enlargement of the self, the result of finding oneself a part of a human world which brings forth and shapes one's energies and in which one has a use, rather than being an instance in which the self bends deferentially to moral rules yielded to as a constraint.

Secondly we might recall the effect upon us of the gratitude which often follows our just attention to others. This was discussed in Chapter 7, Section 4.2. In attending to another in compassion we are aware of the figure we cut in their eyes. What we might hope to find in response to our attention is a spontaneous gratitude, and this gratitude is a form of love in itself, and is a *just* response to the justice we have shown the other. Thus we might find our sense of self affirmed and assured, and again relate to the world as an individual confirmed in relations of just and generous attention with others.

This last point takes us back to J.L.Stocks. Stocks notes a difference in our engagement with the world when we respond in affection to when we respond simply to an object of desire, replaceable by any other object of similar type and quality:

It seems...to be the case that in the attitude of affection the observer's own position and his relation to the observed belong to the fundamental data of thought, as they do not when thought is actualized by desire. This may look like a paradox, since the desirous act is very naturally described as an act in which the agent takes something for himself, and the typical act of affection is apt to be thought of as one in which the agent gives something away. But the direct opposition already formulated between the concreteness of the one attitude and the abstractness of the other will be readily seen to entail this as a consequence. In the act of desire a *hungry person seeks food*; names and personalities are of as little importance on one side as on the other. Indeed to name or otherwise individualise the thing eaten would be to make it repulsive and almost impossible to eat. The act would approximate at once to cannibalism. And you cannot thus denature one term in a relation and leave the others unaffected. Common sense may say that John Smith is eating his dinner; but it is not really John Smith that eats, and the food that will presently go to form his body is not really his. But into the relations established by affection he enters whole and entire with all his peculiarities of status and character. The things and persons bound to him by affection - his home, his wife and children, his friends and country - these are really his. The whole series of relations depends on his unique position in the scheme of things, and constitute, if not his personality, at least what we may call, by misusing a legal term, his personality. The principle of affection creates relations of individuals in respect of their individuality. (Stocks (2), pp. 45-46)

Gauthier, Fried and Williams all sought in different ways to give a proper place to the individuality of the first person. Stocks is hereby demonstrating that that individuality is most clearly perceived and expressed as we attend to others in *their* individuality.

When content to encounter others as of a type, we are ourselves present in that relation as instances of a type too. If, through affection and justice, we encounter others *as* individuals, then we reveal the potential for a genuinely individual relation between themselves and ourselves, and locate ourselves in the world as individuals, with a specific place in it in relation to others.

To my ear, Fried and Gauthier, in particular, echo a popular modern conception of the self, in which we identify with our will, and can consider ourselves the sum of our satisfied desires (Gauthier) or our intentional actions (Fried).ⁱ When the self is seen as creating a life through self-assertion, morality appears as a form of constraint, compromising the creation of a truly individual and self-approved life. However, when the self is seen in relation to other individuals, such a sense that benevolent and just thought and action constitute a necessary constraint upon the self is absent.

I want to argue then that Fried and Gauthier's fear that the self might be lost amongst the claims of others is in part a result of their account of the nature of that self, an account which has a tension between the good of the self and attention to the good of others built into it. This is not to deny that there are forms of attention to others which *are* undermining of the self, and I argued in Chapter 6, Section 4.7 that a relationship between individuals cannot entail *utter self-sacrifice*, but must reflect the dignity and standing of both parties. Nevertheless, with this warning in place, I want to conclude by suggesting that the study of the forms of attention which we can give to other individuals is the most promising route not only to an account of the place which *others* should have in our lives, but also to preserving and nurturing "an awareness of the self that must be saved and developed, and an awareness that the self is yet fulfilled only in community."ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Lionel Trilling argues that this conception of one's being and individuality proceeding from force, action and choice, is central to much modern literature: "There is scarcely a great writer of our own day who has not addressed himself to the ontological crisis, who has not conceived of life as a struggle to be - not to live but to be." (Trilling (2), p. 123) Such a sense of struggle stalks many people of our age: it does not seem to me that a sense of one's own being and individuality need be so reliant upon distinctive choices and self-creative action, but might instead derive from spontaneous and just attention to others, and the receipt of their similarly just attention to ourselves. Iris Murdoch helpfully discusses the image of the good man in modern moral philosophy, and the tendency for will and action to assume too dominant a place in that account. See in particular Murdoch (2).

ⁱⁱ Quotation from Trilling (2), p. 112.

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