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**MORALITY AND THE CARE ETHIC:  
RELATIONSHIPS IN THE  
CLASSICAL CONFUCIAN AND PAULINE  
CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines moral reasoning in the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian traditions. It is demonstrated that moral reasoning in both these traditions is grounded in the concept of the moral agent as a related self. Specifically, affectionate concern for the other and for the other's well-being figures prominently in discussions of moral practice, behaviour and action in the two traditions. In the light of these Confucian and Pauline concerns, the thesis maintains that moral theories which uphold a notion of the moral agent as an essentially detached, individualistic self, need to be reassessed. This criticism is made by way of an examination of feminist critiques of contemporary moral philosophy. Such critiques question, in general, views which uphold justice, rights or rules as important and fundamental features of morality to the neglect or exclusion of aspects of human experience such as relational attachment. In addition, criticisms are also made of views which advocate that the definitive features of moral deliberation include criteria of impartiality, impersonality and/or autonomy. From the point of view of these criticisms, it is considered undesirable to maintain an ideal of autonomy in the sense of detachment specifically because that would rule out modes of human attachment that are typically an important part of women's experience of morality. The different strands of feminist moral philosophy are united in their invocation for urgent and significant renovation not only of the content of morality but also, and more importantly, of the patterns and methods of moral reasoning and the scope of morality. It is important to note, too, that many

feminist moral philosophers are quick to maintain that exclusive emphasis or overemphasis on detachment is detrimental not only to women's morality but is, in general, undesirable because it compromises on important aspects of moral agents *qua* human persons.

This thesis adopts an approach which is sympathetic to the above-mentioned criticisms made by feminist moral philosophers of contemporary moral theory. In particular, it focuses on the care ethic which regards affection appropriate to, and responsibility arising from, relational attachment as fundamental aspects of moral deliberation. Through analysis of a number of moral theories, it contends that the notion of the detached, autonomous moral agent, if understood exclusively or in isolation, results in a warped and fragmented conception of the self. The proposal of this thesis, however, is not that notions of autonomy and universality in moral deliberation should be jettisoned but that they should be articulated in conjunction with notions of human relationality. The thrust of the thesis, more precisely, is that, while there are limits to emphasising autonomy and detachment as fundamental in moral deliberation, it is undesirable, on the other hand, to maintain conceptions of the self and of morality which are defined purely in terms of relationality.

Through a detailed analysis of various concepts and ideas in each of the classical Confucian and Pauline traditions, it is argued that moral reasoning

shares several features with the care ethic. The point of this exercise, however, is not solely comparative. The project seeks, in addition, to identify and articulate problems with moral reasoning within each of the two traditions. One such problem is the neglect or failure to deal with the power structures that might operate within caring relationships. Confucian thought seems to uphold a notion of caring which not only allows for, but actually requires, the subordination and infantilisation of the person cared-for. Similarly, there is much debate amongst Pauline scholars regarding whether St. Paul's use of the concept love (*αγαπη*) is paternalistic and/or instrumentalist—the sense of seeing love as an instrument for creating or maintaining social harmony within a hierarchically organised social order. The investigation of problems such as these has important implications for our understanding of both the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian streams of thought. In addition, it addresses and highlights some possible difficulties in formulating a workable care ethic. More pointedly, it asserts that care morality, in order to be viable, needs to approach with careful discernment, its search for a proper balance between autonomy and relationality.

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## INTRODUCTION

### ***Objectives and Scope***

This thesis has a twofold objective. First, it establishes a point made generally by proponents of care morality; namely, that contemporary moral theory needs to recognise the significance of relationships in individual human lives and, more specifically, to accommodate notions of relating with others. Such a view allows for a more robust and realistic picture of the self *qua* moral agent and, accordingly, challenges the concept of the ideal moral agent as an impartial, detached self. If accepted, the idea that the moral agent is a related self rather than a detached, atomistic individual necessitates a critical assessment of moral systems which uphold universalisability, impartiality and impersonality as central criteria of moral action and behaviour.

Secondly, and relatedly, the thesis makes some cautionary remarks regarding the formulation of care moralities. Specifically, it is pointed out that while the structures of care morality differ in certain fundamental respects from those of justice-, rights-based or deontological moralities, proponents of care morality should not assert, simply and hastily, that care morality is irreconcilable with other moral systems, or that it shares no common features with them. In particular, it is suggested that proponents of care morality should be circumspect about the idea that morality is grounded *solely* upon the nature of particular attachments and that there are no objective and/or general criteria for assessing an agent's actions and behaviours other than by appeal to the relationship itself.

In the context of discussing the two issues just mentioned, the thesis examines and compares moral reasoning in the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian traditions. It is argued that an examination of these traditions provides us with insights into the possibilities and problems associated with relational moralities and, more specifically, with the care ethic.

As with the care ethic which emphasises connectedness of persons rather than their separateness, both Confucius and Paul believed that human beings are essentially related persons; both upheld notions of morality which value the connectedness of persons. With regard to the conception of morality, the Pauline and Confucian approaches are similar to the care ethic in that they stress emotional attachment and involvement in personal relationships as central to moral motivation. More specifically, it is demonstrated that both traditions, in their discussions of responsibilities, loyalties, obligations and commitment arising from relational attachment, accentuate the moral significance of concern for the well-being of the other.

On the other hand, there are important differences between the two traditions regarding the substantive content of relational attachment. For example, an important theme in Confucian philosophy is the view that the *nature* of each particular relationship is the fundamental criterion of moral consideration. While the Confucians advocated a political community founded upon differential role relationships modelled on the Chinese family system, Paul believed, in contrast, that the newly-formed Christian communities should be organised on the basis of fraternal relationships. The different forms of political and social organisation upheld by each of these philosophies is deeply intertwined with issues concerning normative and ideal modes of interaction and with conceptions of moral agency, action and

behaviour. In this connection, the interrelated issues of human nature, moral agency and community within the Confucian and Pauline traditions are examined.

The Confucian and Pauline traditions have been chosen for consideration for two primary reasons. First, being concrete systems, they have both figured significantly, and remain influential, in social, cultural and philosophical traditions. Classical Confucian philosophy, as elaborated in the Four Books<sup>1</sup>, served as the basis of the Civil Service examinations in China for six centuries from 1313 to 1905. Moreover, it continues to exert an influence on, and at times even to dominate, ways of life and modes of thinking in contemporary Asian communities. Similarly, Pauline thought, constituting part of the fundamental text in the Christian tradition, also continues to play an important role in contemporary Christian thinking and practice. Furthermore, Pauline thought was related closely to Hebraic religious belief and practice and overlapped at certain points with the then contemporary Greek philosophy, these two influences being significantly constitutive of the origins of Western philosophical thought.

Secondly, the two philosophies look to human connectedness as the main ingredient in establishing community stability. The period in which Confucius lived (551-479 BC) was riddled with social and political upheaval; the *Spring and Autumn* Period (722-481 BC) marked the beginning of decline of the long-lasting *Chou* Dynasty (1111-249 BC). One of the interesting legacies of this turbulent period in Chinese history is the spawning of multifarious schools of thought; the period between the fifth and the third centuries BC is often characterised as the period of a 'hundred schools of thought'.<sup>2</sup> While some other schools of thought in China were advocating various forms of detachment, Confucianism was accentuating special

consideration for particular others in specific relationships. For instance, the Taoists viewed with scepticism existing social and political structures, and preached detachment from these artifices of human civilisation. Proponents of the Moist school upheld treating everyone equally based on a utilitarian calculus deriving from the notion of Universal Love. The Legalists, who were antagonistic to the Confucian enterprise as well, sought to establish (penal) law that was applicable equally to all persons, thus denying that relational attachment had any moral significance.

In the case of Pauline Christianity, the early Christian communities faced a doubly difficult task in terms of fostering community stability because, although they were newly-formed, it was also believed that they were in transition toward an imminent teleological end. Within that context, questions about values, beliefs and modes of life had to be dealt with. Paul was quick to emphasise that, in spite of the variety of the believers' backgrounds, they had always to remember the purpose of the new communities (for Paul, this consisted essentially in belief in Christ's work and its significance) and that that was the primary unifying factor of life in the community. The divisive factors which Paul dealt with specifically were cultural (Jew-Greek), social (master-slave) and gender-related (male-female). Arguing that these differences were morally irrelevant in constituting the identities of the converts and, more generally, in the characterisation of the community, Paul emphasised that the most important feature of life in the community was a love ( $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$ ) modelled upon Christ's humble sacrifice. Paul appealed to  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  as the justification, and as providing motivation for, other-regarding behaviour which, in turn, was important for community-building and community maintenance.

In the analysis of moral reasoning within the classical Confucian and the Pauline Christian traditions, some of the problems inherent in each of them are discussed. These include problems which pertain to the focus on relational attachment as a basis for morality in each tradition. It is in this connection that some cautionary remarks are made with respect to proposals for a viable care ethic.

### ***Texts***

A few remarks are necessary with regard to the usage of Confucian and Pauline texts in this thesis. The Confucian Analects (*Lun-yü*) is regarded here as the primary source of Confucius' ideas. There are occasional references, as well, to the other three classical Confucian texts comprising the Four Books: the Doctrine of the Mean (*Chung-yung*), the Great Learning (*Ta-hsueh*) and Mencius (*Meng-tzu*).

There is an important and legitimate concern regarding the authenticity and origin of the Four Books. For example, there have been disputes surrounding the man Confucius [551 - 479 BC] as he is portrayed in the Analects and whether he did actually say what he is purported to have said. Additionally, apart from the high possibility of the cross-influence of ideas and the amount of tampering by both later Confucians and non-Confucian thinkers with the texts preceding the compilation of the Four Books by the Neo-Confucian, Chu Hsi [1130 - 1200], the original author/s of the Analects is/are not known and there were already at least three versions of the Analects in existence by the Western Han period (206 BC - 8 AD).<sup>3</sup>

While the historicity and authenticity of passages in the Four Books, and other factors surrounding their compilation are, in themselves, interesting areas of academic concern, these issues are not of concern in this thesis.

The texts referred to above are considered as a canon, serving as the foundational source of Confucian thought. The passages of the texts are, in this sense, treated ahistorically over the period of their development; they are seen as offering insights into ideas and concepts which are characteristic of the history of the classical Confucian tradition.

The Pauline material is treated in a similar fashion. The Pauline epistles, among the oldest of Christian documents, are seen as being representative of ideas that were influential in shaping early Christianity. While the letters reveal aspects of the character of the letter-writer, Paul, they also offer insights into the ordinary life of a first century Christian, whether as an individual or as a member of the newly-formed church communities. To this effect, there is a focus on the epistles as texts rather than on the issue of their authenticity and internal consistency. As is the case with the Confucian texts, almost every Pauline epistle exhibits problems of continuity and coherence; again, these are topics of important academic study which will not be dealt with here. Because of the disputes regarding the authorship of the epistles—only eight of them are unanimously acknowledged as being Pauline—the letters to the Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Philemon and Titus are treated as primary text. The authorship of the remaining epistles is greatly disputed; they are thought to be either non-Pauline or deuterio-Pauline. The uncertainty rests not only in the style of the letters but also in the different (sometimes inconsistent) treatment of issues; thus, only occasional reference is made to the non-Pauline or deuterio-Pauline letters.

In summary, the texts of the two traditions are treated as philosophical material providing insights into the reasoning processes, ways of life and modes of thought of each tradition.

### ***Methodology***

There are inevitable difficulties in cross-cultural comparisons. These difficulties are more pronounced and specific in the case of a philosophical exercise that aims to intelligibly and coherently discuss concepts within different traditions, written against the background of complex overlapping streams of thought. In this thesis, this task is further complicated by the fact that the primary comparative focus in each case is set by issues associated with contemporary care moralities: this gives rise to common points in parallel fashion. It should be noted, however, that differences should not be overlooked; it is clear that classical Confucian and Pauline Christian concepts have arisen from different contexts of experience, modes of thinking and forms of life.

A primary difficulty is, obviously, that of translation. Important Confucian concepts such as *jen* and *li*, and Pauline concepts such as ἀγάπη have no equivalent in contemporary English. This is a general problem encountered in any translation process; the problem is compounded, however, in an exercise which discusses, examines and analyses these two traditions in a third language and which depends primarily on the categories and concepts of the third language.

A way in which this problem is dealt with in this thesis is to explicate the relevant concepts within each tradition in its specific philosophical and socio-historical background. It is with this in mind that the chapters on the two traditions have been kept separate.

Secondly, much care has been taken in explicating the concepts: few, if any, of the concepts in either tradition have been explicated definitively. For example, while *jen* has been variously translated (by Confucian scholars) as love, benevolence, humanity, humanness, human-heartedness, morality etc, the view of *jen* that is held throughout this thesis is that, while it in some way resembles some of these concepts, it is nevertheless not exhaustively and fully defined by any single one, or combination, of them. In short, the view taken in this thesis is that the English terms just mentioned should not be seen as being equivalent to *jen* (in the co-extensive sense) but, rather, as being merely descriptive of *jen*.

Apart from the problems associated with translation, a more pressing problem arises because of the nature of this research project: the success of the thesis, of its findings and conclusion, depends largely on its success in presenting both classical Confucian and Pauline notions of morality as having significant features in common with (contemporary) care moralities. To this end, a significant proportion of the thesis (Part I: Chapters 1, 2 and 3) concentrates on demonstrating that the two traditions focus (as do care moralities) on fostering and cultivating relationships and, more specifically, on a concern for the other rooted in affection. Thus, it is noted that the early Christian communities did, in part, see themselves as groups set up to care for others; for example, to look after widows, the ill and children. Similarly, within Confucianism, family-type bonds are seen as crucial to the development of the moral agent and, thus, the concept of relating well to others grounded in affection plays a major role in Confucius' articulation of the ideal community.

Finally it should be mentioned that the inquiry into the Confucian and Pauline traditions is intended to have a two-fold effect. First, it is hoped to reveal problems in these two systems which proponents of the care ethic should take care to avoid. Secondly, because the thesis critically analyses the structures, ways of life, values and morality of the two traditions, its conclusions should flow back to inform other modes of inquiry into both traditions.

The next Section outlines the project of this thesis and its approach to the material.

### ***Overview of Chapters***

The thesis is divided into two parts, each of three chapters. The aim of **Part I, *Morality and the Relational Self***, is to critically analyse the connection between different conceptions of human nature and their corresponding views of morality. The term 'morality' is used throughout this thesis to cover a wider scope than just rules or principles of correct or appropriate behaviour, reasoning, or action. It encompasses, too, virtues-based approaches to human life and thus includes, as important foci of morality, features of individual lives such as conceptions of meaning, value and human flourishing, as well as human participation in activities and projects and our involvement with other people. The upshot of such a conception of morality is that it treats as morally significant a range of aspects of the self as a related being. In particular, the thesis examines in detail the moral issues surrounding agents' relationships—for example, notions of concern and loyalty—with significant others. In the context of this last point, the examination of different conceptions of morality will be carried out from the perspective of relational morality.

**Chapter One, *Morality and Human Nature***, sets the background for the discussion of conceptions of morality and the self in Confucian and Pauline thought which follows in chapters two and three respectively. The first of two Sections in this Chapter (Section 1.1) contends that moral theories which are associated with the notion of the paradigmatic moral agent as a detached, impersonal and impartial self fail to capture important aspects of human moral life. In establishing this point, various moral theories are considered with a view to outlining their shortcomings. The moral theories discussed in this section include the social contract account found in Hobbes, the universalisability thesis of Kantian morality, the Greatest Happiness Principle of Mill and the impersonality criterion of Nagel. The primary purpose of this Section is to show that the views of morality considered are defective because they are based on inadequate conceptions of the human person.

Section 1.2 begins with brief discussions of certain features of Confucian and Pauline conceptions of morality. The aim, in these discussions, is to demonstrate that both systems of thought place considerable emphasis on relationships and on norms and standards pertaining to relationships. In the light of conceptions of relationships within the two traditions, the personal-impersonal dichotomy, which is often employed in contemporary Anglo-American moral philosophy, is analysed. Within that tradition, it is often assumed that the dichotomy is a precise and obvious one: according to this view, whereas intimate relationships are classified as personal (in the sense that one tends to be partial in relation to one's intimates), one's interactions with others with whom one does not have personal relationships is classified as impersonal. Against such a classification of relationships, it is contended that there are relationships such as friendship, for example, which do not fit easily into either category; and

that the dichotomy is, more generally, too schematic and oversimplifying. Consequently, moral systems which take the personal-impersonal dichotomy as fundamental should be revised.

Within the framework outlined in Chapter one, **Chapter two, *Classical Confucianism: Learning to Be Human***, sets out to analyse the notion of morality, or its equivalent, in the Confucian tradition. In the first Section (2.1), the Confucian concepts *jen* (human; humanity), *li* (social convention, modes of behaviour), *hsiao* (filial piety) and *shu* (reciprocity), concepts which are utilised in Confucian moral reasoning, are examined in detail. The aim of this exercise, apart from explicating the terms, is to demonstrate the reasoning processes at work in Confucian thought. What the analysis in question reveals is that Confucian morality is fundamentally concerned with relationships and the different ways in which agents stand in relation to one another. It is argued that Confucianism, starting from a belief in the family context as the primary locus within which morally significant emotions and attitudes of attachment are cultivated, posits an ideal of self cultivation understood as consisting in the fostering and enriching of one's relationships with others.

The practicalities of the process of self cultivation are dealt with in Section 2.2. In general, this Section views Confucian thought in a positive manner, refuting certain tendencies to characterise the Confucian concept of the self as determined solely by social, moral and political obligations. It begins with a discussion of the idea that, in Confucian philosophy, personal identity is constituted in an important way by the kinds of relationships one has. Within such a conceptual framework, how the individual conducts himself and fulfils his responsibilities and obligations in connection with each

of his relationships both expresses and reveals aspects of his self. It is argued here, against views of Confucianism as repressive and formalistic, that Confucian self cultivation focuses on the development of moral character *as expressed through relationships* and not on external conformity to accepted modes of behaviour.

**Chapter three, *Pauline Christianity: Human Nature and Morality*,** discusses the concept of the self in Pauline Christianity. It begins by examining various anthropological terms used metaphorically by Paul in his moral reasoning: καρδια (heart), νους (frame of mind; perspectivity), εσω ανθρωπον (the inner man) and σωμα (physical body). For Paul, the heart plays an important role in volition, cognition and in affection; it is significant that the three different capacities are thought to be connected. It is suggested in this Section (3.1) that Pauline thought tends to view the human person holistically. This is exemplified in the Pauline use of the concepts σωμα, εσω ανθρωπον and νους, as well as καρδια,. Paul expects that a change in perspective (νους; commonly translated 'mind') due to a believer's commitment to Christian beliefs should effect changes in all other aspects of life, including one's attitudes to the physical body. Such internalist assumptions proved to be the source of Paul's personal struggles which he characterised as a struggle between two selves: one which had committed itself to Christian beliefs, and the other which refused to act according to those beliefs.

In dealing with the incommensurability of his beliefs and his behaviours, Paul attempts to resolve one of the prevailing problems in moral philosophy. Instead of re-examining his internalist assumptions that a change in perspective *entails* a corresponding change in behaviour, he grapples with

issues of responsibility, suggesting that perhaps he is not fully responsible for certain of his sinful actions. In particular, he postulates the concept of the 'inner man' and identifies himself with this inner man, implying that there is a corresponding 'outer man' for whose actions he is not responsible. This first Section draws the conclusion that Paul fails adequately to deal with the above-mentioned problems.

The notion of responsibility figures at another level as well in Pauline thought. Section 3.2 focuses on Paul's treatment of choice and responsibility in the believers' choice between two contrasting modes of life. Paul presents two dualistic schemata in his assertion that the ways of thinking and modes of life of the new converts were to be markedly different from their previous beliefs and commitments. The first dualism is characterised in terms of the different features of the Christ-like and the Adamic lives. Located within the context of existing tension between the Jewish and the new Christian beliefs, the Adamic and Christ-like modes of life are presented as alternative and mutually exclusive choices. A similar antithesis—the second dualism considered in this Section—is posed between the spirit-led life (*πνευμα*) and life according to the 'flesh' (*σαρξ*). While the representative figures of Adam and Christ are used to signify modes of *human* existence, the spirit-flesh dichotomy characterises tension at a greater, cosmic level. Relating the (Jewish) law and sin to the realm of *σαρξ* and, by contrast, salvation and freedom to the realm of *πνευμα*, Paul again presents the converts with two antithetic life choices. The discussion in this Section entails an examination of both dualisms and asserts that Paul holds the believers fully responsible for their choice of modes of life.

Another important feature of the Pauline conception of human nature is Paul's egalitarian tone in advocating that existing distinctions of cultural

heritage (Jew-Greek), social status (master-slave) and gender (male-female) be set aside or be regarded as morally unimportant; this is the subject of Section 3.3. The Section discusses the possible interpretations of Paul's view of the existing categorisations: whether Paul reckons that they should be abolished, or, on a weaker reading, that they are morally irrelevant in the constitution of personal identity and, thus, of community membership. The primary thrust of this Section, however, is to suggest that regardless of his intentions, Paul, in throwing these categories into question, is articulating a radically different concept of human personhood from existing ones and, in addition, is advocating a new and relatively egalitarian basis for the Christian communities.

**Part II, *Relationships and Care***, comprising three chapters, picks up on the theme, dealt with in chapter one of Part I, of the need for moral theory to deal with interaction with particular others to whom one might be related to in a range of ways. The particular focus of this part of the thesis is the significance of relationships and relational involvement and attachments in moral life. Both the Confucian and the Pauline traditions view the moral agent as an essentially related self and, furthermore, emphasise that the connectedness of human persons plays a significant role in moral agency. It is with this outlook that Part II examines in detail the dynamics of relational moralities.

The phrase 'relationship-based morality' is used throughout this thesis to denote moral systems which recognise and acknowledge not merely the relatedness of human persons but, in addition that the *nature of the relationship* between the moral agent and the other is, at least in part, determinative of what might count as appropriate or correct behaviour and

action. According to this view, morality, moral reasoning and moral behaviour are dependent on, and variously circumscribed by, relationships between moral agents and related others. These features of relationship-based moralities are based on conceptions of agency and personal identity which are generally incompatible with notions of the self as an autonomous, detached individual. Requirements that moral considerations be impartial, impersonal and universalisable—such as those discussed in chapter one—are connected to concerns for predicability and consistency in moral action. Accordingly, involvement with and attachment to particular others is de-emphasised and sometimes even construed as a hindrance because it is seen to conflict with principles of impersonality and detached impartiality in moral deliberation.

**Chapter four, *A Morality of Care***, the first chapter of Part II, sets the background for the consideration of the relationship-based moral systems in Confucian and Pauline thought. The underlying stance of Part II is that criteria of impersonality and impartiality, while of crucial significance in many moral contexts, should not be understood as unconditionally and unquestionably applicable in all circumstances. In this connection, it is suggested that an overemphasis on impersonality or impartiality as fundamental criteria of moral consideration often goes hand-in-hand with the classification of personal or intimate relationships as being beyond or external to the domain of morality. Section 4.2 examines the significance of emotional commitments and attachments to morality. In particular, it focuses on the concern articulated by the feminist care ethic that morality should view attachments to particular others in specific relationships as important considerations in moral reasoning. However, while recognising the value of

the care perspective to contemporary moral philosophy, this Section contends that various proposals of the care ethic are practically unworkable because of an overemphasis on caring (for others) as a solely emotional and subjective enterprise.

In response to the criticisms considered in the previous Section, Section 4.2 maintains that a clear distinction needs to be made between the *emotions* of care and the *duties* associated with care. It argues that even within caring relationships, there are certain norms and standards of appropriateness—with regard to duties as well as emotions—which can and need to be articulated. Such safeguards are necessary in order to prevent possible exploitation and subordination especially of the moral patient (the cared-for) in a seemingly caring relationship. Finally, the chapter explores the kinds of norms and standards that might be applicable to caring relationships, suggesting that these need to be worked out within specific socio-cultural frameworks and structures, taking care to allow for the expression of the richness and depth of human relationships. Indeed, through such a process, the re-conceptualisation of moral categories is already taking place.

**Chapter five, *Confucian Community***, investigates the Confucian conceptualisation of relationships, noting in particular its emphasis on cultivating relationships as the basis for establishing social, moral and political order. Section 5.1 analyses the nature of obligation in Confucian morality. Of the five kinds of relationship considered by the classical Confucians to be of special moral significance (father-son, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife, ruler-subject and friendship [Doctrine of the Mean, 20:8]), friendship is the only one which does not involve notions of superiority, inferiority and moral inequality. It is demonstrated, through an

analysis of notions of womanhood, filial piety and political obligation, that the inequality within Confucian relationships, although ideally founded upon appropriate affection and emotions of care, leaves much room for subordination and manipulation of those in roles considered socially and morally inferior (in other words, those in the position of the cared-for).

Section 5.2 continues to describe and to analyse critically notions of obligation and responsibility in Confucian thought. It introduces the concept *cheng-ming* (rectification or regulation of names), which pertains to both the form and the content of appropriate and moral behaviour for participants in particular relationships. In this respect, Confucius expounds on a moral theory of naming: that the bearer of a particular title, say that of father, must conduct himself according to the requirements of that role. This theory is criticised on the grounds that Confucius seems to derive moral differentiation (fatherly roles, sonship, womanhood) from natural categories (male progenitor, male offspring, femaleness).

In spite of the inconsistencies and problems with Confucian thought, Section 5.3, the concluding Section of Chapter five, makes a positive assessment of Confucian thought. It contends that contemporary moral philosophy should recognise, as the Confucians did, the importance of caring relationships in human life. Personal human relationships should not be simplistically and crudely cast aside, as being beyond the realm of morality; the values, norms and structures appropriate to a morality of care should be judiciously worked out in order to capture properly and adequately the nature and scope of the varieties of caring.

Caring relationships are an important aspect of Pauline morality as well.

**Chapter six, *Pauline Community***, examines this focus by analysing Paul's concept(s) and uses of love (*αγαπη*) in his exhortations. Section 6.1 focuses on a particular aspect of *αγαπη*, namely, its incompatibility with a certain legalistic conception of Jewish law. Specifically, the analysis details Paul's rejection of legalistic structures, particularly those embodied in existing Jewish codes. Consideration is given here to the Jewish requirement of circumcision which Paul belittles, rejecting its deontological and motivational structures. It is suggested that Paul's rejection of circumcision is an important development in the conception of morality and moral agency in the history of Jewish and Christian thought.

In Section 6.2, Paul's pragmatic approach to interrelational and communal harmony is examined. In this context, *αγαπη* is highly functional both in integrating the community of converted Jews and Gentiles and/or Jewish and Gentile Christians, as well as in conflict-resolution. In terms of integration, Paul asks that differences be put aside, minimised or eradicated; to this effect he evokes several metaphors, notably the 'common meal' and the church community as the 'Body of Christ'. With regard to community-maintenance, Paul's moral reasoning exemplifies a move from normative standards of acceptable practice to a focus on concern for the other, with such concern construed as a manifestation of *αγαπη*.

In Section 6.3, some themes arising from the discussion of *αγαπη* in the two previous Sections are drawn together in an attempt to compare the features of Pauline morality with some of the characteristics of care morality. The discussion focuses primarily on two aspects of Paul's moral reasoning: its mode and its content. While Paul's rejection of the requirement of certain observances as duties is important, what is particularly interesting is his

definition of ἀγάπη as the fundamental defining feature of the Christian community and, as well, his uses of the concept(s) of ἀγάπη in his moral reasoning. Αγάπη is analysed in the light of notions such as autonomy, universalisability and caring affection.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. See discussion below on texts.
- <sup>2</sup>. See Fung Yu-Lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, (ed Derk Bodde), (The Free Press, Macmillan, USA, 1948), especially Chapter Three, "The Origin of the Schools".
- <sup>3</sup>. See Appendix 3, "The *Lun yü*", in D.C. Lau, The Analects of Confucius, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, USA, 1979.

PART I  
MORALITY AND THE RELATIONAL  
SELF

*If by the age of forty a man is still disliked,  
there is no hope for him. (Analects 17:26)*

*The body does not consist of one member  
but of many ... If the whole body were an  
eye, where would the hearing be? ... there  
are many members, yet one body.  
(I Corinthians 12:14, 17a, 20)*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MORALITY AND HUMAN NATURE**

The questions we ask about morality, such as "What ought I to do?" and "How am I to live?" are deeply connected with our notions of human existence. How we conceive of ourselves as human beings impacts directly on the question of how we are to live our lives. Different views of human nature serve as ontological and metaphysical bases for different conclusions about how we, as humans, are to live and what we should pursue, and how we might go about pursuing those ideals and aims. Basic to and constitutive of moral life is the fact that humans are social creatures. As human beings, we live in and belong to different communities and societies. The existing structures and modes of life associated with each of these communities provide important contexts both for self-definition and self-expression.

The community, insofar as it is further divided into groups—some of which overlap in function and in interest—provides a myriad of options and opportunities for life choices. Rules and norms within the community are formed and develop with the general expectation that most members of that community will subscribe to those standards. Frequent rejection of or departure from these standards might result eventually in a member being ostracised or marginalised from the mainstream social life of the community.

Questions about moral action or about being moral arise partly because human beings have to learn to live together in a community, acknowledging and accommodating the existence of others. It is evident that at least some rules are necessary for the maintenance of the social structure in any society in order that it not break down. Rules such as 'Do not exceed 80 kilometres per hour when driving' or 'Do not litter' or 'Do not smoke' serve

to make life livable and pleasant for the general community. Individual choices are governed to varying extents, in different communities, by rules such as these which recognise that each individual has to give consideration to the likes and dislikes of others, even to those with whom we are not acquainted.

Morality, being concerned with human interaction, is irreducibly social. This does not mean, however, that it can be simply reduced to a question of maintenance of social harmony. Minimally, morality may be understood as the codes and norms which allow people in a community to live in a way that minimises conflict. This reductionist conception of morality, however, is inadequate and inconsistent with the view that morality is fundamental to human existence and is integrally connected to the range of human activities—including such activities as improving technology, increasing knowledge and understanding of the human world and its environment, advocating justice and fairness, improving environments aesthetically, and acting for the sake of the greater communal good. These pursuits, separately or in combination, contribute to the quality of human life.

The picture of moral life presented thus far attempts to capture some difficult tensions in moral philosophy. In particular, it highlights the necessity for universally- and unconditionally-applicable moral and behavioural codes while, at the same time, noting that much of human life is varied and diverse and defies classification and codification.

The preceding discussion introduces the theme of this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to establish an agent-centred account of morality which attempts to take into consideration various aspects of human life which are morally significant. It makes the point that moral theories which emphasise

only specific aspects of human existence to the exclusion of other aspects, or theories which demand that moral agents detach themselves from their personal perspectives or their relational contexts are unrealistic; these views also fail to recognise the richness and variety of human experience. The particular aspect of human experience that is examined in this thesis is that of human relationships. It is argued in this chapter that moral theories should both accommodate the notion of the moral agent as a related self and, as well, incorporate norms and values of connectedness that play a central role in human relationships.

The chapter consists of two sections. The concern of the first section is to demonstrate that moral theories which are limited in their expectations regarding morality, or which attempt to exclude aspects of human experience from morality are flawed. It is argued, too, that the effects of such flawed moral theories lead to inadequate conceptions of human nature: a theory which, for example, upholds a notion of the moral agent essentially as a detached self will accordingly constrain and limit human action and discount aspects of human experience.

In arguing for a relational morality, the view of moral agents as detached and impartial selves is critically examined. It is in this connection that various accounts of morality are discussed. The first of these is the Hobbesian conception of contractarian morality. It is argued that Hobbes' rather simple construction of the social contract is associated with simplistic assumptions about human nature and moral motivation. A fundamental point made in this section is that Hobbes' notion of self-interested moral agents who participate in the social contract for mutual benefit reveals no dimension or capacity on the part of moral agents for forging and sustaining meaningful relationships.

The second of the four accounts with which relationship-based morality is contrasted is the Kantian universalisability criterion. The point is made that an overemphasis on universalisable courses of action and behaviour does not allow for aspects of relating with others which are agent-specific and which are not universalisable. Notions of trust and care, for example, function differently and to different extents across relationships.

Thirdly, aspects of Mill's greatest happiness principle are examined with a view to demonstrating that while considerations of collective goods and of the interests of other individuals occupies an important place in morality, the insistence that such considerations should always override allegiances with specific others, and the responsibilities and obligations arising from those allegiances, unrealistically restricts morality, as well as human experience.

Finally, Nagel's proposal for a perspective-free stance is discussed. While a relationship-based morality presupposes the importance of personal involvement and, thus, of perspectivity, Nagel's system upholds a stance which aims to be independent of subjective points of view; it associates moral practice with the adoption of impersonal and objective points of view. One of the difficulties of Nagel's view, as argued in this section, is that it begs the question of whether it is desirable that moral agents should cast aside their personal perspectives.

The second section of the chapter examines the dynamics of relational morality. It begins with discussions of relational morality within the Confucian and Pauline traditions. It then proceeds to describe aspects of existing debates between those who hold conceptions of the moral agent as a detached self, on the one hand, and those who advocate relational morality, on the other. A view that is discussed in detail is that it might be unhelpful to

describe relationships either as personal or impersonal because the dichotomy, while seemingly exhaustive, fails to capture the nature of relationships which could be both impersonal and personal (for example, depending on situations and circumstances). The suggestion, arising from this contention, is that, from the point of view of relational morality, it is perhaps a more fruitful enterprise to seek to address not merely the *content* of morality but also the existing structures in contemporary moral philosophy.

### **1.1 Detached Selves**

One of the primary concerns of morality—a concern shared by many moral theories—is the tension between the needs and interests of the individual moral agent, on the one hand, and, on the other, the competing needs and interests of other agents, whether individually or collectively. Concerns regarding self-centredness and selfishness arise in this context. In addressing these themes, criteria such as impartiality, impersonality and universalisability are upheld by various theories as fundamental principles of moral deliberation. These criteria are important and instrumental in guaranteeing that morality is not haphazard in the sense that moral agents should not feel that how they treat or interact with others is a matter of subjective determination.

Associated with the view that moral considerations are in general too important to be contingent upon the subjective viewpoints of individual moral agents, is a conception of the paradigmatic moral agent as a rational and detached self. Connectedly, the range of loosely related concepts such as impartiality, impersonality, autonomy, detachment, obligation, universality, consistency and rationality has been articulated in conjunction with moral theories such as contractarianism, Kantianism and utilitarianism.

Criticisms of the above-mentioned concepts, in particular, of their weight in certain moral theories, are advanced from a range of vantage points, three of which will be discussed briefly here. The first is the communitarian objection to liberal conceptions of the self. One of the assertions of communitarian thinkers is that a typically liberal conceptualisation of the moral agent as a detached, atomistic or abstract self does not capture the embeddedness of persons within particular communities. As a consequence, the contention runs, libertarian views fail properly and adequately to reflect socially-constituted aspects of the agent such as her character and identity which are pertinent to moral agency. In general, communitarian objections to the liberal conception of moral agency are situated within the context of more general disagreements regarding concepts of the self and of personal identity, and of how these might be associated with or embedded within social and political structures and contexts. It needs to be stated here, however, that while the communitarian-libertarian debate is presented here as two distinct and clear polarities, there are important disagreements (especially regarding substantive issues such as the content of morality, equality and justice) within each of these positions.<sup>1</sup>

While the communitarian-liberal debate focuses on how the moral agent *qua* self might be constituted, critics of impersonalist moral theories argue that accounts of morality should not require that moral agents be impersonal to the extent that they forego possibilities for the pursuit of the agent's interests, including their self-development. Within moral philosophy, impersonality is often taken to mean that moral agents should, when making moral decisions, adopt a disinterested and detached attitude in the case of competing interests: the moral agent is not to accord special emphasis or

priority to her own needs and desires when she has to choose between them and those of others.

Secondly, another important usage of the personal-impersonal dichotomy in moral philosophy occurs as part of discussions of personal development and moral excellence: moral excellence is often (wrongly) thought to be comprised of the performance of selfless and other-regarding acts (impersonal), neglecting the pursuit of individual perfection (personal).<sup>2</sup> Critics of such views of impersonality note that impersonality, if construed as an overriding criterion of moral deliberation, in both of the above mentioned senses, is inadequate in various ways. In particular, it does not properly account for factors (especially motivational factors) which affect moral agency. Connectedly, the main consequence of this lack is that it forces the moral agent to compromise on her own well-being.<sup>3</sup>

The third kind of objection to impartialist and impersonalist moral theories is advanced from the point of view of relational moralities. In general, relational moralities question the central role of notions such as justice, equality, impartiality, impersonality and obligation within impersonalist moral theories. In addition to, or contrasted with, such notions, it is argued that moral theory should seek to accommodate values pertinent to human relationships such as trust, responsibility, care, love, compassion and special consideration for particular others. According to proponents of relational moralities, contemporary moral theory does not adequately account for the moral significance of relationships in a range of ways. Some critics focus specifically on the *content* of contemporary moral theory, arguing that a primary emphasis on principles or rules for moral action and behaviour does not allow that moral agents might be committed to, or responsible for, particular others.<sup>4</sup> In addition, some others have a more constructive focus,

discussing in detail how moral theory might incorporate values and norms appropriate to relationships.<sup>5</sup> A somewhat more radical—and perhaps more effective—approach is to question existing structures that posit stark and irreconcilable differences between rule- and principle-based moralities on the one hand, and relational morality, on the other.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of the following sub-sections is to demonstrate that certain impersonalist moral theories are unrealistic in their formulations in the range of ways discussed previously. Through a brief examination of various theories, it is argued that conceptions of human nature and of moral agency are very intimately connected to theories of moral action and behaviour and, connectedly, that moralities which fail to capture and account for integral aspects of the moral agent *qua* human person are detrimental to the human condition. In this context, aspects of Hobbes' contractarian morality, Kantian universalisability, Mill's utilitarianism and Nagel's impersonal morality are critically examined.

### **1.1.1 Morality for Mutual Benefit: Hobbes' Social Contract**

As beings living together within a society, individuals must learn to accommodate, at least in some way, the interests of others. Clearly, because of limited goods and unlimited wants, some wants have to be forgone in order that life in human society be livable and not fraught at all times with conflict. It is important, in this connection, that society is not seen predominantly as a loose collection of unconnected individuals seeking merely their own gratification.

This is the view Thomas Hobbes held of uncivilised society—the state of nature. Hobbes' state of nature is characterised by limited goods and

unlimited desires; thus human beings have to learn to curtail their desires in order that social conflict be reduced. Comparing humans with other creatures such as ants and bees, Hobbes asserted that the former are unable to live "sociably one with another", without any coercive power.<sup>7</sup> According to Hobbes, human beings as a particular kind of social creature want to protect their own interests and needs, yet have to recognise that others want to pursue and protect theirs as well. The interests and welfare of others, once their legitimacy is recognised, has to be reconciled with the aim of living our own lives. In recognition of this primary difficulty, writes Hobbes, men come together in a social contract, '*...as if every man should say to every man, I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner.*'<sup>8</sup> A commonwealth is generated when these people surrender their rights to a sovereign, which '*...may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defence.*'<sup>9</sup> This sovereign power is established to ensure that the terms of such a contract are kept.

This short description of Hobbes' social contract, while rather simplified, provides a basic summary of some of its important features. It demonstrates, for example, that a primary aim of Hobbes' social contract—and of contractarian theories in general—is the protection of certain specified freedoms and rights. The contractarian model is applicable particularly in those domains of interaction connected with political life and, more generally, in interactions in the public sphere. In terms of its protectionist character (protecting one's freedoms, interests etc.)—which could be framed more positively in terms of respect (respecting others' freedoms and interests)—

social contract theories of morality are derived from a notion of community essentially grounded in decisions made collectively by members of the community.

While accounts of community and of individuality vary in various formulations of contractarian theory, Hobbes' conception of human nature is rather modest. It is primarily in order to protect one's life and possessions that each individual is willing to relinquish some of his or her natural freedom. The mutual benefit arising from such a collective decision is, in Hobbes' view, obvious. In addition, from the motivational point of view, what ensures that individuals keep to the terms of the contract is a threat of punishment—the 'sword of the sovereign'.

Hobbes views human beings as primarily self-interested individuals for whom only a threatening external force can ensure respect for other's rights to freedom and to life. Hobbes' conception of human desires is pessimistic in that it is negative, basically emphasising non-interference. The Hobbesian conception of desire is also simplistic because it focuses narrowly on self-regarding motives and, correspondingly, sees morality in terms of a delicate balancing act between one's own desires and interests and those of others where there is conflict. A Hobbesian social contract account does not attempt to account for or promote positive moral actions and behaviours which are intimately linked to important notions of moral agency such as responsibility, self-governance and self-regulation. It is in this sense that such an account trivialises *both* human experience *and* the significance of morality.

Furthermore, from the point of view of the relation between the individual and the community, Hobbesian morality is built solely on prudential considerations: the moral agent, as a party to the contract, makes a compromise: he hopes that his various rights will be respected by others if he

respects their rights. Hobbes' notion of social organisation and of the moral agent as a member of his community is flawed because it ignores the possibility that individual lives might indeed benefit from involvement with others through relationships and, more generally, from participation in the community.

In summary, the preceding critical examination of the Hobbesian social contract is not intended as a full exposition of Hobbes' ideas but, rather, to demonstrate that certain of Hobbes' assumptions and views yield oversimplified accounts of morality, of moral agency and of human experience: morality is not merely about a socio-political life fraught with tensions between competing demands of the self and the other, and necessarily regulated by an external threat of punishment.

The following section examines Kantian morality in a similar manner, with a view to demonstrating that the Kantian universalisability criterion should not be taken to mean either that universalisability is itself sufficient for morality or that it is the overriding criterion in morality.

### **1.1.2 The Universalisability Criterion: Kantian Requirements of Morality**

In moral practice, consistency and predictability are, obviously, important because they enable moral agents to communicate successfully and to respond appropriately based on what is normally required and expected of them. For example, promise-keeping as an institution is possible only if certain standards of reliability and trust are upheld. We want people to be honest and fair, at least most if not all of the time, and not to be so only when they feel like it. Similarly, the same is required of oneself by others.

Immanuel Kant was concerned that morality should not be understood as option, in the sense described above.<sup>10</sup> He emphasised, for instance, that a particular type of imperative—what he termed a 'hypothetical imperative'—combined a means-end approach, having the general form, "If you desire or want X, then do Y." According to Kant, moral imperatives cannot be conditional and optional as in the case of hypothetical imperatives. Rather, moral imperatives command us unconditionally and are categorical in nature. Kant makes the point that the Categorical Imperative (CI) is a universal law in the following sense:

... nothing remains to serve as a principle of the will except universal conformity of its action to law as such. That is, I should never act in such a way that I could not also will that my maxim should be a universal law.<sup>11</sup>

That the CI is an universal law is important for Kant especially because he held the view that human beings are, by nature, subject to 'inclination'<sup>12</sup> which, being under the jurisdiction of natural causal laws, is beyond one's control. Being moral, on this account, consists in transcending one's inclinations. For Kant, the application of the universalisability criterion to morality entails a rejection of moral principles which cannot at the same time be a principle for every moral agent.

On Kant's account, too, morality is very closely tied up with rationality: the rational faculty of the human person, together with her autonomous free will, allows her to recognise and to act, as a moral agent, according to universalisable calls of duty—this is distinct and separate from human inclination. Indeed, God, whose will is wholly determined by reason alone, would not have any problem concerning moral action, according to Kant, as He does not experience the struggle between reason and inclination; what a

perfectly rational being does is what an imperfectly rational being (i.e. man), ought to do.

Because humans are imperfect, they need to have their action and behaviour guided by imperatives. Rejecting the idea that one's inclinations can be a suitable motivating force for moral action, Kant postulated reason itself as being the force of obligatoriness of the CI. In addition, he conceived of duty as a purely formal requirement which requires that the agent acts from respect for the moral law alone. While a perfectly rational being would not experience laws as imperatives, an imperative, in the case of humankind, is a command of reason to a will that does not of necessity act in accordance with reason. Kant sought the purely rational subject; although he recognised that humans are imperfect, he believed there was a kind of perfect rationality embodied in perfect beings to which humans should aim.

An important point to be noted is that it is not at all obvious what Kant means by the phrase 'universal law'. There is one sense of universality (universalisability<sub>O</sub>) that clearly emerges when the CI is contrasted with hypothetical imperatives and that is, that the universal law is obligatory. There is at least another sense of universality (universalisability<sub>U</sub>)—emphasis that moral imperatives do not admit of particulars—that is implied rather than explicit. On this view of universalisability<sub>U</sub>, the CI is universal<sub>U</sub> in that it cannot be formulated to suit a specific person or circumstance.<sup>13</sup> More specifically, while it allows for the derivation of particular applications (eg. "Carey should tell the truth") from universals (eg. "All persons should tell the truth"), it does not permit formulations *based solely on particulars* such as "All persons should do their best for Carey."

It is obvious that Kant's universalisability criterion could have more than the two aspects discussed above (universalisability<sub>O</sub> and

universalisability<sub>U</sub>). However, in the context of this thesis, what is important about universalisability<sub>U</sub> is that, in denying some place or role to particular persons or circumstances, it would seem that actions or attitudes which function or occur within the context of, say, personal relationships<sup>14</sup>, do not count as moral.

From Kant's writings, it is at best unclear how significant universalisability<sub>U</sub> is to his conception of the CI. In the context of the discussion of this chapter, it needs to be noted that if universalisability<sub>U</sub> is understood to be a *necessary* feature of morality, one of the (undesirable) outcomes is that practices, actions or attitudes operative within particular relationships might not be considered morally significant.

What is being argued here is not a criticism of the Kantian CI, but of an overemphasis on universalisability<sub>U</sub> in morality, because that would render invalid specific aspects of human attachment and, more generally, of personal experience. For instance, the way in which a particular mother cares for or loves her child is morally significant, yet not universalisable<sub>U</sub>. In other words, while certain aspects of parent-child relationships are universalisable<sub>U</sub> (such as: "All parents have responsibility in ensuring that their children are healthy"), there are other aspects which might not be universalisable<sub>U</sub> but which are yet morally significant (such as: "This father takes his child for a dental inspection every six months"). In other words, there are, and will be, differences between particular parent-child relationships and it should not simply be assumed that such differences, because they are non-universalisable<sub>U</sub>, are therefore either unimportant or inconsequential insofar as the *content* of morality is concerned.

In this connection, insofar as moral agency is concerned, it should not be taken as a given that moral agents are detached selves. In other words,

there should be place within moral theory to accommodate the fact that moral agents are, at least in some sense, related selves. According to some stronger formulations of relational morality, such attachments to particular others are *constitutive of* moral agency. Such a view need not be accepted, however, in order to maintain that, at a minimal level, a theory of moral action should attempt to account for differences across moral agents arising from their differential attachments to particular others. It is clear that an overly rigorous conception of the universalisability criterion could easily gloss over such important features of human attachment and, hence, of moral agency.

The following section examines Mill's utilitarian Greatest Happiness Principle, showing that Mill's utilitarianism requires that attachments to particular others should not be given precedence over considerations of justice, equality and impartiality.

### **1.1.3 Utility: Mill's Greatest Happiness Principle**

Utilitarian moral theories generally seek to curtail solely self-regarding or self-interested motives, actions, rules or behaviours. In particular, they promote actions, practices, rules, behaviours and/or motives which procure maximum happiness of all individuals concerned. The utilitarian enterprise attempts to deal directly with the competing desires and interests of the self and others. It prescribes that moral agents should in principle act to procure what is in the interests and well-being of others over those of the self. More precisely, though, it is not merely the promotion of the interests and well-being of particular others or of groups but of collective good or of desirable states of affairs.

Variations across utilitarian views arise from two primary areas of debate. The first is a debate about the content of morality: pleasure, happiness, justice, welfare and preferences are some utilitarian goods. In this connection, Mill's fundamental objection against Benthamite utilitarianism was its lack of distinction between goods of differing qualities: Mill was concerned to emphasise the more desirable and qualitatively superior happiness connected with the exercise of the 'higher faculties', as contrasted with those deriving from 'mere sensation'. According to Mill, Bentham's measure of utility, because it fails to articulate the necessity of comparing the quality as well as the quantity of goods, is a 'shallow mistake'.<sup>15</sup>

The second area of contention between Utilitarians is that concerning the method according to which outcomes might be assessed or goods realised. There are long-existing and robust debates between proponents of Act Utilitarianism ('Perform the act that will produce the greatest overall amount of utility') and Rule Utilitarianism ('Follow the rule that will produce the greatest overall amount of utility') and, more recently, of Practice Utilitarianism ('Support those practices that produce the greatest overall amount of utility') and Motive Utilitarianism ('Act on the motive that will produce the greatest overall amount of utility').<sup>16</sup>

Mill's greatest happiness principle needs to be situated within the context of his social and political philosophy. Mill was proposing a contractarian theory and, in that context, articulated a moral theory which he believed would suffice in promoting the pursuit of collective interests based on notions of justice, rights, equality and impartiality. In his view, what one must consider, in fulfilling the greatest happiness principle, is "... not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned."<sup>17</sup> Mill is quick to reinforce the point that utilitarianism does not *require* self-renunciation:

The *only* self-renunciation which [utilitarianism] applauds, is devotion to the happiness, or to some of the means of happiness, of others; either of mankind collectively, or of individuals within the limits imposed by the collective interests of mankind.<sup>18</sup>

However, and rather more stringently,

As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator.<sup>19</sup>

Mill argues that while it might seem as if utilitarianism, in being consequentialist (in deriving the rightness of an action from its utility), precludes a consideration of the motives and/or characters of moral agents, there is in fact no inconsistency between concern about agent-motives and utilitarian theory.<sup>20</sup> He points out that:

Utilitarians are quite aware that there are other desirable possessions and qualities besides virtue, and are perfectly willing to allow to all of them their full worth. They are also aware that a right action does not necessarily indicate a virtuous character, and that actions which are blameable often proceed from qualities entitled to praise ... I grant that [utilitarians] are, notwithstanding, of opinion, that in the long run the best proof of a good character is good actions ...<sup>21</sup>

Mill maintains that whilst motives might be intimately linked to the agent's character and worth, from the point of view of the greatest happiness principle, the former are irrelevant insofar as right or moral action is concerned.

Mill's response to the place of moral motivation and moral agency in moral theory is also relevant to considerations of relational attachment. In discussing the implications of the greatest happiness principle, he deals with

the concept of impartiality and points out that the upholding of impartiality, and of justice, seem to require that 'favour and preference' (of particular others) do not apply, and should be suspended in moral considerations. Mill is again, with regard to this issue, happy to concede that favour and preference (opposites of impartiality) are not always censurable. He affirms the place of relational attachment within the moral community, stating counterfactually that a person would be held morally blameworthy, rather than praiseworthy, if he did not give special consideration to his family or friends at least where he could do so "... without violating any other duty."<sup>22</sup>

Mill seems to imply that acting responsibly toward particular others (which might involve giving them special consideration) is a matter of the agent's moral worth which is ultimately unrelated to right moral action. Indeed, he seeks to maintain that in most cases, within a context of justice and equality, impartiality should prevail over considerations of relational attachment:

Impartiality, in short, as an obligation of justice, may be said to mean, being exclusively influenced by the considerations which it is supposed ought to influence the particular case in hand; and resisting the solicitation of any motives which prompt to conduct different from what those considerations would dictate.<sup>23</sup>

It is clear that Mill wishes not to allow that partial considerations for related or specific others might override the greatest happiness principle. Indeed, it seems that Mill holds partiality suspect for the very reason that it runs counter to collective or community interests. The criticisms of overemphasis on universalisability made in the previous section apply here as well: if moral theories require moral agents to consistently deny and forego relational attachments, those moral theories in question should be carefully reassessed

for their failure to take into consideration such morally significant details of human experience.

Thomas Nagel, in contemplating issues of partiality and subjectivity in morality, proposes that moral agents adopt impersonal, objective points of view in their moral deliberation. Nagelian morality is discussed in the next section.

#### **1.1.4 Impersonal Morality: Nagel's View From Nowhere**

Thomas Nagel's work in morality deals with the difficult issues related to debates regarding moral motivation and reasons for action. In particular, he examines the complex tension between moral motivation which is agent-centered, on the one hand, and objective reasons for action which are, in general, agent-neutral, on the other. In The Possibility of Altruism<sup>24</sup>, Nagel argues regarding altruism that the moral agent should, ideally, take a rationalistic, disinterested perspective when weighing the wants and interests of oneself against those of others. Nagel states clearly that his view shares two similar features with a Kantian one. The first is their respective internalist motivational structures. The second is a point related to moral psychology: that moral motivation is based in part on 'the agent's metaphysical conception of himself'.<sup>25</sup>

There is a more basic similarity between the two views which Nagel does not explicitly specify and that is that both moral theories primarily adopt an attitude of suspicion toward subjective agent-relative moral considerations which are not applicable to most other moral agents. Thus, while Kant's paradigmatic moral agent is the rational man who acts according to

universalisable principles, Nagel conceives of morality in terms of agent-neutral impersonal practical judgments:

[In morality i]t is important that what is judged does not apply only from a personal standpoint, and hence only to one's own case ... [To be properly moral] requires the acceptance of universal practical principles which apply in the same sense to everyone, and which are impersonally formulable, so that one can arrive at any true conclusion about what the persons in a situation should do, or have reason to do, without knowing what one's own place in the situation is, or indeed whether one occupies a place in it at all.<sup>26</sup>

For Nagel, the solipsist—one who cannot 'cast his reasonings in impersonal form'<sup>27</sup>—cannot be a successful moral agent. In a later work, The View From Nowhere<sup>28</sup>, Nagel describes how the moral agent should come to acknowledge the incompleteness of personal and subjective points of view. Dealing with the larger issue of metaphysical reality here, Nagel searches for an objective conception of reality which implies that a grip on reality and, similarly, on morality, involves a knowledge of what other perspectives are like 'from the inside'. On that account, moral deliberation would involve, first, knowing one's own perspective and those like ours; and, then, considering perspectives different from and even alien to ours, perspectives which we do not already know 'what it is like to be'.

Nagel states that his aim in ethics is normative rather than descriptive, and that he wants a richer metaphysics of morals; however, he also indicates that he does not know what that richer conception would involve. This uncertainty is reflected in a passage in which he describes the process through which one tries to attain a disinterested perspective:

If we can make judgments about how we should live even after stepping outside of ourselves, they will provide the material for moral theory...In the sphere of values or practical reasoning, the problem is different. As in the theoretical case, we must take up a new, comprehensive viewpoint after stepping back and including our former perspective in what is to be understood. But here the new viewpoint will be not a new set of beliefs, but a new or extended set of values.<sup>29</sup>

Heroically, Nagel attempts to offer a moral theory that is inclusive (in impersonally taking into account all subjective perspectives) and yet inclusive of an account of personal identity. He expresses the problem thus:

Given a complete description of the world from no particular point of view, including all the people in it, one of whom is Thomas Nagel, it seems on the one hand that something has been left out, something absolutely essential remains to be specified, namely which of them I am.<sup>30</sup>

Nagel's view in The View From Nowhere is a more moderate one than in The Possibility of Altruism in that, in discussing how a moral agent might juggle her own perspective as one amongst others, he concedes that it is not necessary that a particular moral agent abandon all the values which she cannot sustain impersonally and objectively.<sup>31</sup> However, he still requires that the moral agent strive toward an objective self, reasoning that "I do not give [myself, the objective self,] any privileged status by comparison with other points of view ... [treating] on an equal footing those [experiences] it receives directly [via the body identified as TN] and those others it learns about only indirectly."<sup>32</sup>

While Nagel's account attempts to deal with the subjective aspect of human experience, the solution appears unworkable because of the

extraordinary demands it places on ordinary moral agents to juggle perspectives.<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, another question that should be raised regarding Nagel's theory is its assumption that the optimal solution to subjectivity in morality rests in an impersonal weighing of one's own perspective with those of others. In other words, Nagel's theory begs the question of whether it is desirable that an agent adopt an impersonal perspective with regard to *her own interests, needs and desires*. Such an assumption fails to take into account motivational factors which are crucial in human intention and action. Furthermore, it seems that such reasoning requires the moral agent to ignore the relatedness of humans and her feelings of attachment to others arising from that relatedness and interdependence. These concerns are important sources of motivation for the individual to seek not only her or his own welfare but those of others as well. Indeed, to insist on impersonality, a stance acquired through adopting and accommodating other perspectives, is to require that one dissociate oneself, if necessary, from what one cares about. The desirability of such prescriptions needs to be carefully scrutinised. If individual differences are to be respected, if perspectivity is an aspect of difference amongst people, and if human existence is necessarily perspectival, it follows that the adoption of an impersonal and objective perspective might entail a rejection of individual modes of human existence.

In summary, the point of this section has been to demonstrate that certain accounts of morality and moral practice leave no room for subjective human experience and/or fail to appreciate that some aspects of that experience might be morally salient. The particular aspect of human experience that is considered here is that of relational attachment and the special loyalties, obligations and emotions arising from it. It has been argued

that the attempt to hold as basic the notion of the moral agent as a detached self, through emphasising concepts such as impersonality, impartiality and universalisability either as necessary or overriding criteria of morality, is unrealistic in that that forces moral agents, in their moral practice, to deny or to count as irrelevant their special attachments.

The discussion in the following section focuses on the dynamics of relational moralities. It briefly examines the nature of connectedness in the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian traditions and then proceeds to analyse various arguments and proposals for relational morality.

## **1.2 Morality and Relationships**

Many of the projects we undertake and the activities we engage in, such as playing games, bushwalking and research, involve others. Some of our projects such as giving to charity and carrying out a survey presuppose the existence and involvement of others. The connectedness of the human person is an important fact of human life. We are born into, grow up in, and are trained in environments that include other people. Learning to be moral presupposes, as its context, a moral community.<sup>34</sup>

In both the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian traditions, the articulation of codes and norms governing relationships is deeply situated within existing ways of life and modes of thought. It is also bound up with other concerns about social and political structures and institutions.

The discussion in the following sub-sections (1.2.1 and 1.2.2) focuses on general aspects of relationships in the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian streams of thought, situating the ideas of each tradition within the respective socio-political and historical frameworks.

### 1.2.1 Relationships in Confucian Thought

In Confucian thought, the human being is conceived of as a member of a species which has as one of its distinctive characteristics a moral nature.<sup>35</sup> It may sound trivial and superfluous to make the comment that human beings are similar because they belong to the same species. However, from an ontological point of view, Confucius and his disciples hold that this similarity in nature is morally significant: every human being inherently possesses the capacity for self-development. This view is one of the primary tenets of Confucian moral thinking. And because human beings share the same nature, it follows that the proper context for the manifestation, development and realisation of this nature is the human community itself.

For the Confucians, being moral and becoming moral are meaningful only within an intersubjective shared communal context; the locus of meaning in human life and its values, both for the individual as well as for the community, is to be found within the cultural, social and political structures of the community. The picture of the ideal community provided in the Analects is marked by a feudal-style hierarchy maintained by the active participation of all the members of the community who understand their relative positions in the various levels of the socio-political hierarchy.

Consequently, much emphasis is placed on the articulation of behaviours and norms applicable to one's situation as a party to specific relationships. The Confucian self-cultivation process—often dubbed 'humanisation'—can only be carried out in an intersubjective context. The process of humanisation—of *being* human—is, for Confucius, one whereby the moral agent carefully and thoughtfully learns how to respond appropriately to different people in different situations. This does not mean, however, that humanisation is merely a socialisation process through which

the individual internalises the codes and values of the community. This is exemplified in the way the Confucian *li*, loosely translated as norms of social propriety, are characterised in the Analects. Not only are existing *li* subject to modification, what is more important is the feeling of reverence which necessarily accompanies *li* behaviour. The feeling of reverence is, in short, respect for the other. Thus *li* might be more fully described as norms of appropriateness guiding behaviour within meaningful relationships. Significantly, *li* are often referred to in conjunction with *jen*, a term referring to distinctly human qualities and symbolising not only self-esteem but also respect for the other.

The humanisation process is, effectively, one in which *jen* is cultivated; this process begins within the family. Thus filial piety (*hsiao*) is an important value in Confucianism because it is within the family that the different loyalties and dynamics of each kind of relationship are first experienced and learnt. One learns, within that context, not simply how to respond to another person but also, at a metamoral level, the meaning and significance of *responsivity* to other human beings to whom one is related in a variety of ways. The Confucian concept *shu* (reciprocity) encompasses both these meanings of response in thinking about human relatedness.

In Confucian thought, how one should respond in a particular situation is dependent both on circumstantial factors and on the nature of the relationship/s between the people involved. One's response to others reveals the kind of person one is. Given that the cultivation of the self is effected through developing meaningful relationships, it follows that the development of the self depends on a wide range of factors specific to the life of the individual moral agent. Given also that the quantity and quality of possible permutations of relationships any one person could have is infinite, each

person is a distinctive self for whom self-cultivation has a specific and specialised procedure and meaning. The Analects itself is a paradigm of such ways of thinking: it contains anecdotes about how people have behaved—appropriately or inappropriately—in a specific situation, the behaviours being manifestations of particular kinds of character. There are dialogues between Confucius and a range of people with Confucius giving each a different reply to the same question. In one instance, Confucius specifically explains that he has tailored his responses to the characteristics of his interlocutors. On a larger scale—at the community level—the importance of response is predicated upon an somewhat idealistic hope that members of the Confucian community will take a personal interest in the community through developing meaningful relationships with others in the community.

It could be argued that the central focus of the Analects is the ideal political community comprising efficient, functional relationships. This emphasis on relational ties need not be construed solely in utilitarian terms, however, because within Confucianism, the issue of individual good is not separate from that of the common good; indeed, it is debatable whether the Analects accommodates *any* concept of individual good.

Within the Confucian community, the well-being of individuals within the ideal Confucian community is ensured when relationships have been carefully cultivated according to intersubjective relational norms. What this means in practical terms is that a man who is, for example, both a father and a son acts appropriately when dealing with his son and his father respectively. To fill in the picture more adequately, however, one needs to consider more substantial issues (rather than merely appropriate actions and behaviours) including concepts of self cultivation, the definition of personhood, and moral agency. The person who excels in his self cultivation

and who enjoys a good life, the Confucian *chun tzu* (unfortunately accounted for solely in masculine terms<sup>36</sup>) is judged a success not merely in terms of having a cultivated moral character but, more importantly, and necessarily so, in having developed meaningful relationships. The establishment of the self is none other than the successful locating of the self in its communal context and in being at ease with the infinite variety of human situations and contexts.

It is within the framework of the programme of 'fitting in' well within the Confucian communal structures that meaningful relationships are deemed to have a central role. Much emphasis is placed on the cultivation of relationships within the communal context. The development of the self is, accordingly, measured in those terms. The Confucian concepts *li*, *jen*, *hsiao*, *shu*, and, more comprehensively, the self-cultivation process, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two; the dynamics and problems of the Confucian notion of relationships are analysed in Chapter Five.

### **1.2.2 Relationships in Pauline Thought**

The Pauline tradition places special emphasis on relationships as well. The reason for maintaining and cultivating relationships, though, is markedly different from those in the Confucian case. Paul considered himself the apostle to the Gentiles. Accordingly, he understood his task to involve modifying certain Jewish concepts and requirements in order that non-Jews could be successfully integrated into the community. This was, indeed, the beginning of the Christian tradition as separate and distinct from the Jewish one.

Attempting to throw off the cultural baggage of the Jewish tradition, Paul insists that a new age had arrived, marked by the Christ-event (the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ). His primary task, in that context,

was to found and care for the early Christian church communities, justifying both to the Jews as well as the Gentiles the significance of the Christ-event.

The Jewish religion, together with its tradition and customs was, up to the Christ event, the special possession and prerogative of the Jews. Adherence to the Mosaic laws, the holy days, and, for males, circumcision, were group boundary markers which distinguished the Jews from others: they were thus symbols of their status as God's elect. These facts Paul could not simply brush aside. Indeed, he affirmed, in his letter to the Roman church, "They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all" (Romans 9:4,5).

There are several ways Paul could have dealt with the Jewish tradition. He could have argued for its total irrelevance, upheld the tradition (thus asserting that all other persons and races are to seek their salvation from within the tradition, accepting and keeping its laws and customs), or he could have set out a compromise situation. The general strategy which Paul adopted was not simply to fit the Gentiles within the Jewish framework but to offer a new interpretation of Jewish history which placed the Jewish story *within* his own apocalyptic eschatology which saw a new beginning, and not an end, in the Christ event.<sup>37</sup>

In making the point that Jewish history was part of wider *human* history and that it provided the lead-up of events to Christ's resurrection, Paul claimed the relevance and necessity of the following events: the covenant; the respective roles of Moses and Abraham; the Judaic law as guide; the fulfilment of the requirements of the law. Yet, these elements receive new interpretations *in the light of* the resurrection: Moses (one of the Jewish

fathers) is given a negative role; Abraham is upheld as the epitome of faith (in demonstrating that fulfilment of the law is unnecessary); the law is futile in salvation; circumcision (of the male) does not contribute to the status of that person.<sup>38</sup>

Paul views the Jewish law as inadequate for salvation: although holy (Romans 7:7-13) and necessary (Galatians 3:24-6), at times Paul even regards it as a sufficient cause of sin (Galatians 3:19, 22; Romans 3:20; 4:15; 5:20). Indeed, Paul seems confused regarding the role of the law. It seems that, on the one hand, he could not absolutely abolish the law because it would have meant that God, being whimsical, had changed his mind. On the other hand, the law had to be less significant than the Christ event and had to be portrayed as being insufficient for salvation; hence the need for Christ. In short, he tried not so much to relate the new to the old as the old to the new. One can quite easily perceive Paul's reconstruction of Jewish history in statements such as: "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing" (Galatians 2:21). What was once applicable only to the tribe and race was now available, on an individual basis, for all who believed. In this connection, Paul's emphasis on faith (*πιστις*) was important because it signified a clear difference between the Judaic and Christian traditions: it was the individual's belief (and commitment to the significance of Christ's work), rather than publicly-verifiable conduct or codes that signified membership of the Christian community. This move allowed for converts from a range of different cultural backgrounds to collectively affirm their belief in Christ and to see the norms and standards of their respective cultures as relatively unimportant insofar as membership of the Christian communities was concerned.

For this reason, because the composition of the early Church communities was mixed and diverse, cohesiveness of the group and community-maintaining values were extremely important. It could be said that love (*αγάπη*) was a core value which Paul emphasised *in order to* instil harmony within the community. In other words, apart from its theological dimension, *αγάπη*, as used in the different epistles, had a range of different functions. For example, disagreement regarding normative codes was settled through an appeal to *αγάπη*: those who had deeper insights were asked to understand the points of view of those who had difficulty understanding the significance of the Christ-event (Romans 8; I Corinthians 8, 10). In addition, *αγάπη* was appealed to in settling disputes regarding a person's position in the social hierarchy. Paul, in invoking *αγάπη*, argued that insofar as participation in the communities was concerned, there was to be no hierarchy of contributions: no particular contribution was to be deemed more important than any other (I Corinthians 12-14).

In spite of the functional rôle of *αγάπη*, it was at times portrayed in the epistles as the basic value in human life (I Corinthians 13). Thus, Paul characterises *αγάπη* not merely in terms of its functionality but, rather, in terms of the depth of affection and concern that underlies meaningful human relationships. The dynamics of human interaction and the Pauline conceptualisation of relationships are discussed more fully in Chapters Three and Six. The following section investigates notions of relating.

### **1.2.3 Impersonal and Personal Relationships**

The major objection to moral theories which overemphasise universality, by philosophers wanting to emphasise the significance of human relationships in morality, is that those moral theories in general cannot, or do not, attempt to

accommodate norms and codes pertaining to interaction within specific relationships. No doubt this lack in some contemporary moral theories is due at least in part to the wide variety of types of human relationship that cannot be systematised or are not reducible to simpler categories. Notwithstanding this, however, there are broad patterns among relationships across the range of human societies.

For example, in a parent-child relationship, it is generally understood that caring about the physical, emotional and mental well-being of one's child is typically expected of parents. This does not mean that all parents are necessarily caring of their children in the same way, nor that some person other than a parent (say, a teacher) cannot care for a child in the way parents normally do. Rather, certain forms and expressions of caring—such as monitoring the child's social and moral development, tending to the child's health and, basically, ensuring that the child leads a happy life—are paradigmatic of parental caring.<sup>39</sup> A teacher, as mentioned earlier, *could* care for a pupil in the way a parent normally cares for a child. It is, however, neither required nor typical for a teacher to do so.

Apart from certain regularities and generalities, though, the variation in relationship norms across communities is perhaps too diverse to allow properly detailed classification. For example, subservience might be the behavioural norm for a child with respect to a parent in a particular moral community and in another, trust, and the cultivation of equality in the relationship as the child matures, might be what is emphasised. Adding to the complexity which frustrates attempts to classify norms in specific relationships is the variation within each specific relationship. In the case of friendship, for example, not every friend appreciates the offer of one's advice or opinion; thus, offering of advice might be appropriate to some friendships

but not others. Even more acutely, a particular friend might at times appreciate my opinion and at others prefer me simply to support his decisions. Being a friend in such cases is difficult because the friend's needs are not always consistent. But being a friend to *anyone* is, in that respect, difficult because it involves the cultivation of sensitivities to certain needs, likes and loves of the friend. Particularly with friendship, but also with other relationships, the cultivation of sensitivity to the needs, desires and interests of the other in varying circumstances, and the ability to respond and act appropriately, are crucial in forging and maintaining a relationship.

In general, any kind of relationship presupposes sensitivities between the persons in the relationship. Variations within relationships are diverse and complex because sensitivities and appropriate and acceptable responses are in large part determined by the individuals involved in each relationship and, in part, by the situations that arise within each relationship. Each relationship is unique because the individual participants bring into the relationship important features of their individual lives. In this way, the formulation of precise rules or guidelines to assist in interaction within relationships is doomed to fail.

On this view, the world of the other is not simplistically and crudely a world of undifferentiated others whose interests, separately or together, compete with one's own. Rather, those others—including people who are mere acquaintances as well as those with whom I am intimately connected—are different individuals who are differently related to myself. Insofar as some of these people are, for me, not intersubstitutable and not replaceable, the relationships I have with them can never be duplicated.

The acknowledgment that people are non-intersubstitutable and that each relationship is unique necessitates a re-examination of detachment,

impartiality and impersonality as unquestionably appropriate approaches in the evaluation of all moral situations. Some critics of the inadequacy of impersonal and impartial criteria in moral evaluation have suggested that there should be a comparable focus on the ethics of relationships, a domain within which principles of impersonality and impartiality are irrelevant or play a diminished role.

Stephen Toulmin is critical of the 'inerrancy of rules and principles in moral philosophy'.<sup>40</sup> For instance, in discussing a range of issues in applied ethics, he contends that in certain cases, responsiveness and reasonableness, and equity rather than impartiality, are the appropriate operative criteria. Citing as an example the resolution of legal disputes, Toulmin argues that in the particular cases of labour-management conflicts and the renegotiation of commercial contracts, mediation or conciliation is seen as the appropriate form of resolution, rather than confrontation. This is important, he stresses, and it is not accidental that mediation is the appropriate method in such cases because "...the parties to a labor grievance will normally wish to continue working together after the adjudication".<sup>41</sup> Implying that the approach towards dispute-resolution in the situations cited above is merely commonsensical, Toulmin points out that the alternative, taking such cases to court, is generally inappropriate in contrast to, for example, criminal prosecutions.

Toulmin mentions that his thesis applies not only in the arena of social ethics but in ethics in a narrower and more personal sense as well. He argues, for example, that in dealings with persons with whom one is intimately linked, Toulmin, "...discretion is all, and the relevance of strict rules

is minimal"<sup>42</sup> while in dealings with strangers, much is guided by rules and there is little left to discretion.

Toulmin's criticism of impartialist and impersonalist morality, and his proposal for relational morality, is based on a dichotomy<sup>43</sup> between an ethics based on rules and one of discretion. He maintains a clear distinction between the kinds of norms and principles operative within the domain of dealing with strangers, on the one hand, and with intimates, on the other. In his analysis, Toulmin views the two systems as complementary in an inversely proportional way such that, if one set of operative principles is applicable in a particular case, then the other set will only be minimally applicable at best.

John Kekes, in his analysis of the notion of impartiality and its place in moral theory, makes a similar point, though dealing specifically with what he terms 'personal morality'.<sup>44</sup> Kekes argues against the view that impartiality is "...a necessary condition of a rule being moral"<sup>45</sup>. Defining impartiality as "...the exclusion of special interests, the equal treatment of all moral agents [and] the prohibition of discrimination"<sup>46</sup>, he contends that such a requirement is typically associated with 'social morality', as opposed to 'personal morality'. The concern of social morality, in Kekes' terms, is to curb selfish and malevolent attitudes toward others. Personal morality, on the other hand, looks at the pursuit of the good life, which often involves self-interest. An insistence that impartiality is a necessary condition of morality would entail that personal morality is not morality at all.

The upshot of such reasoning, Kekes claims, is that the enterprise of morality is defined solely in terms of social morality. This would mean that whatever is classified under 'personal morality'—including one's self-

interested, rational, pursuit of the good life and the cultivation of intimate personal relationships—is either construed as nonmoral, or, alternatively, has to be assessed according to the standards that apply in the area of social morality. Kekes' criticisms of impartialist morality, and his proposed solution, resemble those of Toulmin's:

The more impersonal a relationship is, the more impartial it ought to be. But, it seems to me, the corollary is also true. The more personal a relationship is the less role there is for impartiality. Indeed, impartiality destroys intimate relationships.<sup>47</sup>

Both Kekes' and Toulmin's analyses, which suggest an inversely proportional applicability relationship between the two systems, seem to oversimplify the concept of relational morality. The proposals are predicated upon the presupposition that the solution to an overemphasis on impartial and impersonal criteria is to promote the aptness of personal discretion in certain circumstances. More precisely, both proposals rely on a dichotomous separation between what counts as impersonal and what as personal. While Kekes states that there is a continuum of intimacy (in opposition to 'distance'), a dichotomy is implied in the clear definition of the separate poles of the continuum (intimacy versus distance).

The problematic aspect of both proposals is most obvious when their practical application is considered. According to the two accounts, the first step in moral practice is, presumably, to make a decision whether a particular relationship is, in Kekes' terms, personal or impersonal. This involves making judgments regarding who is a stranger and who an intimate. The primacy of this move is clear in both accounts: the *kind* of relationship has to be determined *prior* to the application of appropriate reasoning strategies.

It seems that both Kekes and Toulmin have overlooked the complexity of this process. It is not clear from either account—or it is assumed to be apparent—how one decides that certain relationships are impersonal and others intimate. Indeed, as exemplified in our ordinary moral lives, much of our time is spent trying to work out what the boundaries of a particular relationship are and there are often no clear answers.

It could be said that Kekes and Toulmin are accurate in portraying the processes of moral deliberation at a descriptive level. At the level of moral theory, however, much more needs to be specified because it otherwise leaves an excessive amount of important, unspecified detail to the discretion of the moral agent. There needs to be a set of criteria regarding how one might to decide, for example, in a relationship which has elements or moments of both impersonality and intimacy, whether the relationship is an impersonal or an impartial one for some particular purpose or in some particular respect. My relationship with a colleague, for example, might be intimate in that I confide in her about the personal and domestic situations in my life. On the other hand, there might be situations in which I treat the same colleague impartially as, for example, if I draw attention to one of her mistakes which has implicated an innocent other (with whom I have no special relationship).

If Toulmin's and Kekes' proposals are to be practicable, there needs first to be criteria regarding what kinds of relationship are intimate and what kinds personal. It needs to be recognised that the intimacy or impersonality of a particular relationship does not just vary with persons; distance from, or intimacy with, another person is contingent, too, on other contextual and circumstantial factors. In other words, it is the case with most relationships that the relational proximity between two persons is not a constant and the

*nature* of the relationship is not the (only) criterion of fundamental moral significance. For these reasons, it cannot simply be assumed that such proximity or distance is easily articulated.

Additionally, it must be noted that morality should not be dependent solely upon a moral agent's subjective evaluation of the relationship. While, in practice, it is normally the case that individual moral agents are deemed the most appropriate persons to decide who is a stranger and who an intimate and while all moral agents are, at times, engaged in such decisions, morality should not be grounded in the subjective feelings of particular moral agents and whether they happen to like or dislike another. In other words, if the evaluation of a particular relationship is left solely to the discretion of individual moral agents, and if morality is dependent on the nature of the relationship, it could mean that certain proposals of relational morality simply collapse into tribalism and favouritism.

Another difficult problem with both Kekes' and Toulmin's views is that they assume that intimacy (and/or distance) is a definable, unitary standard or concept, thus ignoring the empirical and moral fact that there are a variety of ways of expressing intimacy. For example, intimacy could involve the eliciting and offering of details and information about one's private life; physical closeness; and comfortable silences. None of these expressions of intimacy is appropriate in all relationships that might be considered intimate. Some of them might be appropriate only within certain relationships in certain situations. It seems that the inadequacy of the proposals arises from a fundamental error in assuming that there exists a clear distinction between what counts as impersonal and what as personal and, in addition, that all relationships can be precisely classified according to the distinction, or located along a continuum constructed upon that distinction. In dealing with

this problem, it would seem that both Toulmin's and Kekes' proposals have to be rejected because the structures of the two systems they propose, as well as the relation between the two, are not viable. In other words, while their criticisms of impartialist and impersonalist morality might be plausible, their solutions are questionable because those solutions are still embedded in the structures and discourse of contemporary moral theory. Perhaps a more fruitful approach to constructing a viable relational morality would involve addressing the *structures*, as well as the content of morality: more specifically, the impersonal-personal dichotomy should be reassessed.

Lawrence Blum, who argues that certain interactions and relationships do not fit neatly into the impersonal-personal framework, maintains that:

... the damage that the personal/impersonal framework does to moral theory lie only partly in what it omits. What also tends to happen is that the omitted phenomena are taken up and squeezed into the framework itself, which thus preserves the illusion that personal/impersonal comprises an exhaustive dichotomy of morally relevant standpoints or classes of motives but actually distorts or misportrays the nonpersonal, nonimpersonal phenomena.<sup>48</sup>

Blum uses compelling examples from situations in friendship and vocation. In the case of friendship, Blum argues, because it involves a significant amount of variability and individuality (although there are general principles that do apply in all cases of friendship, such as concern for the well-being of one's friend), it *can* indeed be viewed as purely personal or as purely impersonal, although to do so would be to misconstrue its 'deep good'. It is certainly possible to consider a particular friendship solely in terms of the good one derives from it. Blum argues that to classify friendship, as it often is, as

'personal' in the personal-impersonal framework, could have undesirable outcomes in that friendship merely as a personal project—disregarding the well-being and the good of the friend—is a distorted conception of friendship.

Blum's solution is to disengage friendship from the model of the personal good as seen from an impersonal-personal framework so that the depth of real friendships can be realised, including response to the reality of the other person "... in her own right, to her particular needs, to her way of looking at things, and to her individuality more generally."<sup>49</sup> Blum's analysis allows for a deeper and more robust conceptualisation of relationships: it recognises that it does not help to categorise relationships either as impersonal or personal, and then to attempt to work within that framework. Indeed, Blum feels that such structures in our thought patterns might adversely affect the way we relate to others.

The discussion of the impersonal-personal dichotomy in this section foreshadows the discussion in Part Two of the thesis on the related self. Chapter Four, the first chapter of Part Two, examines the content of relational morality and, more specifically, of the feminist care ethic. Similar questions are raised regarding whether proponents of the care ethic should seek to evaluate the content as well as the structures of existing moral theories.

The following two chapters in Part One, Chapters Two and Three, analyse conceptions of human nature and of self cultivation in the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian traditions respectively.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. While the works of Lawrence Blum, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer and Roberto Unger might be described as having distinctively communitarian features, their views regarding justice, equality, morality, distribution of resources, welfare and relationships are far from unified. Similar extents of disagreement exist between the libertarian views of Isaiah Berlin, Ronald Dworkin, Robert Nozick and John Rawls. Comprehensive discussions of these tensions include Liberalism and Its Critics, Michael Sandel (ed) (Basil Blackwell, 1984, Great Britain), and Owen Flanagan's Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism (Harvard University Press, 1991), especially Part II: Liberal and Communitarian Philosophical Psychology.
- <sup>2</sup>. This point is made by Susan Wolf in "Moral Saints", Journal of Philosophy, 79 (1982). Some of Wolf's arguments are discussed in the next section.
- <sup>3</sup>. The more prominent critics of such views include GEM Anscombe ("Modern Moral Philosophy", Philosophy, 33 (1958)), Philippa Foot (Virtues and Vices, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978), Bernard Williams ("A Critique of Utilitarianism", in JJC Smart & Bernard Williams, Utilitarianism: For and Against, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973; "Persons, Character and Morality" in Amelie Rorty (ed) The Identities of Persons, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976), Michael Stocker ("The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories", Journal of Philosophy, 73 (1976)), Susan Wolf ("Moral Saints", *op.cit*), Lawrence Blum (Moral Perception and Particularity, Cambridge University Press, USA, 1994; Friendship, Altruism and Morality, Routledge and Kegan Paul, USA, 1980), John Kekes (especially Facing Evil, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990), John McDowell (especially "Virtue and Reason" in The Monist, 62, 1979, pp. 331-350), Peter Winch (Ethics and Action, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1972), and the collection of essays on Winch's work edited by Raimond Gaita (Value and Understanding: Essays for Peter Winch, Routledge, London and New York, 1990). There is a collection of

articles on impartiality arising from the *Symposium on Impartiality and Ethical Theory in Ethics*, **101**, 1991.

- <sup>4</sup>. The works of Lawrence Blum (especially *The Possibility of Altruism*, *op.cit*), John Kekes, Stephen Toulmin and John Cottingham articulate a version of this view.
- <sup>5</sup>. In addition to the authors referred to in footnotes 3 and 4, Jeffrey Blustein and Norvin Richards have contributed significantly to this debate. See also the anthology of essays in *Person to Person*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1989.
- <sup>6</sup>. Lawrence Blum, Michael Slote and Michael Stocker question existing structures of morality. From the point of view of feminist critiques of morality, Marilyn Friedman and Virginia Held have contributed much to the debate; their views are discussed in Chapter Four.
- <sup>7</sup>. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter 17, "Of Commonwealth". Hobbes lists six characteristics of human beings which render them different from other animals; they deserve more attention than can be afforded in this discussion.
- <sup>8</sup>. *ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup>. *ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup>. See Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (tr. Lewis Beck), Macmillan, New York, 1987; H.J. Paton, *The Moral Law*, Hutchinson, London, 1948; Lewis Beck, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, University of Chicago Press, 1949.
- <sup>11</sup>. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *ibid.*, p. 18, section 402.
- <sup>12</sup>. *ibid*, especially pp. 14-15.
- <sup>13</sup>. Universalisability<sub>U</sub> is implied, for instance, in Kant's discussion of promising (*ibid*, sections 421ff), that demonstrates how the concept of universalisability is meant to operate (based on what one can rationally will) and does not allow for exceptions.
- <sup>14</sup>. For example, "Carey deserves the best because he is my child and because *I love him*." that is *not* derived from or derivative of the more general "All children deserve the best from their parents."

- <sup>15</sup> John Mill, "Utilitarianism" in Utilitarianism and Other Essays: J.S.Mill and Jeremy Bentham, Alan Ryan (ed), Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Great Britain, 1987, p. 277. It is with this criticism in mind that Mill makes the remark "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." (p. 281).
- <sup>16</sup> See Lawrence Hinman's discussion of these different formulations, in Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, USA, 1994, Chapter Six.
- <sup>17</sup> John Mill, "Utilitarianism", *op.cit.*, p. 288.
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, italics mine.
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Bernard Williams' criticism of this aspect of utilitarian theory raises important issues regarding moral agency. See JJC Smart and Bernard Williams, Utilitarianism: For and Against, Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- <sup>21</sup> John Mill, "Utilitarianism", *op.cit.*, p. 292.
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 318.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1970.
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 107.
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 115.
- <sup>28</sup> Oxford University Press, New York, 1986. See also Nagel's "What is it like to be a bat?", in Mortal Questions, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1979, in which he sets out the problems related to the subjectivity of experience.
- <sup>29</sup> The View from Nowhere, *op.cit.*, p. 138.
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 54. Nagel continues, in p. 61, to describe the sense of detachment from oneself: "... I begin by considering the world as a whole, as if from nowhere, and in those oceans of space and time TN is just one person among countless others. Taking up that impersonal

standpoint produces in me a sense of complete detachment from TN, who is reduced to a momentary blip on the cosmic TV screen."

<sup>31</sup>. See p. 173, as well as the discussion in pp 195-200 (Section 3: The good life and the moral life) where he writes, "the impersonal standpoint is not the whole of human life" (p. 198). In other words, Nagel holds the view here that the right life (the moral life) need not always override the good life and, while attempting to portray the difficulties of weighing different perspectives, argues that moral agents can favour themselves.

<sup>32</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>33</sup>. It might indeed be the case that some moral agents are unwilling to consider the perspectives of other agents, for which Nagel's theory might be applicable. Nagel's account however, if it is to be practicable, presupposes that all moral agents *can both* put aside one's own perspective and adopt an impersonal stance. Furthermore, even if this point were granted, the question of *how* one might compare and evaluate different perspectives—presumably involving both analysis and synthesis—which perspectives should be adopted, and which others to be discarded, awaits resolution.

<sup>34</sup>. The concept of a moral community is a complex and ill-defined one because it does not always correspond to geographical, ethnic, national or political boundaries and could sometimes apply across historical periods. It could perhaps be said, rather generally and vaguely, that a moral community—if it does in practice exist—would comprise persons belonging to a group who, to a considerable extent, identify with the moral beliefs, standards and values of other members. The paradigm of a moral community so defined is a religious community; members of a particular religious community tend to share similar moral beliefs and values and these beliefs and values are often integral to the cohesiveness of the group in the sense that they contribute to the distinctiveness of the group. A member of a particular religious community might, for example, identify extremely closely with another person of a

different nationality and existing in a different historical period because they share similar beliefs and values.

<sup>35</sup>. This theme was articulated especially by Mencius in Mencius.

<sup>36</sup>. Indeed, masculinity appears fundamental to the concept of *chun tzu*.

<sup>37</sup>. See Rudolf Bultmann's "History and Eschatology in the New Testament", New Testament Studies, Vol 1, 1954-5, pp. 5-16, for an interesting account of Paul's manipulation of Jewish historical narrative.

See also E.P. Sanders' argument that Paul reasoned retrospectively from the Christ event to the Judaic tradition and law (in Paul, (Oxford University Press, 1991; pp. 40ff). Sanders argues that Paul construed everything as working up to the Christ event and the preceding history as being determined by it. For example, Abraham was emphasised over Moses. Whereas Abraham was upheld as the epitome of faith, and thus of redemption for the Gentiles (as well), Moses was rejected and placed in a negative light and associated with the ministry of death and condemnation (2 Corinthians 3).

<sup>38</sup>. These are discussed in detail in Chapters Three and Six.

<sup>39</sup>. It is difficult to avoid construing parental care in terms of a duties such as those mentioned here. Furthermore, while it is normally assumed that such duties, or parent's *commitment* to such duties, arise from concern and affection, it might be important to emphasise that the duties are binding even in the case of a lapse, or lack of affection. See, for example, Marilyn Friedman's "The Practice of Partiality" in Ethics, 101, (July 1991), pp. 818-835, where she remarks in the case of family relationships that most will remain intact even if the 'emotional functions are unfulfilled' (p. 823). Parental caring is discussed in somewhat more detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>40</sup>. Stephen Toulmin, "The Tyranny of Principles", in Hastings Center Report, XI, 6, 1981.

<sup>41</sup>. *ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>42</sup>. *ibid*.

- <sup>43</sup>. It is unclear whether Toulmin intends a simple dichotomy or a continuum with strangers at one end and intimates at the other. A more generous reading of Toulmin could accommodate a continuum of increasing (or decreasing) intimacy, and thus, in Toulmin's terms, of the applicability of discretion. A simple dichotomy between impersonal and intimate relationships would render Toulmin's analysis naive.
- <sup>44</sup>. John Kekes, "Morality and Impartiality", in American Philosophical Quarterly, Volume 18, Number 4, 1981.
- <sup>45</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 295.
- <sup>46</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 296.
- <sup>47</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 302.
- <sup>48</sup>. Lawrence Blum, "Vocation, Friendship and Community: Limitations of the Personal-Impersonal Framework", in Flanagan and Rorty (eds), Identity, Character and Morality, *op.cit.*, p. 192.
- <sup>49</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 193. It is paradoxical, as Blum points out, that the real good of friendship for the self cannot be realised unless the depth of real friendship is appreciated. As with the case of vocation and community, Blum argues, if one views them merely as sources of one's personal good, then one cannot derive from them the deeper good that communities and vocations can actually provide.
- See also Jeffrey Blustein's argument (in "The Moral Status of Intimacy", in David Rosenthal and Fadlou Shehadi (eds), Applied Ethics and Ethical Theory, University of Utah Press, 1988, pp. 213-228) that being intimate with another person is a distinctive moral category especially with regard to valuing and respecting other persons. Blustein, too, argues against the inapplicability of the impersonal-personal framework in intimate relationships.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM: LEARNING TO BE HUMAN<sup>1</sup>

Confucius remarks in Analects 7:1 that he is a transmitter (of teachings and ideas) and not an innovator. This statement should not be left unquestioned because Confucius was both a transmitter and an innovator. He was a transmitter in the sense that he utilised many pre-existing concepts such as *jen* (traditional meaning: goodness or morality), *hsiao* (filial piety), *li* (traditional meaning: sacrificial rites) and *chun tzu* (nobleman) in articulating his ideas and ideals. Also, at many points in the Analects Confucius states that he is a lover of antiquity (eg 7:19); by antiquity he means certain practices and beliefs of the Chou dynasty embodied especially in the hierarchical feudalistic socio-political structure governed by the Duke of Chou (Analects 7:5; 3:14).

In spite of Confucius' remarks that he is only a transmitter, he was in fact an innovator: he so drastically modified some existing concepts that, in certain instances, little, if any of their original meanings remained. Concepts such as *jen* and *hsiao* he adapted and interwove into his system: *jen* had previously referred simply to humaneness or human goodness but Confucius gave it a central place in his philosophy and deepened its significance. Similarly, *hsiao* he constructed as a prerequisite of life in political society whereby the Confucian sage-king was the patriarchal head of the state-family. In addition, Confucius greatly extended the scope of *li*—which originally and narrowly referred to sacrificial and religious rituals and the propriety or appropriate performance of these rituals—to apply as well in the sphere of social interaction. Indeed, for Confucius, human interaction had

religious significance and therefore *li*—norms of social propriety—played a highly significant role in his system because they guided such interaction.

It could be said that the most radical innovation of Confucius was the transformation of the concept of the *chun tzu*. While it had been used to refer to men with inherited social statuses (lit.: son of prince) Confucius substituted the criterion of acquired moral character as a prerequisite of social and political leadership for that of noble lineage. This points to one of the most important themes in classical Confucianism: that one could, and had to, learn to be human. This learning was associated with education which was, before and during Confucius' time, accessible only to nobility. Confucius, however, departing from tradition, was keen to point out that neither poverty nor inferior social status ought to be obstacles to learning (Analects 7:7; 15:38); the only precondition was one's eagerness to learn (Analects 7:7; 5:28; 8:17; 11:6).

In dismissing the traditional views of obstacles to education such as poverty and low-birth, Confucius was, indeed, challenging certain aspects of government. He believed that education<sup>2</sup>, which provided the basis for self cultivation, should be available to all; and, just as importantly, he advanced the view that every person had the potential to cultivate themselves.

It needs to be noted, however, that while Confucius was emphatic that learning, and hence self-cultivation, was available for every person, he also maintained that the processes and the aims of self-cultivation varied amongst people. For example, he believed that not everyone could become a *chun tzu*: some were wanting in ability (perhaps as a matter of birth), others simply lacked determination (Analects 8:9; 9:29) such that even in the case that education were made available to all men, there would be limits to the attempts of some to cultivate themselves.<sup>3</sup> As a corollary to this view of self-

cultivation, the view of government in the Analects incorporates a political division of labour: direct involvement in government was not a central issue; rather, every person had a role to play within political society. For instance, by being a good son (and not necessarily by being an effective *chun tzu*) one was already making a positive contribution to the government of society (Analects 2:21).<sup>4</sup>

The first section of this chapter involves a detailed analysis of Confucian concepts pertaining to morality and moral reasoning. Through an explication of the concepts (*jen, li, hsiao, shu* and *tao*), the aim of the section is to discuss classical Confucian views on human being, meaning in life and the development of the self, especially with a view to demonstrating the Confucian notion of the related self. For the classical Confucian, to be human was, necessarily, to exist as a member of a community with a network of interpersonal relationships. The distinguishing feature of a Confucian community, as portrayed in the Analects, is a hierarchically-ordered political society consisting of networks of relationships marked by subordination and superordination and by attitudes and behaviours appropriate to such ordering. Each person *qua* individual was a centre of relationships<sup>5</sup> and thus had responsibility to cultivate these relationships. Consequently, a necessary aspect of the development of the self is the cultivation of one's relationships.

Given that there are infinite permutations and combinations of relationships one could have, self development is an open-ended and individualistic process—individualistic not in the autonomous sense but in the sense that each person is uniquely different; the difference being constituted by differences in the *types* and *qualities* of relationships. In Confucian thought, personal identity is constituted in an important way by the

relationships one has. In this connection, the discussion in the second section of the Chapter focuses on how the various Confucian concepts (discussed in the first section) are interwoven to justify and support the Confucian ideal of self development within a relationship-based hierarchical network.

## **2.1 Human Nature and Morality**

Confucius upheld an optimistic humanism in his conceptualisation of the ideal community. The stance in the Analects regarding human nature is that there is some predisposition of humans toward the good or the moral; Confucius remarked that "If a *chun tzu* (a Confucian gentleman) lived among [the barbarians] there will not be vulgarity or corruptness" (Analects 9:13; see also 4:25; 13:16; 8:2; 13:19). While the concept of human nature—whether as innately good or predisposed toward good—is not developed in the Analects itself, there is considerable focus on how human nature might be developed (Analects 1:12; 3:19; 4:13; 6:25; 8:8; 15:32; 20:3).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, all of the Confucian concepts are articulated in conjunction with self-cultivation. This is demonstrated in the following sub-sections.

### **2.1.1 Human Nature and Moral Cultivation**

Confucius believed in a hierarchically-ordered society and in values which upheld that structure as a remedy to social unrest. Thus, he imputed certain virtues to social hierarchy which, he asserted, was rooted in the order of the world. He cited heaven (*t'ien*) as the source of world order, at a variety of levels.<sup>7</sup> *T'ien* is a cosmic force, responsible not only for the existence of all things (*pai wu*) but also for the natural course of events, such as the four seasons (Analects 17:19, and especially Chung-yung, 1:1; 17:3). In addition,

*t'ien* is also portrayed as having supernatural powers to which humans had access through prayer (Analects 3:13; 14:37). Most relevantly, however, *t'ien* was the ground of human morality, the latter being distinctive of the human species. This cosmology provided justification for the Confucian idea that in every human being lies the potential for self development. Herlee Creel expresses this idea succinctly:

[Heaven is] a cosmic counterpart of the ethical sense in man, a guarantee that somehow there is a sympathy with man's sense of right in the very nature of the Universe.<sup>8</sup>

Confucius' usage of the term *t'ien* defies precise definition. It is the source of virtue inherent in humanity (Analects 7:22) and is itself the prevailing moral order (Analects 2:4; 18:8). The idea of a moral order within the natural one present not merely in human social life itself but also in the structure of the world represents an interdependency between human beings and the natural order, both of which are grounded in *t'ien*. Therefore, it was an important point, for Confucius, that there is order in the human social world. In this context, order prevails when people take up their rightful positions within society and, accordingly, live according to the requirements of their social roles. Government is effective, according to Confucius, when the father correctly or appropriately "fathers", the prince rightly "princes", and so on—with people not overstepping the boundaries of what is appropriate to their roles and statuses in society.

Liu Shu-Hsien, discussing the conceptualisation of human existence in Confucian thought, describes the kind of interplay between the concepts of transcendence and immanence, and between humanity and heaven:

Now the Confucian approach to the problem of transcendence and immanence becomes clear. Heaven is transcendent in the sense that

it is an all-encompassing creative power which works incessantly in the universe. It is not a thing, but it is the origin of all things. And it cannot be detected by sense perceptions, because its "operations have neither sound nor smell." But Heaven is also immanent in the sense that it penetrates deep in every detail of the natural order, in general, and the moral order of man, in particular. But Heaven in no sense should be regarded as something completely beyond nature; on the contrary, it is that which constitutes the warp and woof of nature. As for man, he is beyond any doubt a creature in the world and hence a part of the natural order.<sup>9</sup>

The view that human life is subject to certain contingencies because it is part of the natural order is expressed in the concept of *t'ien ming* (mandate or decree of heaven). Thome Fang discusses various theories of *t'ien ming* in ancient China and their implications for moral action:

In ancient China there were five theories about destiny or the Mandate of Heaven. The first was fatalism: the Mandate of Heaven is fixed and unchangeable. The second was moral determinism: Heaven always encourages virtue and punishes evil; therefore, man can determine his reward and punishment through moral deeds. The third was anti-fatalism, advocated by the Moist School. The fourth was naturalistic fatalism, which means that destiny is not controlled by Heaven in the sense of an anthropomorphic God but by Nature and works automatically. Lastly, there was the Confucian theory of "waiting for destiny." According to this doctrine, man should exert his utmost in moral endeavor and leave whatever is beyond our control to fate. It frankly admits that there are things beyond our control but that is no

reason why one should relax in his moral endeavor. The tendency was definitely one of moralism and humanism."<sup>10</sup>

It is difficult to determine which, if any, of these views of *t'ien ming* Confucius believed in; he stated very simply that what is beyond human control includes death and life, riches and honour (Analects 12:5.3, see also 6:8; 9:6; 11:8).

While Confucius thought it important to know *t'ien ming*—commenting on the development of his own life, Confucius asserts that at fifty, he knew *t'ien ming*<sup>11</sup>—the idea of what is supernatural, or beyond human control, has only a limited role in his system. He remarked, on one occasion, that "while one is not able to understand (and thus to carry out) the affairs of human beings, why bother trying to understand the affairs of spirits; while one is not able to understand life, why bother trying to understand death?" (Analects 11:11). This remark has often been quoted in support of the view that Confucius was agnostic and that his philosophy is a-religious.

What seems to be the more important point of this remark—which is, unfortunately, often missed—is that Confucius felt that issues beyond human control were only of secondary importance. D.C. Lau offers an interesting analysis of the concepts *t'ien ming* and *ming* which supports this point. He points out that while, in the Analects, heaven (*t'ien*) is a synonym for *t'ien ming*; *ming*, used on its own, actually has a different meaning.<sup>12</sup> According to Lau, *ming* refers to events controlled by destiny: events which are not brought about by human agency and over which human endeavour has no effect (Analects 6:3; 11:7). Given this, therefore, one should learn only to pursue the things or events that one can potentially affect. Thus Confucius criticised Tzu for not accepting his lot and for indulging in speculation even though Tzu was often correct in his speculation and it increased his wealth.

In this connection, Lau offers an enlightening interpretation of Analects 20:3: "A man cannot become a *chun tzu* unless he knows *ming*". The phrase "knowing *ming*" (*chih ming*), according to Lau, looks very much like Confucius' statement regarding himself at fifty: *chih t'ien ming*. Lau argues that the two concepts are actually quite different: while *chih t'ien ming* is "to understand *why* Heaven should so decree ... ", "*chi ming*" refers to knowing and understanding " .. *that* certain things in life come under the sway of Destiny and *that* it is futile to pursue them."<sup>13</sup>

Lau's analysis is clearly consistent with many passages in the Analects where Confucius is described as refusing to engage in speculation (Analects 6:20; 7:9; 7:20; 9:1). In this connection, then, it could be said that part of the Confucian enterprise is to sort out what kinds of things are within human control and, more pointedly, which aspects of (the existing chaotic) socio-political life could be rectified through human efforts. Confucius clearly stated that wealth or poverty, honour and (the occurrence of) life and death were beyond human control. A distinctive feature of Confucius' thought is that these aspects of human life are not only not to be a hindrance, but also that they are irrelevant to one's self cultivation. Clearly, while there are some limits to self-cultivation, poverty and low-birth were not (to be) limiting insofar as education and learning were concerned.

With regard to the concept of human nature (*hsing*), there is similarly little emphasis on defining the concept; the concept was only evoked when it was instrumental to demonstrating a need for self-cultivation. Indeed, there is only one instance in the Analects when Confucius is recorded as having explicitly used the term '*hsing*':

By nature humans are alike, through cultivation they become different (Analects 17:2).

It seems that the purpose of this passage, in referring to *hsing*, was not to directly comment on it but rather to stress the necessity for educating and developing oneself. It needs to be noted that difficulty in translating this passage is encountered not only as regards the term *hsing*<sup>14</sup> but also with the terms *xi* (practice) and *jīn* (translated 'alike' here, but could also mean 'near'). Legge, who provides another interpretation, argues that the term used here refers not to moral constitution alone but includes the complex combination of material, animal and intellectual aspects as well. He states that it is suggested in this passage that it is through association with these other faculties that the moral element of human nature is led astray. He argues that the Confucian conceives the intrinsic moral element to be similar in all human beings, while the other three faculties differ, albeit only slightly. These three faculties develop differently among different individuals and thus variously influence the individual's moral nature.<sup>15</sup> Legge's interpretation, however, imposes on the concept a structure: moral, animal, material and intellectual; categories which do not exist in the Analects. In addition, given the vagueness of the statement, even in its original Chinese, it is perhaps more useful to recognise the futility of authoritative definition and to examine the concept within its contexts of use.

There are other passages in the Analects which seem to contradict the passage 17:2. For example, in 16:9, although there is no reference to the term *hsing* itself, there is an allusion to some people being born with the possession of knowledge, while others are not:

Confucius said, "Those born with possession of knowledge are the highest of persons. Those who learn and, as a result, attain

knowledge, are the next. Those who require much effort in learning, and, though not thoroughly understanding, do learn, are yet another category. Those who require much effort in learning and do not learn are the lowest of the lot."

It could be plausibly argued that Confucius here is more focused on the *effort* to learn rather than the abilities that some are born with and others without. Thus, while there may be some who are born with the possession of knowledge, what matters most is that each person has a concern for learning. Indeed, other passages in the Analects which discuss differences among persons has a similar focus on learning without any reference to any inherent state. Thus in 17:3, Confucius remarks that "only the wisest and the most stupid do not, and cannot change", because, presumably, the former are too wise to allow a decline in their knowledge or wisdom and the latter are too stupid to improve themselves. There is a concern therefore not with what one might be inherently born with but with existential differences:

There are some with whom we may study but not to study or understand principles with; there are some with whom we may together understand principles but not be established with; there are some with whom we may be established with and yet unable to weigh (assess) events and situations with. (Analects 9:29).

It is difficult to offer an accurate rendering of the above passage and to work out what Confucius meant exactly by 'being established with' or 'to weigh events with'. The point being made here, however, is that there are marked differences between people—and that those differences be maintained. This is similar to Confucius' statement regarding friendship that some people may be friends while others not, depending on their stages of development (Analects 1:8.3)<sup>16</sup>.

This radical differentiation of persons is balanced by Confucius' belief in the availability of self-cultivation for all people. In many passages in the Analects, he makes the point that with regard to teaching or, more specifically, the willingness to teach others, there is, and should be, no differentiation of categories (of persons) (Analects 15:38). Poverty or inferior social status (Analects 8:21; 7:7) should not be a hindrance to learning and, accordingly, is not a valid reason for a teacher to not want to teach a pupil: "In teaching there should be no distinction of classes" (Analects 15:38)<sup>17</sup>. Similarly, Confucius himself had 'low' beginnings, being born neither of nobility nor of wealth and was yet able to develop his various abilities (Analects 9:6). The view that self cultivation is a possibility for every person is also maintained in another classical Confucian text:

The way which the *chun tzu* pursues reaches wide and far, and is yet secret. Common men and women, however ignorant, may intermeddle with the knowledge of it; yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage does not know. Common men and women, however much below the ordinary standard of character, can carry it into practice; yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage is not able to carry into practice ... The way of the *chun tzu* may be found, in its simple elements, in the interaction of common men and women; but in its utmost reaches, it shines brightly through heaven and earth. (Chung-yung, 12)<sup>18</sup>

Because he believed in an equal potential, in each person, to develop himself, Confucius played down the notion of the divinely-inspired ruler while articulating his idea of a cultivated gentleman, the '*chun tzu*', who, regardless of beginnings or origins, had successfully cultivated himself (although there is no end to this process of cultivation). Confucius reworked the scope of

application of the term '*chun tzu*' to include those who were not born into noble lineage but who, instead, had successfully cultivated themselves. Prior to the time of Confucius, *chun tzu* referred to men of noble birth; their rank and status was accorded by virtue of their noble lineage.

W. Scott Morton discusses Confucius' modification of the term and, with a statistical count, shows that '*chun tzu*' was used 90 times in the (pre-Confucian) Book of Odes, out of which only 16 uses, or 18% of uses were in the ethical sense. In the Analects, however, the term was used 65 times, with 62 times or 95% being used in the ethical sense. He concludes that Confucius had transformed the meaning of *chun tzu* to refer to people who, regardless of status at birth, had cultivated themselves.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, while Confucius recognised the fact that human beings are socially, morally and intellectually different, he maintained the equal potential of every human being (one might say that this potential is inherent in human nature) to cultivate themselves. Therefore, self development consists in improving or working on the nature that one already has by virtue of being human; to this effect Confucius remarked that *jen* is near or, one might say, at hand (Analects 7:29; also 19:6).

### **2.1.2 Humanity: *Jen***

The concept *jen* is a dominant theme in Confucianism, although it occurs in other Chinese philosophies as well. In Chinese Buddhism, *jen* has long been used as an honorific for the Buddha, for a worthy person, for a temple or a pagoda. In ancient Taoist classics (notably in Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu), *jen* was severely denounced as hypocrisy, but it was eventually incorporated into the Taoist ethical system as a cardinal virtue (by Ko Hung, 284 - 363). It is

mentioned only occasionally in pre-Confucian texts, and in all these cases it denotes the particular virtue of kindness, especially the kindness of a ruler to his subjects.

*Jen*, however, is essentially a Confucian concept occupying a fundamental position in the Analects; 58 of its 499 chapters are devoted to the discussion of *jen* and the term appears 105 times.<sup>20</sup> Although Confucius made *jen* the central theme of his conversations, he never defined the term. Thus, the best description that could be attempted is an examination of the way it was used by Confucius in its various contexts in the Analects and other Classical Confucian texts.

The etymology of *jen* is composed of, on the left half, the character signifying 'human', and on the right half, the character signifying 'two'. It thus suggests not only the relatedness between at least two beings belonging to the human species, but, more importantly, their interdependence. It is recorded in the Analects 1:4 of one of Confucius' disciples that his self-examination consisted in evaluating his relationships with others, this practice being based on the idea that the individual in relation to others constitutes an important element in self-evaluation. The idea of human relatedness is based on the Confucian theme that human life is meaningful only if one is a participating member of a community.

There is, therefore, a distinct sense that *jen* is connected with morality, although it is not a merely behaviourist conception of morality that *jen* should be identified with. *Jen* involves a more substantial, fuller account of being human—whereby morality is but one, albeit an important, aspect—which takes into account the character of the agent and, more generally, the way

human beings should live. It is a quality so fundamental to human life that life itself should be sacrificed to preserve it (Analects 15:8).

Even though *jen* is an essential quality of human life, Confucius remarks, in Analects 3:3 and 4:2, of the possibility of losing one's *jen*. This means that one could cease being *jen* or, in other words, being human. What these two passages give a sense of is that one has to work at *jen*, that is, at being human. The process of self cultivation, according to Confucius himself, is exceedingly difficult. Yet, it seems merely to require personal commitment (strength):

I have not seen a person who loved *jen*, or one who hated what was non- (or not) *jen*. He who loved *jen* would esteem nothing above it. He who hated what is non- (or not) *jen* would practice *jen* in such a way that he would not allow anything that is not *jen* to approach his person. Is any one able for one day to apply his strength to *jen*? I have not seen any one without sufficient strength to do so. Perhaps there is such a case, but I have never seen it. (Analects 4:6; see also 15:3; 15:12).

The difficulty of attaining, or of being *jen*, is further expressed in Analects 14:30, where Confucius states an almost impossible situation: the man of *jen*, being virtuous, is free from anxieties; being a man of wisdom he is free from perplexities; and being a man of courage, he is free from fear. Several concepts are linked in this passage: virtue, wisdom and a lack of perplexity or anxiety amounting to ease in action and in dealing with human affairs.<sup>21</sup> In Analects 4:2; 4:3; 4:5.3; 9:13, *jen* is associated with other virtues such as wisdom and strength; in Analects 12:1,2,3, it has to do with moral behaviour.<sup>22</sup> This quality which marks out the distinctiveness of the human species serves also to identify beings belonging to that species. In other

words, *jen* is both the distinguishing and distinctive characteristic of all humanity.

*Jen*, however, is not a mere capacity either, for it is to apply in all situations. This is clearly stated in Analects 4:5.3: "the *chun tzu* does not even during a meal cease to act according to *jen*; in instances of haste and danger, he acts by it." *Jen* cannot be conceived of as a mere aggregate of virtues; in Analects 12:1; 12:2; 12:3; 17:9, Confucius utilises various different concepts to elaborate on what *jen* would encompass: these provide important but not sufficient insights into the nature of *jen*. It encompasses more than the merely moral and the one sense of *jen* which is consistent with *all* its uses in the Analects is that it is the substratum, the source of all human virtue, of which the moral is but a part. *Jen* appears to represent the ultimate moral achievement in personal, social and cultural life. The meaning of *jen* integrates other important ideas such as affection, community and relatedness.

Because different human relationships have their own contexts of meaning and appropriateness, it is not possible, Confucius felt, to have lawlike rules of behaviour which generalised over individuals or situations. For these reasons, Confucius never attempted to define *jen*; he used the term differently in different contexts. It could also be argued that Confucius' lack of definition of *jen* demonstrates that he wanted the term to have an indeterminate range of reference. To define the term would restrict its application, for in its most general sense, *jen* refers to the *human*. Confucian philosophy is a *humanistic* philosophy; its focus is on human life *within its lived reality*. It seriously narrows the Confucian enterprise to think of it merely as a moral philosophy and consequently to characterise it according to the categories appropriate only to moral philosophy in the Western philosophical

tradition. Consequently, the individual-society distinction exists only on the theoretical level; *jen*, because it is manifest as *shared humanity*, can only be cultivated and developed within the context of the human community.<sup>23</sup> In this connection, because *li* upheld the hierarchies and powers which propelled human social life and further facilitated human social behaviour, it was inseparably linked with *jen* throughout the Analects. The next section focuses on *li*.

### 2.1.3 Norms of Social Interaction: *Li*

The term *li* was used in pre-Confucian literature (in the Shu Ching and the Shih Ching) to denote ritualistic religious behaviour toward spiritual beings for the purpose of inducing supernatural protection and blessing.<sup>24</sup>

Etymologically, the term is composed of two halves: 'religious' and 'sacrificial vessel'. Even before Confucius' time, however, the scope of application of the term had already been extended (in the Tso Chuan and the Shih Ching) such that it was used to refer as well to the norms guiding appropriate social behaviour. Confucius continued this usage of *li*. Thus, for instance, Tsu-hsia, one of Confucius' disciples, argued that if the *chun tzu* were to act toward others according to *li*, all within the 'four seas' would be brothers (Analects 12:5.4).

Because *li* is described in some passages of the Analects primarily in behaviourist terms, some commentators have understood *li* as purely formalistic ritual devoid of deeper significance. In addition, *li* have been criticised as (unnecessarily) rigid and as upholding a hierarchical social structure with a view to subjugating the peoples.<sup>25</sup>

These criticisms stem partly from (particular conceptions of) the Confucian construction of five relationships as forming the primary structure

of social reality: sovereign-subject; father-son; husband-wife; elder brother-younger brother; friend-friend (*Chung-yung* 20:8) as being the basic and important ones, and that the cultivation of these relationships are the proper paths to be taken by all under heaven.

Of these five basic relationships within human society, only one is a relationship between equals; the other four relationships are marked by the difference in statuses between a superior (sovereign-, father-, husband-, and elder brother) and an inferior or junior (subject, son, wife and younger brother). *Li* serve to mark out these differentiated roles; they support and uphold these hierarchies. However, Confucius stated explicitly the indispensability of *li* in all human relationships at all levels of the social hierarchy. He also commented on the proper use of *li* and also on actions which violated *li*.<sup>26</sup>

There is, in addition, a clear connection between order in society and the practice of *li* by the people in that the codes and norms of behaviour serve to maintain the socio-political hierarchy; this in turn means that people differentiated according to their roles in society do not overstep the social boundaries.

This strictly hierarchical construction of relationships was further supported by *li*: actions were considered appropriate or inappropriate according to one's status in a particular relationship. In this connection, the most important relationship, according to Confucius, is the father-son relationship; it is the one on which all other relationships are modelled. Therefore, filial piety, couched in terms of the father-son relationship, is the important guiding principle in parent-child relationships and is the root of both *li* (*Analects* 2:5) and *jen* (*Analects* 1:2). The encouragement to a son to conceal the crime of the father (*Analects* 13:8) violates values of honesty and

responsibility to the larger society but seems to be accepted with simple conviction by Confucius, a conviction grounded in the belief that the son's response is a mere reflection of the natural order. Confucius, and especially Mencius, believed that the family setting would provide the individual with the ideal environment in which to begin self cultivation. Mencius went further emphasising that, given the biological connection between the parents and the child, love for one's parents is innate, and that this love is the feeling of filial piety (Mencius 7A:15).

The view that the Confucians sought through *li* to establish and perpetuate hierarchy was also advanced by the Legalists. Their accusation was that within the Confucian system, authority was maintained by the partiality of *li*. As the Legalists saw it, social order should be maintained by legal rules which did not make concessions for those higher on the social and/or moral scale. The function of law, the Legalists felt, was to obliterate the already-existing hierarchies present in their society.

Admittedly, Confucius did seem to be protecting the nobility because in 513 B.C., when the state of Chin set out to publicise the penal laws, Confucius criticised, saying, "Chin is going to ruin. It has lost its (proper) rules (of administration) ... people will study the tripods, and not care to know their men of rank. And what profession can the superiors keep?".<sup>27</sup> This complaint of Confucius' reflects the ideology of nobles who felt that the move towards legalisation threatened their authority as a ruling class.<sup>28</sup> Based on these comments, it might be warranted to contend that Confucius sought to uphold hierarchy and protect the elite minority.

However, that provides only part of Confucius' rationale regarding good government. More specifically, the understanding of *li* as rigid and formalistic rules ignores Confucius' insistent emphasis, appearing many times in the Analects, that it was especially the ruling nobility, with their pronounced responsibilities, who needed to be morally responsible for their conduct. Thus, Confucius' stance against rule by law was based on the assumption (hope?) that the nobles were *expected* to have *already* successfully cultivated themselves. Motivationally, *li* are distinguished from laws because *li* are those through which the character is established. More important, though, *li* stem from *jen* (Analects 3:3), whereas laws do not. A people ruled by laws will have no sense of shame, even although wrongdoing is generally avoided (Analects 2:3), and this sense of shame is crucial to the cultivated life. Confucius states, "I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself" (Analects 5:26).<sup>29</sup>

Thus, to view the concept of *li* in the Analects, as referring to strict, rigid rules which uphold the social hierarchy and protect the ruling minority while legitimating domination of the common people is to misunderstand Confucius' use of the term. It could be argued that Confucius was idealistic to think that there would be *chun tzu* who were paradigms of moral excellence and responsibility and who could, through their moral achievements, influence the common people. Confucius commented regarding government that if one were to advance the upright and to hold back the wrongdoers, the people would follow (Analects 2:19): if the ruler were serious (about his task) the people would respect him; if he were filial and kind, they would be loyal to him; if he advanced the good and taught the incompetent, they would be diligent in their quest to be good. (Analects 2:20; see also 12:19). Therefore, idealistic though Confucius was, it cannot be maintained, even from the

sayings in the Analects alone, that the Confucian *li* was just a system of formalistic hierarchy-maintaining codes.

According to the Analects, the *li* are norms of conduct which have gradually been established through tradition and custom and they assist people in acting appropriately in relationships. *Li* serve to regulate the correctness and decorum appropriate to interactions between people related to each other in various different ways. In Analects 8:2.1, *li* are viewed as being necessary to social behaviour and, indeed, as providing an aesthetic sheen to human interaction:

Respect without *li* is labour wasted; carefulness without *li* is timidity; courage without *li* is intimidation; straightforwardness without *li* is rudeness.

*Li* as used by Confucius retains a sense of ritual behaviour, a sense of ritual that actually provides for more than the purely formal and that does have deeper moral and cultural significance. This is indicated in Confucius' comment in Analects 15:4 that Shun, one of the sage-kings, had governed efficiently without exertion; he did nothing except to face south: the ruler's ritual posture. Indeed, in this passage, the two aspects of *li*—ritualistic and social—are assimilated such that the ruler who governs according to *li* does so effortlessly and yet efficiently. The analogy between *li* in the ritualistic and in the social senses could be drawn based on several points of similarity. An explication of the similarities will help in elucidating Confucius' conception of *li*. Five similarities will be discussed.

First, the practice of ritual assumes interaction between at least two parties, often between the human and the divine. On the more practical level, *li* guide

*human* interaction and the practice of *li* presupposes at least two parties; " ... the problem of *li* does not even occur when one has absolutely nothing to relate to".<sup>30</sup> Secondly, ritual behaviour is patterned and therefore, as the term 'ritual' itself denotes, becomes, after some practice, polished and is also carried out with a certain ease. Acting according to *li* within the Confucian community allows one to participate in social 'ceremony': one becomes socially competent and interacts with others—understanding what is required in a variety of situations within a variety of relationships—with seeming effortless (see Analects 14:30).<sup>31</sup> The third similarity is that while the performance of ritual is disciplined and is carried out according to the rules pertaining to the ritual, *li* as norms of appropriateness governing social behaviour involve discipline. Reflecting at one point on the onerous task of self cultivation, Confucius wonders, sceptically, whether there is any person with sufficient strength and determination to attain this condition (Analects 4:6; 8:7; 15:3; 15:12). Fourthly, both ritual and *li* are meaningful, in different ways, in their immediate and larger contexts. For example, the specific ritual of food offerings to ancestor spirits at the family altar has its immediate significance for the members of that family participating in that ritual. On the other hand, in the larger and more inclusive context, ancestor worship has social significance as well, reflecting a community's cultures, ways of life and philosophies. *Li* have exactly these two levels of meaning as well: in an immediate sense for the participants—the people involved in a relationship—whereby, say, one treats the other with respect; and, within the larger community, where the notion of respect for persons is upheld and within which that particular act of respect is manifest. Finally, a very important similarity between ritual and social interaction as guided by *li*, according to Confucius, is the 'spirit' with which one performs that action; "... by its

essentially humanistic-religious and aesthetic origin, by its very nature an act of *li* is *expressive* and *indicative* of one's cultivated, native human emotion or feeling, which Confucius called *jen*".<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, it is recorded (in Analects 3:12) that Confucius sacrificed to the spirits of the dead (ancestors), and to the gods, as if they were present. He also commented that if he did not participate in the ritual, then it is as if he did not sacrifice at all. Fingarette<sup>33</sup> presents *li* as having some 'magical' quality in the sense that when it is practised, relationships function smoothly and social life is seen as 'ceremony'. Although Fingarette's thesis has been variously criticised, it does provide an interesting perspective from which to understand the mechanism of *li*. Furthermore, it is hard to dispute his point that *li* are significantly related to the relationships each individual has.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, as Confucius often insisted, *li* are varied and variable and are manifest differently depending on the situation and the people involved. For example, there are instances where Confucius recounts how he modified various *li* in relation to worship in the ancestral temple in Analects 9:3.<sup>35</sup> It is thus not appropriate to categorise *li* in terms of 'rightness' or of 'moral correctness'; nor are *li* merely rules of correct social behaviour: Confucius did not care about outward show (Analects 17:21). Rather, his focus is on the value of human action and, in that context, on whether one has acted appropriately in a situation *given the nature of the relationship*, and taking into account the *characters of the people involved in that relationship*. The focus of *li* is the human relationship rather than correct social behaviour.

Because of this focus, there is flexibility in the application of oneself to the variety of situations and relationships in human life. A.S. Cua, who offers liberal readings of Confucian morality, explains this flexibility in terms of the *ching-chuan* principle.<sup>36</sup> *Ching* is 'an invariable rule, a standard of conduct,

constant, recurring'; while *chuan* pertains to 'exigency, circumstances, that which is irregular, and opposed to *ching*, that which is constant or normal—from this comes, therefore, the idea of temporary'. Applied to moral theory, Cua suggests, the doctrine of *ching-chuan* is a theory of the normal and the exigent, or the exceptional. While the former is an 'invariable rule in the sense of a rule regularly and invariably applied to situations or actions that fall within the scope of its application', the latter applies in situations in real life that 'appear to fall outside the scope of the application of rules'. Cua's description allows a certain flexibility in moral practice that strict deontological and rule-based theories will not admit since flexibility invariably leads to a sense of arbitrariness with regard to the application of a rule or principle. The argument for a reading of *li* as not purely formalistic, yet not totally contingent on the whims of the moral (or immoral) agent, is further substantiated in the next section in which a connection is drawn between *jen* and *li*.

#### **2.1.4 If a Man is Without *Jen*, What has He To Do With *Li*?<sup>37</sup>**

*Li* and *jen* are linked together inseparably in the Analects. What is debatable, however, is the nature of that connection. There are three basic positions that could be adopted. The first is that *jen* is more fundamental; the second that *li* is more fundamental; and the third that the two are interdependent and each is as important as the other. It will be argued here that the third view is most consistent with the relevant passages in the Analects.

Tu Wei-ming's conception of the connection between *jen* and *li* is that *jen* is more fundamental. He characterises *jen* as a concept of 'personal morality'.<sup>38</sup> This, however, could be misleading because there is no sense at all of personal morality—in the sense of individual virtue—in Confucian philosophy.

If by 'personal morality' Tu means inner disposition as opposed to observable behaviour, it could be plausibly argued that, consistent with the Analects, *jen* refers to an inner or internal aspect of human action pertaining to a person's character. In this sense, it is largely correct to say of Confucius' ideas that *jen* is the 'inner' or internal aspect or component—simply because it is what being human is all about—while *li* is the 'outer' or outward manifestation of *jen* because *li* is ontologically grounded in the natural order of the world in general and of human relationships in particular.

It needs to be noted, however, that to say that one concept pertains to the 'inner' feeling or disposition while the other is an 'outer' manifestation is not to imply that the former is therefore more fundamental and is a higher order concept. It seems that Tu's conceptualisation of *li* and *jen* is that *jen* is both 'inner' and more fundamental than *li*. Thus, while he argues that *jen* and *li* are interdependent in an important way—there is a creative tension: *li* as externalisation of *jen*; *li* as principle of particularism that signify *jen*, he also maintains that "... *jen* as an inner morality is not caused by the mechanism of *li* from outside. It is higher-order concept which gives meaning to *li*."<sup>39</sup>

If, by 'personal morality', Tu means the enterprise of human development which involves individual search for autonomy as opposed to learning within an intersubjective context, then it is inconsistent with the Analects. Tu's usage of the phrase 'personal morality'—he remarks that "as a concept of personal morality, *jen* is used to describe the highest human achievement ever reached through moral self-cultivation"<sup>40</sup>—is not sufficiently clear in indicating what he means. Furthermore, he concedes at one point that the concept 'personal morality' was not necessarily a category in Confucian thought.

The only sense in which *jen* involves the concept of the 'self' is in the context of human self cultivation. The term 'self' in self cultivation (*hsiu chi*) could mean only that individual effort is important. From the Confucian point of view, the cultivation of the isolated individual self, not only as independent from, but also as unconnected with, other persons, is meaningless and impossible.

Thus, while it theoretically might be possible to isolate the 'self' from 'other', the process of self-cultivation *is* the cultivation of the *self-in-relation*; it is not possible practically to isolate the individual self from its web of relationships. Cua expresses this sentiment in "Tasks of Confucian Ethics"<sup>41</sup> when he states that "*Jen* as an ideal theme in part pertains to the psychological condition of responsive agency. Methodologically, the practice and development of *jen* begins at the personal level ... What is personal from the Confucian viewpoint can, and ultimately must, have a public or interpersonal import. *Jen*, as an ideal, involves relation between men rooted in the agents' conscientious and continuing effort at self cultivation." That the idea that the 'self' in self cultivation is meant as an emphasis on personal effort rather than on the personal development of the agent is also affirmed by Fingarette at two instances: first, he points out that in Analects 14:45, 'cultivate' in *hsiu chi* does not have oneself as the object<sup>42</sup>; secondly, he argues that 'self cultivation' does not receive any philosophical centrality in the Analects and that any focus on self cultivation is not on the self as some item of 'ultimate or generalised significance', but rather, it is to encourage one to *cultivate certain traits*.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, Tu's conception of the *jen-li* connection is problematic especially in light of a passage in the Analects (which Tu himself discusses,

but does not later take into consideration) which suggests that one learns to be *jen* through conducting life according to *li*:

*ke chi fu li is jen ... (12:1)*

The interpretation of this phrase is, to say the least, contentious. While *ke* means to overcome and *fu* means to live according to, *ke chi* has often been (mistakenly) transcribed as overcoming the self. This translation imposes on the Confucian text a devaluation of the physical body and its selfish desires, a view which owes more to Buddhism and/or certain strains in Western philosophy than to Confucianism.<sup>44</sup>

Tu rightly denies that it is a Confucian idea that one should "engage in a bitter struggle with one's own desires"<sup>45</sup> and consequently identifies *ke chi* with self cultivation (*hsiu shen*). Regarding *fu li*, Tu rejects the idea that it means "to submit to rituals"<sup>46</sup>; he proposes that, in a more authentically classical Confucian sense, *fu li* implies active participation.

While Tu's analysis of "*ke chi fu li*" is largely consistent with the Analects, he does not seem to have brought the implications of the last-mentioned passage to bear on his discussion on the *jen-li* connection.

There is another perspective on the passage in question offered by Shun Kwong-Loi which reveals an insightful analysis of the phrase.<sup>47</sup> Shun makes the point that the meaning of the phrase is dependent on whether one is to take *chi* or *chi fu li* as the subject of *ke*. While the former focuses on the self as subject needing to be worked upon, the latter implies a less absolute alignment of oneself with *li*.

Regardless of the interpretation of *ke*, Shun goes on to say, this passage in the Analects, together with 12:2 and also 1:2 and 2:5 together, could be cited to support what he terms a 'definitionalist interpretation' of the

*jen-li* connection. On this interpretation, Shun states, "... *li* can be characterized independently of *jen* but not vice versa ... it is the observance of *li* which has ultimate value, from which the value of being the kind of person who generally observes *li* is derived."<sup>48</sup> This account is a version of the more general view referred to above that *li* occupy a more fundamental position than *jen* in Confucius' thought.

The definitionalist interpretation of the *jen-li* connection poses a challenge to Tu's position, which, according to Shun's terminology, would be classified as instrumentalist. This latter interpretation, according to Shun, holds that "*Jen* has evaluative priority over *li* ... It is *jen* alone which has ultimate value, and the value of the existence of *li* practices in society, and of an individual's observing such practices, is derived from the instrumental role *li* plays with regard to *jen*."<sup>49</sup>

Shun's discussion of definitionalist and instrumentalist interpretations of the connection between *jen* and *li* is situated within the larger context of his thesis that there are, indeed, passages in the Analects to support each of these accounts. He proposes that, although the Analects is not authentically Confucius' or even Confucian, there is a way of construing the *jen-li* connection which sees *jen* and *li* not as merely interdependent but also as *integral* to each other. Furthermore, Shun argues, his characterisation of the *jen-li* connection takes into account all relevant passages in the Analects such that the text *could* be understood as a whole.

Shun's thesis implies an internalist connection between 'inner' *jen* and 'manifest' *li*. This connection is explicated via the analogy of the connection between the mastery of a concept and the mastery of a certain linguistic practice. While having mastery of a concept (likened to *jen*) is like having the capacity to have thoughts of a certain kind, having mastery of a linguistic

practice (likened to *li*) is like having "... the capacity to use a language correctly in appropriate circumstances and to respond in appropriate ways to its use."<sup>50</sup>

Given this connection, Shun proceeds to argue that the mastery of a concept is given verbal expression within a certain community; within this community mastery of the corresponding linguistic practice is *both* necessary and sufficient for the mastery of the concept. A person's mastery of the concept and mastery of the corresponding linguistic practice are not merely causally related; indeed, one cannot have one but not the other of the two capacities.

There are four important observations if this analogy is applied to the *jen-li* connection. First, with respect to sacrifices to ancestors, for example, the participation in such while observing *li* is *both* necessary and sufficient for one's attitude of reverence toward ancestors (*jen*). Secondly, the attitude can be instantiated in other communities with different conventional practices associated with the attitudes. Thirdly, there is scope for revision of the existing practices because "... the possession of the attitude ... provides a perspective from which revision of the existing ritual practices can be assessed."<sup>51</sup> Finally, revision of existing practices, although possible, will be limited by a somewhat conservative approach since such revision has to be intersubjectively validated.

Shun's particularly precise rendition of the possession of *jen* and the observance of *li* brings together all the relevant passages on *jen* and *li* in the Analects. In addition, it reflects the tone of the Analects in that although Confucius did use *jen* in the sense of 'inner' component to the 'outer' manifestation of *li* in passages in the Analects, he wanted to eliminate this distinction when it came to practical action in the sense that he sought to

argue that to embody one without having the other would be meaningless. For how could the shared human element *jen* ever be realised if it were not also manifest within the human community? Likewise, acting according to *li* without comprehending its meaning and understanding its significance is nothing more than empty formalism (Analects 3:26; 3:4.3; 17:11). It is in this connection that we begin to understand why Confucius never attempted to define *jen*, for *jen* "... almost by definition requires concrete manifestation".<sup>52</sup>

The necessity of a social and cultural context for the expression of *jen*-actions which give heed to the details of performance and style (*li*), is captured in Cua's view that:

*Li* appears to be the *convention* that defines the form and possibility of moral actions. In this sense, *li* defines the conventionally accepted *style* of actions, i.e. the form and possibility of moral achievement within the cultural setting, or what may be termed 'cultural lifestyle' ... In a more contemporary idiom, we may express this idea in terms of the *tie* or *contact* of an individual agent's actions with the cultural form of life which gives them the locus of identification and the possibility of moral achievement.<sup>53</sup>

Cua's explication of the connection between *jen* and *li* allows for modifications to be made to *li* and, at the same time, emphasises its intersubjective aspect. It can be said, therefore, that *li* derive from a variety of sources including one's motivational and intentional states (although these categories are not Confucian); intersubjective norms and standards; and established values. These established standards have evolved from the ethical and aesthetic insights of those who have experienced similar situations in the past. It is in this connection that Confucius comments that he is a transmitter. Adaptable to changing situations, *li* have a polyphonic

meaning and mean more than mere social convention. Indeed, they could be characterised as "aesthetic expression[s] of natural human feeling", denoting "... only those patterns or norms of social behaviour that tend to mutually exalt the character and dignity of the participants"<sup>54</sup>.

Understood in this light, it can be seen that although Confucius was more concerned with social expedience than moral absolutes, his work does not reduce moral norms to social norms. The status quo, empty formalism and the pursuit of harmony are explicitly rejected; acts according to *li* are to be accompanied by an attitude of reverence (*ching*) (Analects 1:12; 3:26). Thus, Confucius remarked that the outward show of giving gifts of jade and silk—obviously accepted social practice in Confucius' time—does not constitute *li* (Analects 17:11). Similarly, superficiality is condemned not only at the personal level but, more importantly, at the level of the community. So, the good villager, "... who, though he acted as if he were following the Confucian norms, was actually only following convention without consciously engaging in moral practice at all",<sup>55</sup> is despised as being a 'thief of virtue'.

One's character is revealed through both the *means* and the *ends* of one's projects and activities:

Look at the means a man employs, observe his reasons or motives, examine where/what he takes his rest or feels at home in. How can his character be hidden? (Analects 2:10)

When applied to the *jen-li* connection, Confucius can be understood to be expressing an internalist connection between motivation and action and, in that context, between *jen* and *li*. It is through actions according to *li*—including the accompanying attitude of reverence—that we might say of a man that he embodies *jen*. However, *li* are not merely the vehicle for the expression of *jen* because *li* actions, importantly, allow for the development of

*jen* through careful and thoughtful internalisation of existing practices and teachings. Confucius criticised thoughtlessness:

To learn without thinking through is effort wasted ... (Analects 2:15)  
He wanted his students to express opinions and to dialogue with him, condemning uncritical acceptance of his views:

Hui is of no help to me because he is pleased with everything I say.  
(Analects 11:3)

Thus, one learns about the codes of conduct operative in one's social environment and carefully and diligently selects the ones which are relevant to and which are important in the conduct of one's rôles in the community. This dynamic connection between *jen* and *li* is expressed in the Master's statement that:

Where nature (substance) exceeds cultivation (culture) there is crudity; where refinement exceeds nature there is antiquarianism; where cultivation and nature are correctly balanced, we have the *chun tzu*.  
(Analects 6:16)

The *chun tzu* needs to strike a balance between internalising everything that is social or cultural and expressing what is (innately) human. The last passage implies the futility of formalism in general and specifically condemns inflexible conservatism. Together with Analects 6:25—the *chun tzu* who has extensively studied culture and who abides by *li* still holds to what he believes is right—6:16 provides a fuller picture of *li* than just the simplistic conception that they are rigid codes which are, in effect, tools of social control. *Li* function as the catalyst for transmitting the *jen* embodied in each person to a harmonious community; they allow for *jen* to be properly contextualised.

In an ideal Confucian community, the *chun tzu* has successfully cultivated himself within his communal context; the experience is an

intersubjective one and his success is measured in terms of the ease with which he deals with others (see Analects 14:30). This manifests itself in the quality of the relationships he has. The ideal Confucian community is constituted by people in meaningful and functional relationships. According to the Confucians, the training process begins within the context of the family.

### **2.1.5 Filial Piety: *Hsiao***

*Hsiao* is another important concept in Confucian thought. As with other Confucian concepts in the Analects, it is characterised in a variety of ways. It is most crudely portrayed, in 2:5, as obeying parents' wishes. In 2:7 and 2:8, however, *hsiao* is understood more expansively. Thus, it is said that it is not enough to constitute *hsiao* merely to support one's parents or to extend them courtesies such as offering them food first or to undertake their tasks. The most significant of this series of passages 2:5 to 2:8 is 2:6, whereby Confucius remarks that "... parents are anxious lest their children should be sick"<sup>56</sup>. This passage provides a different perspective to filial piety from the other passages; it strongly suggests that filial piety is not a requirement of children toward parents alone but that the term implies that parents have responsibilities as well; namely, to demonstrate to their children the concern and love appropriate to the parent-child relationship.<sup>57</sup>

Although the Confucians felt that the range of relationships into which one enters needs to be differentiated according to priority and the type of responsibilities involved, the basis for asserting the priority of *hsiao* (upon which other relationships are modelled) is the idea that one's immediate family is the natural starting point from which one establishes other valuable and worthwhile relationships. Emphasising the biological connection between

parents and children, Mencius made this point explicitly. He went as far as to assert that love for one's own parents is innate, and that this love is the feeling of filial piety (Mencius, 7A:15). In addition, filial piety is the germination or starting point of the gradually expanding virtue, the universal love of humankind.

Mencius' definition of 'universal love' was very different from that of the Moists'. According to the latter, universal love was love which applied unconditionally and impartially to all human beings, regardless of their relationship to the moral agent. Mo Tzu (479 - 438 B.C.), the leader of the Moists, argued that love should be without distinction and that everyone should be loved equally.

It is questionable, however, whether Moist universal love was totally unselfish, because Mo Tzu upheld a deeply utilitarian theory regarding its effects; he proposes all-embracing love for its utility, expressing, "He who loves others must also be loved by others. He who benefits others must also be benefited by others. He who hates others must also be hated by others."<sup>58</sup>

Mencius found this concept totally unacceptable; he asserted that the Moist universal love was deeply flawed because there is a special relationship with one's father and with one's ruler:

The words of Yang Chu and Mo Ti fill the world. If the people in their opinions do not follow Yang Chu, they follow Mo Ti. Yang advocated egoism, which means a denial of the special relationship with the ruler. Mo advocated universal love which means a denial of the special relationship with the father. To deny the special relationship with the father and the ruler is to become an animal. (Mencius 3B:9).

Mencius' discussion of relationships is limited in scope because it is restricted only to one's (the male person's) relationships with the father and with the ruler. It is possible, however, to extend the scope of the discussion to include the whole range of possible relationships on the basis that the family context is considered the natural training ground for the formation of all one's relationships. Care and concern is first developed within the family and is to be applied, later, to relationships with those not within the family. It needs to be noted that the priority of family relationships over extra-family ones is not merely a sequential priority whereby one first develops family relationships and then carries on to develop other relationships. The priority is also a qualitative one; especially as argued by Mencius, and also by Confucius at various points in the Analects, especially at 2:24: "To offer sacrifice to the spirit of an ancestor not one's own is obsequious ..."<sup>59</sup>

Learning to be filial *and* being filial has implications for both social life (in the young man's cultivation of himself (Analects 1:6)) and political life (either in one's participation in the political society as a subject (Analects 1:2) or as a ruler (Analects 2:20; 8:2.2)). The practice of filial piety by all in the community has an invaluable impact. This is set out in chapter one of the Hsiao Ching (Book of Filial Piety): the scope of filial piety begins in the service of one's parents, is continued in the service of the *chun tzu* and ends in the establishing of the self. What this means for the ruler, who is supposed to cultivate himself as well as to influence his subjects to cultivate themselves, is perhaps best expressed in Chapter 9 of the Ta-hsueh (Great Learning):

What is meant by "In order rightly to govern the state, it is necessary first to regulate the family," is this:- It is not possible for one to teach others, while he cannot teach his own family. Therefore, the ruler,

without going beyond his family, completes the lessons for the state. There is filial piety:—therewith the sovereign should be served. There is fraternal submission:—therewith elders and superiors should be served. There is kindness:—therewith the multitude should be treated ... when the ruler, as a father, a son, and a brother, is a model, then the people imitate him.<sup>60</sup>

It is assumed that the attitudes and emotions that are characteristic of happy family life are stable and strong. Filial piety was (and is?) a principle of social action and also a moral virtue within Chinese society.<sup>61</sup> Confucius utilised the concept, giving it fundamental importance in his system when he stated that *hsiao* is the root of *jen* (Analects 1:2). The sense that *hsiao*, and thus, *jen* and *li*, are intimately connected with one's character rather than with mere behavioural compliance is apparent in Confucius' conversation with Tsai Wo during which he discharges the latter from the usual three-year mourning period (Tsai Wo had only been in mourning for a year) because Confucius felt it did not make sense to force Tsai Wo to continue this practice given that Tsai Wo himself did not see any sense in continuing this practice beyond a year (Analects 17:21). Mourning, in the eyes of Confucius, was an expression of *hsiao* and emphasis on the *feeling* of filial piety is succinctly expressed in Analects 19:14:

Tzu-yu said, "When mourning gives full expression to grief nothing more can be required."<sup>62</sup>

It is this depth of character and emotion which Confucius' system seeks to propagate; for Confucius, these are the features which affirm the individual both as a distinct self and as a self-in-relation with others. It is from within the primary familial context of attachment that one learns the significance of engaging with others in a meaningful and responsible way, affirming the

interrelatedness of human beings. The interrelatedness of human beings and the mutual responsibility of each party in a relationship is the topic of the next section.

### 2.1.6 The Golden Rule: *Shu*

An integral aspect of Confucian moral life is the interrelatedness of the human person to other people. To that effect, Confucius emphasised *shu* as an expression of one's mutual responsibility in a relationship. In living the Confucian life, one has to respond *appropriately* to those with whom one has a relationship.

Life as a totally independent, non-related individual is unacceptable in Confucian thought (Analects 18:6) and, consequently, an account of virtue or value that emphasises personal excellence in isolation is deemed meaningless. The articulation of what it means to act with *shu* occupies an important position in the Analects. It is, in short the 'golden rule': Do not do to others what you do not wish to be done to yourself (Analects 5:11).<sup>63</sup>

The golden rule, evidently, assumes a similarity-in-kind amongst human beings such that one is able, through the interpolation of personal wants and interests, to work out another person's wants and interests.<sup>64</sup> This theme of *shu*, therefore, is not a call to unending dedication to the cause of others while one neglects one's own because the self is, clearly, the starting point and, especially for the *chun tzu*, the source of virtue (Analects 15:20). Confucius also stresses loyalty to oneself (*chung*) and relates *chung* and *shu* by reference to the metaphor of the '*i-kuan*'<sup>65</sup> or thread. About this metaphor, Chan Wing-tsit states (commenting on Analects 4:15):

... Confucianists have not agreed on what it means. Generally, Confucianists of Han and T'ang times adhered to the basic meaning of "thread" and understood it in the sense of a system or a body of doctrines. Chu Hsi, true to the spirit of Neo-Confucian speculative philosophy, took it to mean that there is one mind to respond to all things ... All agree, however, on the meanings of *chung* and *shu*, which are best expressed by Chu Hsi, namely, *chung* means the full development of one's [originally good] mind and *shu* means the extension of that mind to others.<sup>66</sup>

The determination of what counts as appropriate response has to be worked out within the framework of the *nature* of the particular relationship in question. Thus *shu* encompasses a moral aspect based on one's appropriate responses given one's role in the relationship. It is in this light that 'reciprocity' seems to be an inadequate translation of *shu* because it implies an equivalent 'pay-back' response. This is, however, clearly not the case as, for example, in a teacher-pupil relationship where it would be peculiar for the teacher to expect (moral) guidance from a pupil in response to the guidance the teacher gives.

It is more appropriate to translate *shu* as 'mutuality'. This is because *mutuality* best captures the sense of response *and* responsiveness to the other, as well as the ideal of mutual responsibility for the relationship. Thus, *shu* is not concerned with mere response but with response *in an appropriate manner* in the circumstances and given the nature of the relevant relationship. The idea of responding appropriately plays a significant role in Confucian philosophy because it is the operative principle according to which, specifically, the common people learn from the ruler who is their model. The *chun tzu* is a paradigm for all (Analects 13:11): he is able to transform all that

is bad or immoral. Similarly, good government by the *chun tzu* affects both the near and the far; the former in the sense that they are happy, and the latter in the sense that they are attracted to the virtue of the leader(s) (Analects 13:16). Fingarette<sup>67</sup> proposes an interpretation of the Confucian doctrine of models and suggests that a model is not merely of instrumental value to the learners, but has its *intrinsic* value as well. What this means is that "whether or not others make use of a consummatory model is not of the essence of its being such a model—it is its own fulfilment."<sup>68</sup> Using an illuminating analogy with a baseball game, he imagines a particular match which embodied various kinds of suspense, skill, excitement, remarkable performances and turns of fortune that can be said to characterise baseball at its best. One could say that this was a model game. This need not mean, however, that it is a useful game to copy—certainly, one would not insist that all other baseball games be exactly modelled after, or be copies of, this particular game.

This brings to the fore the idea that models are not to be exactly copied. Indeed, for Confucius, exact imitation would bring about the vital project of maintaining the different norms and values of the various *different* relationships. In other words, one's response to a model must be *appropriate* and *correlative* rather than *purely imitative*, because, for example, if the model were a ruler, it would be highly inappropriate for the ruler's subjects to be copies of the ruler. The latter situation would be a major catastrophe in the Confucian system. What is required, rather, is an *appropriate response*; what is inappropriate would be an appreciation of the model expressed through mere imitation.

This point is also the thrust of Roger Ames' comment on Fingarette's thesis.<sup>69</sup> Ames suggests that Fingarette's theory might be further supported

by a more detailed analysis of the concept of a person in Confucius' philosophy. Ames comments that

... underlying Confucius's notion of person is a pervasive philosophy of organism. Discrete, discontinuous and essential individuality is not operative with respect to his understanding of either person or personal realization ... the *chun-tzu* is not individually determined by an internally contained process of self-realization or by some private enlightenment experience.<sup>70</sup>

With regard to this point, Ames adds, Fingarette's distinction between the *instrumental* and the *consummate* senses of a model obfuscates the dynamism of the kind of relationships prescribed by Confucius.<sup>71</sup> This, in turn, according to Ames, weakens Fingarette's thesis.

Ames is correct in insisting that the Confucian process of transformation of the self and of society must be conceived of as a *dynamic* one. The dynamism of the system Confucius proposed allows for the transformation of the whole community based on the effectiveness of *shu*. In the light of Ames' comments, Fingarette's thesis can be modified accordingly: that as people *respond* to these Confucian models within an organismic society, the relationships within the Confucian society are constantly being harmonised and, therefore, individuals are constantly engaged in, ideally, improving themselves. In practical terms, this dynamism applies not only to the formation of new relationships—for example, one becomes a parent on the birth of a child—but also to the development of different ways of conceptualising existing relationships—for example, a student becomes a colleague. This process is unceasing, given that the final outcome is that "... all within the four seas will be brothers" (Analects 12:5.4).

The next section discusses how the process of self cultivation integrates the important Confucian concepts discussed so far, and what it means to achieve human excellence in the Confucian context.

## **2.2 It is the Human Being which Furnishes *Tao* with Value and Meaning ...**

... simply abiding by the *tao* does not render human life meaningful or worthwhile (Analects 15:28)

Whilst Taoist conceptions of the *tao* involve deep metaphysical issues regarding the nature of reality, and Taoist ontology is inclusive and all-encompassing (in that it sees all existence as deriving from and thus dependent on *tao*), the Confucian statement cited above reveals a stark humanistic theme. The statement, possibly a Confucian rejection of Taoist ideals, establishes the extent to which humans are in control of, and responsible for, creating their own paths of development.

In contrast to the Taoist enterprise, which promoted a natural order to which all beings, non-human as well as human, should conform, the Confucians did not agree that human existence was to be subjected to a notion of order which was independent of human life. In that connection, while Taoists were distrustful of much of social, moral and political life—claiming that these were artificial, merely human, constructs—Confucians sought to introduce forms of behaviour and other structures that would assist in the coordination and maintenance of life within communities.

Another feature of the Confucian conception of *tao* which the Taoists would have vehemently rejected is that *tao*, being a product of human

innovation, was variously manifest *according to* the different capacities of different individuals. For example, Confucius advises in Analects 15:39 that those whose *tao* are different should not make plans for one another. This passage reveals the humanistic emphasis of Confucius' philosophy; his belief that human life is not totally determined in that there is scope for plan-making. More significantly, it implies that individual perspectives are brought to bear on one's plans and that *tao* differs for each person; in this context *tao* seems to refer to a perspectival world-view.

That there are different paths for different people—'path' being the most literal translation of *tao*—is a view which, in Confucian thought, could be understood to mean that the self cultivation process is a particularistic enterprise, focusing on certain characteristics of each person rather than on universally applicable aims or goals. This view is supported not only by the fact that the Analects describes *tao* as being specific to different people or groups of people<sup>72</sup> but also by the Confucian conception of the human person as being constituted, at least in part, by the *kinds* and the *qualities* of relationships one is involved in. Thus one who is a father, for example, would cultivate himself, in that respect, differently from one who is a daughter. Similarly, with respect to the qualities of relationships, one who is, for example, a pupil involved in a relationship of mutual respect and understanding with her teacher will cultivate herself, *qua* pupil, differently from another who is merely subservient and obedient to her teacher.

It is in this sense that self cultivation takes on a different meaning for each individual because of the uniqueness of each person as a being-in-relation with others. The idea of the uniqueness of each individual person, together with the humanistic emphasis of Confucian thought, entails that *tao*,

in the Analects, cannot be conceived of as it is in taoist thought as a transcendent order of reality and/or, in moral terms, as an unwavering standard or principle.

Hall and Ames, in their discussion of the Confucian *tao*, reject the understanding of it as some order of transcendent principle.<sup>73</sup> They thereby challenge the views of Arthur Waley and D.C. Lau who characterise *tao*, respectively, as the "... one infallible method of rule" embodied essentially in the "... Way of the ancients" and as "... the sum total of truths about the universe and man, and not only the individual but also the state" and which "... comes very close to the term "Truth" as found in philosophical and religious writings in the West".<sup>74</sup>

Their most sustained criticisms, however, are of Fingarette's conception of the Confucian *tao* as a transcendent objective order.<sup>75</sup> According to Hall and Ames, although Fingarette recognises the particular individuality of each person with regard to self realisation, he nonetheless holds on to a conception of the *tao* as moving from the particularistic to the universal, from the humanistic (of human origin) to the transcendent, as one cultivates oneself. Fingarette's *tao* exists objectively and independently of human life. As Hall and Ames observe:

[For Fingarette,] [t]he ultimate source of meaning and value is this objective *tao*, and the greater the human achievement, the less particular the human and the more impersonal the *tao* becomes.<sup>76</sup>

Hall and Ames argue that Fingarette's conception of *tao* restricts the range of possibilities of human life and is essentially inconsistent with the ideals in the Analects including its humanistic orientation and the tolerance and flexibility of self cultivation, the multiplicity and multivalence of *tao* in its association

with various historical figures, varying levels of human achievement and a broad range of cultivated interests.

Hall and Ames are basically correct in their criticisms of Fingarette's conservative characterisation of *tao* as objective and transcendent reality and/or truth independent of human beings. In addition to their criticisms, it needs to be noted that Fingarette reads into Confucius' *tao* a (non-existent) two-tiered conception of human life and meaning; contrary to Fingarette's views, Confucius was never interested in metaphysical issues and issues of transcendence (of human life) (see Analects 6:20; 7:9; 7:20; 11:11).

The idea that *tao* is some kind of universal moral principle is also upheld by Sandra Wawrytko who draws a parallel between Confucius' *tao* and Kantian Moral Law in their respective concepts of respect for persons.<sup>77</sup> Wawrytko's larger project is a synthesis of the two systems: she proposes an ethical theory which combines Kant's respect for the Moral Law—"Kant's rigid architectonic"<sup>78</sup>—tempered by the Confucian emphasis on the complexity of human life expressed in and through dynamic community. Wawrytko does recognise that respect for persons takes completely different forms in each of the systems: it is expressed hierarchically in Confucian thought and universally in Kantian thought.

Her discussion of *tao*, though, seems at points confused for, while she holds that "... Confucius advocates the cultivation of a sense of judgment which is guided by experience and fitted to concrete cases"<sup>79</sup>, and, at the same time criticises Kant for 'objectionable inflexibility'<sup>80</sup>, she yet describes *tao* as an unwavering standard. She argues:

*Tao*, as revealed by *i* [Wawrytko translates this as 'judgment'], provides a universal and unwavering standard for judgment. In the

terminology of ethics, Confucius exemplifies a deontological or rule-oriented approach, as is borne out in the *Analects*.<sup>81</sup>

Furthermore, she characterises *i*, which she connects in an important way with *tao*, as "... the conscious decision to adhere to the correct Way based solely on the fact that it is correct ... [*i*] serves as the general "standard of evaluation", bestowing meaning upon one's acts".<sup>82</sup> Thus, in Wawrytko's account, while Confucian ethics is contextually sensitive and flexible, there is, on the other hand, an unwavering, 'correct' standard to be sought after.

It is difficult to understand why and how Wawrytko sees the Analects as embodying a rule-oriented approach (while she in the same paper discusses the Confucian stress on following the examples of models, which renders moral learning an open-ended process). In addition, she contends that *i* bestows meaning upon one's acts. This assertion directly contradicts Analects 15:28, a passage which Wawrytko herself discusses. It is surprising that in her discussion of this passage, she alludes to the need for creativity in the practice of *i*.

Furthermore, the idea that there is an unwavering and correct standard presupposes the existence of a standard of conduct which does not take into account individual differences. This view is inconsistent with the general view in the Analects that courses of development and, by extension, ways of responding to and in situations, vary from person to person. The focus of the Analects seems to be on appropriate action and behaviour rather than on 'correct' forms. Thus, what is at issue here is not so much that there is flexibility in the application of a standard—Wawrytko does indeed appreciate Confucian ethics for its flexibility—but rather that there is a ('correct') standard *at all*.

Apart from the general sense of confusion in Wawrytko's discussion of *tao*, her enterprise of effecting a synthesis of the Confucian and Kantian systems is ill-conceived because the two systems are so essentially different in their structures and aims that Kant himself was not willing to concede that the Chinese were ever concerned with, or entertained issues pertaining to, virtue or morality:

Philosophy is not to be found in the whole Orient ... Their teacher Confucius teaches in his writings nothing outside a moral doctrine designed for the princes ... and offers examples of former Chinese princes...But a concept of virtue and morality never entered the heads of the Chinese.

.....  
In order to arrive at an idea ... of the good [certain] studies would be required, of which [the Chinese] know nothing.<sup>83</sup>

From Kant's point of view, the Chinese never contemplated issues of virtue and morality for at least two reasons, neither of which Wawrytko seems to have taken into account in her project. First, the idea in Confucianism that human beings are empirically given and have to learn to behave *appropriately* depending on the nature of each different relationship is closely connected to the Confucian notion of (the value of) social hierarchy and differentiation and of different loyalties due to different categories of people. Obviously more particularistic than any deontological moral theory or universalisability criterion would allow, this move by Confucius forces the agent to make choices and to accord different priorities to the variety of people he comes across. Distinguishing between people is not advocated, crudely, as a means to effect discrimination but, rather, as a means to work out one's responsibilities (for example, whether as father, friend or subject). It

seems, in the light of Confucian theory, naive to insist that all should be treated equally, or loved equally, or to try to achieve a social setting in which relational values are not accorded any significance and, in fact, to be played down or eliminated.

Wawrytko seems not to have grasped this crucial and essential feature of Confucian philosophy and how dramatically different this feature is from any notion of morality in Kantian thought. Thus she states, very generally, that "Due to the primacy of respect, Kant joins the Confucians in condemning the impracticality of universal love."<sup>84</sup> She fails to note, in making such an over-generalised statement of comparison, that Confucius and Kant reject the idea of universal love from within their respective systems for specific reasons which render their ideals mutually exclusive each of the other. The Confucian abhorrence of universal love as both impracticable and inappropriate as the operative principle in relationships—the arguments most strongly advanced by Mencius—is based on a reason directly opposite to that of Kant's. While Kant did not see any role for love or attachment in one's quest to be moral, it could be said that Confucius impressed, in comparable terms, that moral duty (to another) was dependent on the nature of one's relationship (with that other), the latter constituted in part by the feelings of loyalty and attachment appropriate to it. Their ideas of what constitute morality and, in that connection, what it means to be a moral person, are in direct opposition: Kant's universal man must, in being moral, be autonomous, rational and impartial<sup>85</sup>; Confucius' *chun tzu* must, in his quest to be moral, be differently loyal and differently attached to different people. Thus it is these very different (and opposing) reasons which are so fundamental to each of their ideals that led them to reject universal love; their common rejection of the practicality of universal love should not itself be overrated.

Secondly, the Kantian and Confucian conceptions of human nature and morality, and of the connection between the two, differ drastically as well. Wawrytko is alert to the fact that there is no dualistic conception of human nature in Confucius' thought corresponding to that in the Kantian system. She writes that "[i]n the assumed duality of human nature, Kant detects a seething rebellion against reason, plotted by the "beast within"."<sup>86</sup> What Wawrytko fails to deal with, however, are the implications of Kant's dualistic conception of the human being whereby one feature or ability has to be overcome by another, or put aside, in order that the other can be effectively applied; and, in that connection, how Confucius did not conceive either of human nature or of morality in such terms.

Confucius never engaged in moral philosophy the way Kant did. Morality, or moral issues, were never a primary concern for Confucius. In the Analects, moral concerns were but a component of larger issues which encompassed the political, social and moral structures of communal life. Thus, to assume that Confucius and Kant were engaged in similar projects is to narrow both the scope of Confucian categories (to the merely moral) and, more generally, the whole Confucian enterprise.

What emerges from the preceding discussion is that Confucius did not engage in moral philosophy in two connected, though different, ways: first, moral philosophy was neither his fundamental nor sole concern; secondly (what we might call) morality is not confined to a limited number of actions and behaviours but rather, is an important component of *all* human action and is inseparable from the self in its social and political spheres. These different aspects of human action and behaviour, including the moral, are

embodied in the Confucian conception of *li, chung, shu, jen, li* and *hsiao*.

These concepts circumscribe what it means to be human in a Confucian way.

Just as it is inappropriate to assimilate Confucian thought to the sphere of (Western) moral philosophy, so it is inappropriate to read it primarily as a religious ethics. This latter approach is adopted by Joel Kupperman in "Confucius and the Nature of Religious Ethics".<sup>87</sup> There, Kupperman argues that religious ethics is significantly different from 'big moment' ethics. The major difference between the two, he proposes, is that while 'big moment' ethics is concerned solely with "... moments of sharp moral decision ..." <sup>88</sup> the former focuses on a deeper, 'emotional harmony' which is expressed in and through every act and activity, "... even at moments when [the agent] is not making or preparing for a moral decision."<sup>89</sup>

Kupperman is primarily correct in asserting that Confucius was interested in the inner cultivated character of the agent as the basis of all actions and not merely in isolated moments involving moral decisions. In making his point, however, Kupperman has imposed onto Confucius' thought a (non-existent) dichotomy between moral and non-moral actions and behaviour. Kupperman writes that generally, and this applies in the case of the Confucian person too:

... most of a man's life normally is entirely neutral with respect to traditional moral codes; that is, moments of moral choice or action normally will comprise very little of the duration of his life.<sup>90</sup>

But does the Confucius of the Analects think of human life in these terms?

Would he say that most of a person's life is concerned with actions and behaviour which are morally neutral? Indeed, the converse seems to be the case, for he remarked that "even within the space of a meal (which has to do,

in a large part, with the gratification of bodily desires) the man of *jen* does not act contrary to *jen*; in moments of haste and danger, he abides by *jen*" (Analects 4:5.3).

If *jen* is understood as the shared human capacity, and if embodying *jen* entails having proper respect for and commitment to human life both in oneself and in others, then Confucius' remark to abide by *jen* in all situations implies that there is a moral component in *all* one's actions and activities expressed in and through one's attitude toward human life. The point here is this: the Confucian conception of human action cannot be simplistically categorised either as moral or nonmoral; if in every action one is to embody and exemplify *jen* then it is the case that *every* action has moral significance.

This conception of human action is integrally connected to the Confucian conception of human existence as encompassing at least, the following inseparable spheres: social, cultural, historical, political and moral. Every single action—for example, the decision to conceal that one's father has stolen a sheep (Analects 13:18)—has ramifications in each of these spheres.

Thus characterisation of *li* as moral rules is totally inappropriate. Confucius' reference to concepts of connectedness were never clearly defined, and this lack of concern about precise definitions could be attributed to his orientation towards particularistic rather than universalistic, flexible rather than inflexible, codes of conduct and appropriate behaviour. As argued in a previous section of this chapter, he modified *li* codes at times and, also, at one instance, specifically commented that the *chun tzu* is flexible in that respect; the two translations of Analects 15:36 listed below give an important insight into how Confucius conceived of flexibility:

A *chun tzu* is devoted to principle but not inflexible in small matters.<sup>91</sup>

A [*chun tzu*] is correctly firm, and not firm merely.<sup>92</sup>

The text of the Analects—its mode of discourse and its philosophical method—also demonstrates this point: what is taken as recorded sayings of Confucius appears either in the form of an instruction for a specific person regarding a specific matter, often based on discussions of the *chun tzu*. What occupies a larger proportion of the text is not so much a list of the virtues or characteristics of the paradigmatic *chun tzu* as descriptions of what the *chun tzu* would do in a wide-ranging variety of different situations.

Closely associated with Confucius' flexible approach to codes of conduct is his focus on the character of the agent rather than on external behaviour or on isolated instances of action or behaviour. What is meant by a person's character is, in Confucian terms, the 'inner' cultivation of the person. It is this inner cultivated (or uncultivated) self which is the source of behaviour and action and, therefore, the primary concern of Confucius; indeed, he drew a strongly internalistic connection between 'inner' cultivation and 'external' behaviour:

If one's will is set on *jen*, one will be free from wickedness or evil.

(Analects 4:4)<sup>93</sup>

Certain other passages in this chapter of the Analects reveal similar internalist assumptions:

... the man of *jen* is attracted to *jen* because he feels at home in it. The wise man is attracted to *jen* because he finds it to his advantage.

(Analects 4:2)<sup>94</sup>

The Master said, "I have never seen a person who values and abides by *jen* or one who hates not-*jen*. The person who values and abides by *jen* will not accord priority to anything else; he who hates (what is)

not-*jen* will practise *jen* in such a way that not-*jen* cannot affect him.

(Analects 4:6.1)

Confucius held suspect the motivational content of strict principles or rules of action.<sup>95</sup> Like penal laws, rules may, through threat of punishment, be effective in exacting external compliance (Analects 2:3) but they do not aid in a person's self cultivation (Analects 3:26; 17:11; 17:21). Indeed, at the political level, mere compliance of subjects to rulers was not endorsed by Confucius (Analects 13:15).

The kind of person Confucius sought to give effect to his teachings were men with certain intentional and motivational characteristics, men who valued and abided by *jen*.<sup>96</sup> These men of *jen* have a certain composure: "being *jen* [they are] free from anxiety; being wise [they are] free from uncertainty; being courageous [they are] free from fear" (Analects 14:30). It follows, then, that "[w]hat the *chun tzu* seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others"<sup>97</sup> (Analects 15:20).

It is in this sense that self cultivation, in Confucius' system, is an individualistic process: the search is not for a universal man but, rather, for men who, in their particular lives, embody and manifest *jen* within human community and who influence others to do so as well. That self cultivation is a particularistic process shaped by each person for him/herself, does not also mean—the point has already been noted—that humans are to be understood as independent, autonomous individuals. Rather, self cultivation takes place within an intersubjective context in which the developing person affirms himself as a person-in-relation with others.

This idea of the person as the centre of relationships is highlighted by Tu Wei-ming, who describes the self as the locus from which concentric

circles of influence emanate, moving gradually from the family as the innermost ring, to the community, country, and world.<sup>98</sup> Although it was rather idealistic of the Confucians to suggest that the effects of self cultivation are as far-reaching as they suggested, the Confucian view of the emanating effect of self cultivation can be given a less radical and more plausible interpretation by reference to a community of developing selves which together aim to realise the Confucian ideals.

That Confucius proposed the concept of the individual as a related self rather than define it atomistically does not diminish the moral responsibility of the self. Instead, moral responsibility is construed within a context of interdependence. Fingarette outlines the contribution of the members of a community to what he feels is a distinctively *human* community. He writes:

Is it enough merely to be born, to eat, breathe, drink, excrete, enjoy sensual gratification and avoid physical pain and discomfort? Animals do this. To become civilized is to establish relationships that are not merely physical, biological or instinctive; it is to establish *human* relationships, relationships of an essentially symbolic kind ... "Merely to feed one's parents well" ... "even dogs and horses are fed." (2:7) To be devoted to one's parents is far more than to keep the parents alive physically. To serve and eat in the proper way, with the proper respect and appreciation, in the proper setting—this is to transform the act of mere nourishment into the human ceremony of dining. To obey the whip is to be not much more than a domestic animal; but to be loyal and faithful to those who rightly govern, to serve them and thus to serve *in* the human community, to do this out of one's own heart and nature—this is to be a true citizen of one's community.<sup>99</sup>

The human person or self is conceived of in terms of its social interdependency with other human persons. Given that communal life is the *only* locus of meaning for the human, what is integral is that the self has to be cultivated within the present society—in the here and now—in conjunction with all others in one's community. There is thus a distinct sense in the Analects that self cultivation is to take place within an intersubjective context because the modes of life of the community—involving culture and history and, more simply, the stories which people in that community tell—play an irreducible role in shaping the individual.

These modes of life of the community are learnt through the inculcation and practice of *li* (Analects 6:25; 12:15), beginning with *hsiao* in the family context (Analects 2:5). The different loyalties to, and affection for, other people are dictated by the *kind* of relationship one has with the other. *Li* are the vehicle of expression for these differing attachments. Furthermore, given that one can only be truly human within the communal context, relationships and attachments are important to the individual person in a fundamental way.

The cultivation of the self which includes, in an integral way, the development of one's relationships with others (Analects 6:25) can be understood by reference to the concepts of *chung* and *shu*. It is in these two concepts that the idea of respect for persons, insofar as it exists in Confucius' thought, is embodied. While *chung* might be translated as 'sincerity to oneself' and *shu* as mutuality or mutual responsibility and attachment to others, *chung* and *shu* together are expressions of the respect for human life, both in oneself and in others. It is in this sense that both *chung* and *shu* are connected with *jen*, the distinguishing characteristic of all humanity (Analects 4:15). To uphold *jen* is to affirm the value of human life within its communal

setting and, therefore, to understand the self as expressed and manifest only through *li*. *Li* are applied according to norms of appropriateness rather than to defined rules or principles.

What counts as appropriate in a certain situation is dependent on the nature of the relationship involved. The course of action decided upon and carried through, in turn, reveals the kind of person one is. Thus, because the Confucian self-cultivation process is at once intersubjective and personal and particularistic, its effects and outcomes are open-ended. In this connection, Hall and Ames conceive of *jen* as 'person-making' and of *tao* as 'road making'.<sup>100</sup> "The human being has an active, creative role in continuing, broadening, and extending the *tao*, such that the *tao* is historically composite and cumulative, the human unfolding of chosen areas of importance"<sup>101</sup>. Roadmaking, Hall and Ames argue, refers to "making a roadway real"<sup>102</sup>, rather than simply being led along a path. Thus the Confucian concept of self cultivation involves the self as initiator and creator *within* its social and cultural environment and *according* to the rôles one occupies in the variety of relationships one engages in. The distinctiveness of each person, although all share in the same quality of being *jen*, rests in the (successful) integration of all the relationships one engages in. Thus, for example, I am at once a daughter, friend, partner, teacher, employee, colleague, and so on. This does not mean, however, that each person is completely constituted by the roles s/he plays. Rather, the quality and meaning of a satisfactory Confucian life is based on *how* one fulfils the responsibilities within each relationship. Thus, the Confucian life is seen as a dynamic process whereby one might form new relationships, end some other relationships and develop or modify certain others; it is in and through these processes that one *is* human. Tu describes

the dynamics of this process, distinguishing between Confucian and un-Confucian ways of understanding personhood:

The dramatic image of the modern person who assumes a variety of social roles is definitely unConfucian. The idea of my assuming the role of son in reference to my father and simultaneously assuming the distinct and separate rôle of father in reference to my son is unnatural, if not distasteful. From my own experience ... I have always been learning to be a son. Since my son's birth, I have also been learning to be a father and my learning to be a son has to take a new significance as a result of becoming a father myself. Furthermore, my being a son and a father is also informed and enriched by being a student, a teacher, a husband, a colleague, a friend, and an acquaintance. These are ways for me to learn to be human.<sup>103</sup>

As Tu writes, *how* one conducts oneself in the range of relationships one engages in constitutes one's ways of *being human*. Each individual is a necessary and distinct node within a web-like network of different relationships, and these different relationships, in different combinations and permutations, make for the distinctiveness of each human life. Affirmation of the *quality* of life as such can only be achieved within the network of human relationships. Life in this community is a dynamic, unceasing one because one needs constantly to be working on and developing different relationships with different people in the quest for the common good. In the words of Tu, "ontologically we are irreducibly human, and existentially we must struggle to remain human."<sup>104</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. An earlier discussion of many of the concepts and themes in this chapter has been published in Karyn Lai, "Confucian Moral Thinking", in Philosophy East and West, Vol. 45., No. 2, pp. 249-272.
- <sup>2</sup>. What has been translated 'education' here (*xue*) meant, for Confucius, significantly more than book-learning, although it may include that (Analects 11:24). Confucius himself taught in four areas: culture; appropriate conduct; sincerity (to oneself); and trustworthiness (Analects 7:24). He was always concerned to emphasise the practicality of education (Analects 17:9).
- <sup>3</sup>. It is clear that women cannot become *chun tzu*. Refer to section 5.2.1.
- <sup>4</sup>. See section 5.2.3 for a discussion of government in the Analects.
- <sup>5</sup>. See Tu Wei-ming, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, State University of New York Press, New York, 1985; especially the Chapter "Learning to Be Human".
- <sup>6</sup>. Mencius (371-289 BC) and Hsun Tzu (298-238 BC), belonging to the classical Confucian tradition, debated on this issue of human nature. While Mencius argued (in Mencius) that human nature is good and Hsun Tzu (in Hsun Tzu) that human nature is evil, both emphasised, as Confucius did, the necessity for self-cultivation. For the respective views on human nature and the debates involved, see A.C. Graham's The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature, reprinted from the Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies, 1967; Chan, Wing-tsit, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1963; Dennis M. Ahern, "An Equivocation in Confucian Philosophy", in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 7 (1980), pp. 175-185.
- <sup>7</sup>. The concept of heaven was only introduced during the changeover of dynasties from the Shang to the Chou. Up until the time of Confucius, the metaphysical supreme power

was called *ti* (the Lord) or *shang-ti* (the Lord on high) and was understood in an anthropomorphic sense. The Chou had overthrown the rulers of the Shang Dynasty and needed to substitute some other name than that of the founder-ancestor of the former. Confucius never spoke of *ti*; in fact he often spoke of *t'ien* (heaven). The term *t'ien* was extended to include the Shang cult of worship of ancestors, heroes, gods and other deities. Refer to Ward J. Fellows, Religions East and West, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, U.S.A., 1979.

<sup>8</sup>. Herlee Creel, Confucius: the Man and the Myth, John Day and Co., New York, 1947, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup>. Liu Shu-hsien, "The Confucian Approach to the Problem of Transcendence and Immanence", in Philosophy East and West, Vol. 22, No.3, July 1971. p. 49.

<sup>10</sup>. Thome H. Fang, The Chinese View of Life, Union Press, Hong Kong, 1957.

<sup>11</sup>. Analects 2:4. The Master said,

"At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning.

At thirty, I stood firm.

At forty, I had no doubts.

At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven.

At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth.

At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right."

<sup>12</sup>. D.C. Lau, Introduction, Confucius: The Analects, Penguin Books, 1979, pp. 27-30.

<sup>13</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup>. Some Neo-Confucianists argued that *hsing* in this passage refers to human physical nature. See Wing-tsit Chan's comments in A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>15</sup>. James Legge, The Four Books, The Chinese Book Company, Hong Kong. Legge postulates that human nature is originally good—in fact, perfectly good—and,

connectedly, argues that it must be a mixture of other elements (external to human nature) which lead it astray. It is arguable that Legge's interpretation has been greatly dominated by the Christian viewpoint on the corruption of originally-good human nature.

- <sup>16</sup>. What Confucius meant by *pu-ru* (unlikeness) in this passage is ambiguous; it is difficult to ascertain what likeness or similarity between two or more people is predicated upon. In the Analects, however, a major constituent of differences between people is in their level of moral cultivation (again, this cannot be clearly separated from the other aspects of human life). In Analects 13:24, Confucius states that it is not necessarily a good thing when a person is liked by all. On the other hand, one need not necessarily be considered all bad if everyone hated him. This is because it is preferable for a person to be liked by the morally cultivated and hated by those who were not.
- <sup>17</sup>. Legge's interpretation; The Four Books, *op.cit.*
- <sup>18</sup>. The Chung-yung was handed down from one disciple to another in the Confucian school until *Tzse-sze*, one of them, committed it to writing and delivered it to Mencius. The Neo-Confucianist *Chu Hsi* later compiled it and organised it into chapters and sections, in its present form.
- <sup>19</sup>. W. Scott Morton, "The Confucian Concept of Man: The Original Formulation", in Philosophy East and West, No. 21, Jan 1971, pp. 69-77.
- <sup>20</sup>. Chan Wing-tsit, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, *op.cit.* p. 16.
- <sup>21</sup>. A.S. Cua comments that in the case of the man of *jen*, "[h]is *easeful* life is more a matter of attitude and confidence in his ability to deal with difficult and varying situations, rather than an exemplification of his infallible judgment and authority." Refer to "The Concept of Paradigmatic Individuals in the Ethics of Confucius" in Inquiry, 14, p. 47. See also Analects 7:26.
- <sup>22</sup>. Because Confucius himself never defined *jen* either metaphysically or ontologically, it has been variously interpreted in English as benevolence, love, humanity, humaneness, etc.

None of these translations into English, however, are adequate to capture the meaning of *jen* as *shared humanity*. Refer to Wing-tsit Chan, "Chinese and Western Interpretations of *Jen* (Humanity)" (in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 2 (1975), pp. 107-129) for a more detailed analysis of the possible different meanings of the term *jen*.

- <sup>23</sup>. The view of the Confucian self described here derives in part from Tu Wei-ming's characterisation of an individual as 'a centre of relationships', and, connectedly, of ultimate self-transformation (or self-cultivation) as a communal act. See his, "Ultimate self-transformation as a communal act", Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 6 (1979), pp. 237-246; also, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, State University of New York Press, New York, 1985.
- <sup>24</sup>. C.K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1961, pp. 253-254.
- Henry G. Skaja, in "*Li* (Ceremonial) as a Primal Concept in Confucian Spiritual-Humanism", Chinese Philosophy, Vol 3: Confucianism and Other Schools, pp. 47-71, suggests that since the will of the spirits could be influenced by the will and deeds of men, a practical-indicative way of influencing the spirits was through sacrifice (*li*). This meant that religious sacrifice as understood in the Chinese context was not a purely 'supernatural' or 'transcendent' process; the spiritual world is in no way transcendent or apart from the natural world. Therefore, Confucius extended the scope of *li* without having at the same time to cross any (artificial) boundary between the spiritual and the mundane.
- <sup>25</sup>. Refer to note 11 in Chapter five.
- <sup>26</sup>. Chu T'ung T'su, Law and Society in Traditional China, Mouton and Co., The Hague, 1965, describes the operation of *li* in the classical Chinese context. pp. 226-247.
- <sup>27</sup>. *Tso Chuan Chu-su*, 53, 6b-7a, in Legge, Chinese Classics V Pt. II 732.
- <sup>28</sup>. Ch'u T'ung Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*, pp. 170-172.

- <sup>29</sup>. Legge's translation, *op.cit.*
- <sup>30</sup>. Tu Wei-ming, "Li as a Process of Humanisation", in Philosophy East and West, Vol. 22, 1972, p. 190.
- <sup>31</sup>. See Herbert Fingarette, Confucius: The Secular as Sacred, Harper and Row, USA, 1972.
- <sup>32</sup>. Henry Skaja, "Li (Ceremonial) as a Primal Concept in Confucian Spiritual-Humanism", *op.cit.*, p. 51. Skaja's understanding of the Confucian *li* accords *li* a more central role in Confucius' philosophy than Tu Wei-ming's does. See the discussion of the connection between *jen* and *li* in the following sub-section.
- <sup>33</sup>. Herbert Fingarette, Confucius: The Secular as Sacred, *op.cit.*
- <sup>34</sup>. Fingarette uses some rather simplistic examples to demonstrate the efficacy of *li*. In addition, he seems to not have properly articulated a connection between *jen* and *li* which would have provided further support for his thesis.
- <sup>35</sup>. There are many examples in the Analects of the spontaneity, imaginativeness and mastery required in the practice of *li*: 6:13, 13:5, 2:4, 7:36-37, 8:1, 8:2, 13:26, 15:21.
- <sup>36</sup>. Antonio Cua, "The Concept of Paradigmatic Individuals in the Ethics of Confucius", *op.cit.*, pp. 50-51. Cua in this article argues for a liberal interpretation of Confucian moral theory, dealing with the idea of the *chun tzu* as a paradigm which is not bound by strict obedience to principles. Cua discusses Chan Wing-tsit's interpretation of the *ching-chuan* principle.
- <sup>37</sup>. Analects 3:3.
- <sup>38</sup>. In "The Creative Tension Between Jen and Li", Philosophy East and West, 18, no. 1-2, January-April, 1968.
- <sup>39</sup>. *ibid*, p. 33
- <sup>40</sup>. *ibid*, p. 7.
- <sup>41</sup>. In Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 6 (1979), pp. 55-67.

- <sup>42</sup>. Herbert Fingarette, "The Problem of the Self in the Analects", Philosophy East and West, 29, no.2, April 1979, p. 130.
- <sup>43</sup>. Herbert Fingarette, "The Music of Humanity in the *Conversations* of Confucius", in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 10 (1983), p. 332.
- <sup>44</sup>. Legge transcribes the phrase *ke chi* as to 'subdue himself'; note also his comments, pp. 277-278 (in The Four Books, *op.cit.*) referring to various other commentators who construe *ke chi*, variously, as: 'to restrain the body'; 'to overcome the selfish desires of the body'; 'subduing and putting away the selfish desires *in the self*'. Legge contends that 'selfishness in the self' has a threefold character: first, it is the animal nature in man—Legge likens this to the Greek ψυχικος ανθρωπος; secondly, it is associated with the desires of the physical senses: the eyes, ears, nose, mouth; thirdly, it is the egoistic 'I', what Legge terms "the lust of superiority". Legge claims it is the second of these features Confucius was specifically referring to. Legge's discussion of *ke chi* might fit the Mencian conception of human nature (although there are problems there too) much better than it does Confucius'. There is little or no emphatic reference to a dualistic human nature in the Analects.
- <sup>45</sup>. Tu Wei-ming, "The Creative Tension Between *Jen* and *Li*", *op.cit.*, p. 6.
- <sup>46</sup>. *ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup>. Shun Kwong-loi, "*Jen* and *Li* in the *Analects*", in Philosophy East and West, Vol. 43, No. 3, 1993.
- <sup>48</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 462. For an example of the definitionalist interpretation of the *jen-li* connection, see Henry Skaja, "*Li* (Ceremonial) as a Primal Concept in Confucian Spiritual-Humanism", *op.cit.*
- <sup>49</sup>. Shun Kwong-Loi, "*Jen* and *Li* in the *Analects*", *op.cit.*, p. 461.
- <sup>50</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 468.
- <sup>51</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 471.

- <sup>52</sup>. Tu, Wei-ming, "The Creative Tension Between *Jen* and *Li*", *op.cit.*, p. 10.
- <sup>53</sup>. A.S. Cua, "The Concept of Paradigmatic Individuals in the Ethics of Confucius", *op.cit.*, p. 44.
- <sup>54</sup>. Henry Skaja, "Li (ceremonial) as a Primal Concept in Confucian Spiritual Humanism" *op.cit.*, p. 49.
- <sup>55</sup>. Tu, Wei-ming, "The Creative Tension Between *Jen* and *Li*", *op.cit.*, p. 37, citing Analects 17:13. See also Mencius' comment on this idea in Mencius 7B:37.
- <sup>56</sup>. Legge's translation, The Four Books, *op.cit.*
- <sup>57</sup>. Some translators interpret the passage to mean that it is the *children* who should worry when the parents are sick. (See Wing-tsit Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, *op.cit.*) Such a reading does in fact keep 2:6 in line with 2:5, 7 and 8. Another possible translation is "Give your father and mother no other cause for anxiety than illness" (D.C. Lau, Confucius: The Analects, Penguin, 1979). Each of the interpretations, including Legge's, represents a completely different meaning. Legge's interpretation emphasises mutual responsibility in a relationship, a theme expressed in the concept *shu* (see section 2.1.6).
- <sup>58</sup>. Mo Tzu, Chapter 17. See also Christian Jochim's "Ethical Analysis of an Ancient Debate: Moists Versus Confucians", in Journal of Religious Ethics, 8/1, (1980), pp. 135-147.
- <sup>59</sup>. D.C. Lau, Confucius: The Analects, *op.cit.*
- <sup>60</sup>. Legge's translation, The Four Books, *op.cit.*
- <sup>61</sup>. Refer to C.K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society, *op.cit.*
- <sup>62</sup>. D.C. Lau, Confucius: The Analects, *op.cit.*
- <sup>63</sup>. This formulation has often been dubbed the "negative formulation of the golden rule", or the "silver rule". Legge remarks, in his commentary on this passage, that this is the lesser version of the positive version which reads "Do to others as you wish to be done to yourself" (in The Four Books, *op.cit.*). Robert Allinson provides an interesting analysis

of this so-called 'negative version', arguing for its appropriateness in Confucian philosophy (in "The Confucian Golden Rule: A Negative Formulation", Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 12 (1985), pp. 305-315).

<sup>64</sup>. Whether such a postulation is warranted is highly questionable and is, indeed inconsistent with Confucius' vehement insistence that people are, and should be, socially differentiated. See Analects 15:39; 16:9.

<sup>65</sup>. Translated by Chan Wing-tsit as "one thread" in A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>66</sup>. *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>. Herbert Fingarette, "How the Analects Portrays the Ideal of Efficacious Authority", *op.cit.*

<sup>68</sup>. *ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>69</sup>. Roger Ames, "A Response to Fingarette on Ideal Authority in the Analects", in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 8 (1981) pp. 51-58.

<sup>70</sup>. *ibid.* pp 51-52.

<sup>71</sup>. Ames makes several other important criticisms in his paper, but which I have not brought up as they are not directly relevant to my topic.

<sup>72</sup>. See Hall and Ames, Thinking Through Confucius, *op.cit.*, pp. 226-237.

The different kinds of *tao* applicable to different people include:

- exemplary beings (Analects 14:28, 19:12, 11:20)

- Kings Wen and Wu (Analects 19:22)

- the masses (Analects 8:9)

- family members (Analects 1:14, 6:12, 1:11, 4:20)

- Confucius himself (Analects 4:15, 6:12)

<sup>73</sup>. *ibid.*, pp. 232-237.

<sup>74</sup>. *ibid.*, pp. 232-233; referring to Arthur Waley's, The Analects of Confucius, Random House, New York, 1938 and D.C. Lau's Confucius: The Analects *op.cit.*

- <sup>75</sup>. *ibid.*, citing three of Fingarette's works. These are Confucius: The Secular as Sacred, *op.cit.*; "The Problem of the Self in the *Analects*", Philosophy East and West, *op.cit.*; and "The Music of Humanity in the *Conversations of Confucius*", *op.cit.*
- <sup>76</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 235.
- <sup>77</sup>. Sandra Wawrytko, "Confucius and Kant: The Ethics of Respect", in Philosophy East and West, Vol. 32, no. 3 (July 1982), pp. 237 - 257.
- <sup>78</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 254.
- <sup>79</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 252.
- <sup>80</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 251.
- <sup>81</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 243.
- <sup>82</sup>. *ibid.*
- <sup>83</sup>. Helmuth von Glasenapp, Kant und die Religionen des Osten. Beihefte zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität, Königsberg/Pr. (Kitzingen-Main: Holzner verlag, 1954), pp. 105-106, translated by Julia Ching and quoted in "Chinese Ethics and Kant", Philosophy East and West, Vol. 28, no.2, April 1978. Ching's article focuses on the grossly differing structures and dynamics of the two systems.
- <sup>84</sup>. S. Wawrytko, "Confucius and Kant: The Ethics of Respect", *op.cit.*, p. 249.
- <sup>85</sup>. Kant was suspicious of inclination in that personal desires or attachment might distract the agent from rational and universalisable action. In addition, as Wawrytko points out, Kant felt that "... [one] cannot require that we have this disposition [love] ... [t]o command the emotion of love as a moral duty is contradictory ..." (*ibid*)
- <sup>86</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 251.
- <sup>87</sup>. In Philosophy East and West, 21, 1971, pp. 189-194.
- <sup>88</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 194.
- <sup>89</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 190.
- <sup>90</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 192.

- <sup>91</sup>. D.C. Lau's translation, in Confucius: The Analects, *op.cit.*
- <sup>92</sup>. Legge, The Four Books, *op.cit.*
- <sup>93</sup>. The obvious implication of this passage is the dichotomy between *jen* and wickedness or evil.
- <sup>94</sup>. Adapted from D.C.Lau's interpretation, in Confucius: The Analects, *op.cit.*
- <sup>95</sup>. What is out of place with these two views is Confucius' assumption that people—even the small man—are naturally attracted to moral goodness: "In administering your government, what need is there for you to kill? Just desire the good yourself and the common people will be good. The virtue of the gentleman is like wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend" (Analects 12:19; D.C. Lau's translation, in Confucius: The Analects; *op.cit.*).
- <sup>96</sup>. It is unfortunate that there is no comparable notion of excellence for women. See the discussion of this in Chapter 5.
- <sup>97</sup>. Legge's translation (The Four Books, *op.cit.*); adapted.
- <sup>98</sup>. In Tu Wei-ming, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, *op.cit.*
- <sup>99</sup>. Herbert Fingarette, Confucius: the Secular as Sacred, *op.cit.*, p. 76.
- <sup>100</sup>. Hall and Ames, Thinking Through Confucius, *op.cit.*, pp. 226-237. According to them, *tao* is best understood as multi-dimensional but, in its multi-dimensionality is yet continuous. At one of its simplest levels, *tao* could be understood as "...roadmaking," and, by extension, to connote a road that has already been laid and hence can be travelled" (p. 227).
- <sup>101</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 229.
- <sup>102</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 227.
- <sup>103</sup>. Tu Wei-ming, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, *op.cit.*, p. 58.
- <sup>104</sup>. Tu Wei-ming, in "Pain and Suffering in Confucian Self-Cultivation", *op.cit.*, p. 17.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PAULINE CHRISTIANITY: HUMAN NATURE AND MORALITY

Paul the apostle understood his primary task to be apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 1:5ff; 11:13). He felt that his mission was to preach to the Gentiles regarding the facts and significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> The epistles were Paul's attempts to maintain contact with the converts to his religion. In them, Paul encourages and advises the converts to live lives that reflect both the death and resurrection of Christ. It was to be a different way of life; the believer was a 'new creation' (II Corinthians 5:17) and thus had to live according a different set of norms and codes from his or her previous one.

This new life, however, was not a permanent condition. Rather, the converts, including Paul himself—indeed, the whole of creation—were waiting for a teleological end in the context of which humans were but a part of God's greater cosmological plans (Romans 8:22,23). This event, Paul claimed, was the *parousia* (παρουσία), the 'day of the Lord' (I Thessalonians 4:15f; I Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6f) which would be signified by a variety of incidents manifesting the victorious power of Paul's God.

In the meantime, however, the focus of the epistles was on life in that 'in-between' period. Paul wrote to the converts, as and when the need arose, regarding their behaviour and conduct.<sup>2</sup> The justifications for his various exhortations and advice were based primarily on the two theological aspects of human life discussed above. The first was the changed status of the believer brought about by the Christ event; the lives of the believers, Paul claimed, were to reflect that change. The second was the hope associated with the eschatological end; the conduct of lives was, similarly, to reflect such

hope. There were, indeed, some practical problems regarding this latter situation: Paul had to reprimand a group of enthusiastic believers who, in that eschatological context, had decided upon the futility of work. The epistle of 2 Thessalonians was written to encourage this group to recognise that even in view of the coming age (αἰών), one had to live responsibly, i.e. to continue in their vocations.

The aim of this chapter is to reconstruct the Pauline conception of the human being by bringing together various lines of thought in the epistles. The epistles to the various churches reveal Paul's thinking about human nature, the human condition and human agency in the light of the work of Jesus Christ.

The first section sets up the framework from which to understand the Pauline conception of humanity. It examines the anthropological terms which Paul uses. These include καρδιά (heart), νοῦς (attitude/perspective), εσω/εξω ανθρωπον (the 'inner/outer man') and σωμα (body). This exercise is crucial in investigating Paul's conception of human being and human life because these concepts play a significant role in his moral reasoning. Accordingly, rather than investigating his derivation of the concepts, this section focuses on how each concept functions within a variety of situational contexts. The concern here is not merely Paul's methodology in his moral reasoning but, more significantly, the meanings of the anthropological concepts which, in spite of a degree of indeterminacy, together constitute Paul's notion of the human person. One of the themes emphasised in this section is the idea that Paul upholds a holistic conception of the human person and believes—in the epistles this idea is generally simply assumed—that there is an internalistic connection between one's attitude and one's

behaviours. This internalistic connection is grounded in a cognitivist understanding of the conversion experience.<sup>3</sup> What Paul attempts is to convince the believers that an *ontological* change in their being—brought about by the Christ event—entails a corresponding change in their lives and behaviours. The cognitivist point of view is described by Bultmann, a New Testament scholar, as the 'indicative-imperative' construction.<sup>4</sup>

Paul discovers, however, that an internalist view of moral motivation is problematic in the light of empirical evidence. He describes the conflict he himself faces when he does what he knows is sinful (and hates); at one point he seems to attribute the source of this tension to anthropological dualism, positing an 'inner' man (who desires the good) and an 'outer' man (who does what is sinful). However, instead of rejecting either the internalist or the cognitivist views, Paul upholds those and maintains that the source of evil or sin lies beyond himself, in the external world. One implication of this stance is that a dualistic conception of human nature is dismissed.

The tension, as suggested in the epistles, arises from a more potent and complex conflict between competing realms of power. When Paul names *σαρξ* (commonly translated 'flesh') as the source of sin, as opposed to spiritual existence (*πνευμα*) founded upon the life of Christ, he could be interpreted to be alluding to a dualistic conception of human nature. However, it is argued, in the second section, that although *σαρξ* and *πνευμα* are, seemingly, anthropological terms, Paul does not use them to describe a dualistic conception of the human person. Rather, he uses them in a metaphorical manner to represent two different modes of life, upholding a way of life which is 'according to the spirit' (*κατα πνευμα*).

The other dualism dealt with in this third section is that between the Adamic and Christ-like ways of life. Similar to the *σαρξ*–*πνευμα* distinction,

Paul uses the Christ-Adam contrast to outline different modes of life for the believer in the in-between period. A major difference between these two sets of dualisms, however, is their respective temporal settings within Paul's eschatology. While the Adam-Christ contrast derives from Paul's rejection of the predominance of Jewish values (and thus represents modes of life *before* and *after* the work of Christ), the  $\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ - $\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  metaphor represents life, for the believers, in its *present* and *future* conditions. To describe the respective time frames in terms of past, present and future is, however, simplistic. This is because, according to Paul, the effects of the future age are already manifest, though not fully, in and through the believing communities.

This in-between time was a difficult one both for Paul and for the believers because while, on the one hand, the believer's mode of existence—indeed, his *being*—had either undergone or was to undergo change and redefinition, on the other hand, the believer understood the life conditions of this period to be provisional. The third section of the chapter deals with this tension.

While frequently emphasising to the believers that a change had already been effected in their lives, Paul nonetheless maintained that they had to wait for the  $\pi\alpha\rho\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$  (the coming age) in order to experience in full the benefits of Christian life. He upheld a relatively egalitarian picture of conditions in the future  $\alpha\omega\nu$  which would see the obliteration of certain social (master-slave), cultural (Jew-Greek) and gender (male-female) distinctions and prejudices (Galatians 3:28). However, these utopic conditions were yet manifest and the believers had to wait for that period. Instead of encouraging an active role on the part of the believers to strive toward those conditions, Paul advised them to "... remain in the condition in which you were called" (I Corinthians 7:20, 24).

From Paul's ideas about the conditions of life, the possible ways in which to conduct one's life and the human predicament in the in-between period, we can piece together, at least to some extent, his conception of the human being, human agency and the moral life. First, however, the certain basic concepts regarding human nature will have to be examined.

### **3.1 Paul's Anthropological Terms**

An important aspect of Paul's usage of anthropological terms, as will be shown in the following sections, is that he never attempts to define the terms and, in addition, sustains a fluidity in meaning in relation to each of them. These concepts serve different functions within different arguments; the majority of them, though, appear in contexts in which Paul tries to encourage (or to discourage), and to justify to the converts certain courses of action or appropriate (or inappropriate) kinds of behaviour.

Regarding his usage of the terms *καρδια* (heart), *νους* (attitude or perspective), *εσω/εξω ανθρωπον* ('inner/outer' man) and *σωμα* (body), it is interesting that rarely does he posit a dualistic tension between any of these aspects or capacities of the human being (given that then, there were prominent dualistic conceptions of human nature upheld by the gnostics and the pneumatics, for instance). Nor does he suggest that any one of them is predisposed toward good or evil (although at least two of them, *καρδια* and *νους*, are associated with intentional aspects of human beings). For example, Paul affirmed the *possible* holiness of the bodily aspect of the human person (I Corinthians 6:12-20; 9:27; Romans 12:1,2) and also its *possible* corruption (Romans 1:24). Furthermore, although Paul discusses the Old Testament conception of original sin in I Corinthians 7, he does not suggest that human

nature is evil or sinful, nor does he subscribe to Greek notions of denying the empirical body or of repressing physical or material desires in quest for the (morally) good life. The first of the Pauline concepts to be examined is καρδια.

### 3.1.1 Heart: Καρδια

Καρδια plays a central and primary role in Paul's conception of the human being. The heart, according to Paul, is not only the centre of emotion, affection, volition and decision making, it is the fundamental active initiator of all purposeful (τας βουλας) action and behaviour. Καρδια is, indeed, such an important part of the human person that it is that which God judges or tests (I Corinthians 4:5; I Thessalonians 2:4).

In its more specific manifestations, this central source of individual agency is the decision-making capacity, capable of firm resolution and determination (I Corinthians 7:37), and of cognitive comprehension (II Corinthians 9:7)<sup>5</sup>. It is also, importantly, the seat of affection and emotion: καρδια is the source of one's emotional attachment which persists in spite of physical separation (I Corinthians 5:3; II Corinthians 6:11; 7:3; 8:1-6; Philippians 1:7).<sup>6</sup>

The heart as the subjective, internal aspect of the person is also emphasised when καρδια is contrasted with face (προσωπον) in reference to physical separation (I Thessalonians 2:17): Paul yearns to see his Thessalonica converts 'face-to-face'. The contrast between heart and face is more emphatic and substantial in II Corinthians 5:12 whereby Paul upholds the priority of intention (expressed in terms of καρδια) over behaviour (expressed in terms of προσωπον). In this passage which is concerned with the issue of circumcision, Paul writes to the converted Gentiles—as well as to

the dissatisfied Jews—that the circumcised heart is preferable to physical circumcision and is, indeed, the necessary and sufficient condition of being a believer.

Because Paul uses καρδία in different contexts to designate all the above-mentioned capacities, it could be said that the heart signifies, for Paul, the aggregation of those capacities which make up the intentional self. This becomes clearer in the light of various passages which more succinctly depict καρδία as having a specific orientation which is fundamental in the determination of the behaviours and actions of the individual.

The orientation of καρδία could be towards Christ's spirit and love and this, obviously, affects the believer in a positive way (Galatians 4:6; II Corinthians 1:22; 3:2-3). One of the consequences of such a change is ἀγαπή (love) (Romans 5:5) while another is obedience (to the teachings of Paul's church) (Romans 6:17) and yet another is πίστις (faith) (Romans 10:9-10), all of which are to be manifest in the believing communities and which help the believers through the difficulties of the in-between time.

It is also possible, on the other hand, for a person to be negatively oriented: criticising those who refuse to change their ways, Paul condemns their hearts as centres of perverse thoughts, (Romans 1:18ff) characterising their hearts as being hard and impenitent (Romans 2:5).

Three conclusions may be drawn from the preceding discussion. First, it is significant that the capacities for emotion and affection *as well as* those for decision-making and volition are functions of the one καρδία. However, Paul's understanding of the relation between some of these capacities, for instance, whether decision-making processes are affected by emotion, is not clear. What is more definite, however—and this is the second point—is that

Paul attributes to each individual control of the orientation of their own καρδία. Examples of Paul's encouragement and chastisement of the converts are premised upon this assumption.

The third and related point is that, in his praise and blame, Paul assumes an internalist connection between the orientation of καρδία and the behaviour and conduct of the person. For example, he does not merely criticise the unacceptable behaviour of the ungodly but focuses on the morally inept orientation of their hearts (Romans 1:18ff; 2:5). On the other hand, appropriate conduct is encouraged not on its own terms nor by the upholding of a certain value or values but rather through exhortations to modify the orientation of one's καρδία (Galatians 4:6; II Corinthians 1:22; 3:2-3; Romans 5:5; 6:17; 10:9-10). For Paul, therefore, action and behaviour are manifestations and functions of one's beliefs and intentions. Given this emphasis on the first-person perspective, there are constant admonitions from Paul to the converts to make appropriate changes to their attitudes and perspectives as a necessary condition of their new lives. The changes in attitude are discussed in the next section particularly in connection with Paul's usage of vous.

### **3.1.2 Perspective: Nous**

Paul's conception of vous does not in general concur with Greek philosophical notions of the rational mind or of the human capacity for rationality. Instead, it is most commonly used in the epistles to refer to the attitude of the believer which, in Paul's view, plays an important role in motivation.<sup>7</sup> For example, vous is functional in Paul's encouragement to his converts to 'renew' their vous or to 'have' the vous of Christ; there is the presupposition that this renewal is itself sufficient in motivating, and hence in

producing, behaviours appropriate to belief in Christ. According to Paul, there are different ways in which life has changed since the Christ event. To experience these changes, one needs to make changes in *vous* in a range of ways:

(a) personal life: each person is to offer him or herself to God, and part of that spiritual worship (την λογικην λατρειαν) involves renewing (ανακαινωσει) their *vous* (Romans 12:2); their renewed attitudes and perspectives allow them insight into God's will.

(b) communal lives: the believers are to be united in the same *vous*; having the same attitude is, Paul maintains, the remedy to schisms in the Corinthian church community (I Corinthians 1:10).

(c) the in-between period: it is with this usage that *vous* as 'attitude' is particularly clear. In the letter to the enthusiastic Christians at Thessalonica, Paul's recommendation is that they have an attitude of calm rather than zealotry and its manifestations, regarding the advent of the day of the Lord (II Thessalonians 2:2).

(d) the *vous* of Christ: in I Corinthians 2:16, Paul deals with the Judaistic view of God's omnipotence, supremacy and inscrutability (Isaiah 40:13). In this context, *vous* is used to contrast the inferiority and inadequacy of human wisdom and understanding with that of God's. Paul concludes optimistically, however, asserting that though the believers cannot have the *vous* of the Lord, they (can) have the *vous* of Christ.<sup>8</sup> It needs to be noted that *vous* is narrowly and inappropriately, although frequently, translated 'mind' in both occurrences (mind of the Lord and mind of Christ). This is because, in the larger context of his preceding discussion, Paul attempts to point out that it is only through having the perspective of Christ that the

human being can begin to understand spiritual things (πνευματικά). The usage of *vous* in this passage is similar to that in Romans 12:2 whereby to renew one's *vous* is to *adopt a different perspective*—specifically, that of Christ's—such that one is able to comprehend spiritual things.

As with his usage of καρδιά, Paul's use of *vous* reveals his internalist assumptions regarding belief and action. What he assumes is that insofar as one believes in Christ and in the Christ event, one's attitudinal perspective will change: one will adopt the Christian perspective. Adopting a new perspective results, in turn, in changes in the way one acts and behaves. Such assumptions are exemplified in Paul's criticisms of the ungodly: just as their hearts are the source of sexual immorality (Romans 1:24), so also are their debased *vous* to be blamed (Romans 1:28).

Supplementing Paul's focus on perspectivity as an important element in moral motivation is the connected, but different, emphasis he places on personal responsibility. Thus, implicit in Paul's exhortation to renew one's *vous* is the assumption that it is not beyond one's control to do so. The idea that one can *choose*, and hence *determine*, one's entire perspective is consistent with Paul's view that the orientation of one's heart is within one's control. The conception of the human being as having full control over his/her own orientation, perspective and actions is, however, brought into question when Paul discusses the tension between the 'inner' and 'outer' man.

### **3.1.3 The Inner Man: Εσω Ανθρωπον**

The notorious section (7:14-25) in the Romans letter has sparked much theological as well as philosophical debate with regard to issues including

motivation, responsibility, *akrasia* (weakness of will), personal identity and the concept of human personhood. Such issues are raised with particular acuteness by the statement at v. 20:

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

This statement seems to suggest either a dualistic conception of the human person or a disclaimer of responsibility for one's own action, or both.

Karl Barth, an important commentator on Pauline thought, held that the above statement reveals Paul's belief that he was constituted by his two selves residing in the one body.<sup>9</sup> This dualistic conception of the human person, which Barth attributed to Paul, bothered Barth himself to the extent that he saw the need to reaffirm the one person-one self theory by way of response to Paul's view as he saw it:

Reality, even the reality of religion, knows but one man ... within the four walls of the house of sin dwells but one man.<sup>10</sup>

It needs to be examined, though, whether Barth is correct in his understanding of Paul's statement as implying a dualistic conception of the human person. Barth's interpretation of the passage is questionable in the light of Paul's claim (v. 7b) that it is *sin* (dwelling in him) which is to blame. Paul does not assert that there are two selves in him, one which does not want to sin and the other which actually sins. Nor does he claim the weaker dualistic thesis that there are two or more parts which comprise the self, one of which deplores certain acts while the other carries them out. Indeed, it seems as if he is trying to absolve *himself* from responsibility when he associates his sinful actions with sin itself.

It would be problematic, however, if this latter thesis were the only alternative reading of Paul's dilemma, because it is not without difficulties. It is a fundamental theological and moral difficulty if Paul is understood to be disclaiming responsibility for his own actions. C.H. Dodd deals, in particular, with this concern. In his defence of Paul, Dodd claims that Paul is not attempting to 'shuffle out of responsibility' but is instead pointing out the difficulty he encounters, being under the 'thralldom of sin'.<sup>11</sup> Dodd continues to argue that what is actually happening when Paul does what he hates is that, while a part of him is under the thralldom of sin, another part—the εσω ανθρωπον—resists.

In his reading of the passage, Dodd attributes to Paul the view that the human person is comprised of at least two parts. Dodd's view is open to question because Paul does not seem to be suggesting that the tension arises because there are different parts of him at work. Instead, he claims that it is he *himself* rather than *another part* of him which both initiates and abhors sin and sinful acts: *I can will what is right, but I cannot do it* (v. 18); *I delight in the law of God* (v. 22) ... *but I see in my members another law* (v. 23). It seems that what Paul is doing is merely referring to various aspects of his existence as a human being—for he identifies himself (εγω) with each of these aspects—rather than ascribing to himself a dual nature.

Furthermore, it does not seem that Paul is trying to disclaim responsibility for his sinful actions. Indeed, the tension he encounters in facing up to sinful acts which he thinks *he himself* committed is expressed in the phrase "Wretched man that I am!" (v. 24) Clearly, in this agonising introspective exercise, Paul is claiming ownership of what he considers are sinful acts.

Given that Dodd's view is rejected, the problem still remains, of how we are to understand the comment, "... it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me". If the claim is that Paul is not attempting to shuffle away responsibility, then it could be the case that he is simply dealing with an instance of *akrasia*: I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I do (v. 19). Gareth Matthews, who argues against Dodd's interpretation, rejects, as well, the thesis that Paul is trying to deal with *akrasia*. Instead, Matthews contends, the issue here is that of motivational opacity:

The wicked actions are motivated by impulses and desires that St. Paul cannot, for whatever reason, recognize as his own. Since the motivation is opaque to him, the action it motivates is not, according to a familiar philosophical picture, really his own action.<sup>12</sup>

Matthews substantiates his reading of Pauline thought by referring to Locke's memory criterion of personal identity. According to this criterion, Matthews claims, if a person cannot remember having performed a certain action then it is not s/he who committed it. Thus, Matthews ascribes to Pauline thought a Lockean thesis of personal identity.

Matthews acknowledges that his understanding of Pauline thought is problematic because it might allow for a self-righteous hypocrisy which represses the memory of the commission of a particular act while claiming that the righteous self is distinct and separate. In fact, Matthews seems to be accusing Paul of this 'second order' hypocrisy while at the same time saying that such a view is unjustifiable:

... St. Paul is right to point out that sometimes one cannot recognize as one's own the motivation for what one does. The question is whether such motivational opacity, perhaps coupled with a conscious

condemnation of the sinful deed, justifies one's saying, "It is no longer I that do it."<sup>13</sup>

According to Matthews, too, Paul in his deliberation, is "... pretending that [his] righteous self is distinct and separate, when such distinctness as it has rests on repression."<sup>14</sup> Matthews' account is, however, problematic in a few ways. First, it assumes that Paul subscribes to a Lockean conception of personal identity: to 'the philosophical picture of the self as a self-transparent agent'.<sup>15</sup> Paul does not, however, allude to this thesis elsewhere in the other epistles nor in the Romans epistle itself.

Secondly, Matthews' understanding of Locke's theory is simplistic; he claims that Locke's conception of personal identity encompasses the picturing of oneself as a self-transparent agent and, by extension, that "... one has performed only those actions whose motivation one can recognize as having been one's own".<sup>16</sup> It needs to be noted, though, that Paul is at one level *conscious* that the action is *his* even though it is motivationally opaque: there is guilt involved and this is one of the reasons why Paul is wrestling with 'himself'. As with the case of memory, if guilt is understood to be constitutive of one's self awareness—which, in Lockean terms, constitutes personal identity—then Matthews' thesis which aims to combine Pauline and Lockean views fails on its own terms because it could be argued that Paul *does* remember and *does* recognise those particular actions as his own. According to Matthews' analysis, it is unclear why either Locke or Paul should be understood as subscribing to the view that motivational clarity is constitutive of personal identity.

The third and related objection to Matthews' thesis is that, contrary to what Matthews claims, Paul is grappling with the issue of volition and not of memory. Even if he is correct regarding the alleged motivational opacity of

Paul's sinful actions, Matthews inappropriately applies Locke's *memory* criterion of personal identity as an explanation of Paul's struggles.

Finally, Matthews' explanation does not accommodate the larger context within which Paul's problem is situated. It is important that the difficulties Paul is facing with regard to volition and action are understood as part of his views on the requirements of the Jewish law and their relevance to the moral life of the believer. In his discussion of this larger issue, Paul attempts to nullify the requirements of the Torah. Even in this endeavour, there is indecisiveness, perhaps reflecting Paul's view on the predicament of life during the in-between time. While he says that the believer is already 'discharged from the law' (Romans 7:6), at points, there is a marked ambivalence regarding this: "the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime" (7:1). Again, while Paul claims to be living 'in the new life of the Spirit' (7:6)—the antithesis to life according to σαρκί—he later states that 'nothing good dwells within me, that is, in σαρκί' (7:18).

In his study of Paul's anthropological terms (especially, in this case, of εσω ανθρωπον), Robert Jewett makes the point that the concept itself, as well as Paul's struggle, needs to be understood in the larger context of Paul's discussion of the Jewish law and sin.<sup>17</sup> According to Jewett, Paul is, in this section, highlighting the possibility of how a law-abiding Jew could come into conflict with God's righteousness. Jewett interprets Paul's struggle as a sign of the frustration of a person's aim to gain life through the law.

Jewett's thesis finds support in Paul's comment that obedience to law no longer works in this new αἰών begun by the work of Christ; indeed, from the law arises *both* the concept and the possibility of transgression (against that

law) or sin (7:8-10). According to Jewett's account, therefore, Paul's problem is not a problem of the dualistic self but one which arises because of the circumstances of existence *within this age* (αἰών) *and time*.

In line with Jewett's proposal, an important idea that needs to be examined is the connection between sin and σαρκίς. Paul claims not only that sin dwells within him (7:20), but specifically that the *law of sin* dwells in his members (μέλος) (7:23) and in σαρκίς (7:25). That the law of sin is operative in σαρκίς is an idea that has not been explored fully in connection with this paragraph in the Romans letter. In this context, σαρκίς has commonly and mistakenly been aligned both with the self in 7:20 and with μέλος in 7:23; the three together being understood to refer to bodily existence as contrasted with the life of the inner man. What, furthermore, gives rise to this interpretation of σαρκίς is its apparent symmetrical usage in discussing the connection between the law of God and νόμος. While the law of God is operative in νόμος, Paul writes, the law of sin is operative in σαρκίς (7:25). In this statement, Paul has often been interpreted to mean that the connection between the law of God and νόμος is symmetrical to that between the law of sin and σαρκίς.

It needs to be noted, however, that the connection between the two is not symmetrical because, in the first place, νόμος and σαρκίς are not parallel concepts. Some accounts of the sin-σαρκίς relation, including those of Dodd's and Matthews' discussed above, misconstrue Paul's problem in the sense that they conceptualise σαρκίς as, in line with νόμος, referring to a certain portion or aspect of the human person. Dodd's account, for example, does not properly understand Paul's conception of σαρκίς and thus interprets Paul's problem as being based on a dualistic conception of human nature. Matthews' thesis does not attempt to investigate or explain σαρκίς and

bypasses that important concept to account for Paul's problem in terms of motivational opacity. The point made here is that both Matthew's and Dodd's accounts fail to capture the crux of Paul's problem in Romans 7 because while Dodd misconstrues σαρκῆς, Matthews does not even attempt to deal with it.

Σαρκῆς can only be properly understood within the context of its most frequent usage: as antithesis to πνεύμα. While both σαρκῆς and πνεύμα *could* be understood as constituents of human nature, the more adequate framework within which to conceptualise them is Paul's eschatological characterisation of the concepts as domains of power which impact on human life and existence.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, σαρκῆς and πνεύμα are not merely antithetical, there is an antinomy between them: they are conflicting normative systems.

Thus, within this particular discussion, σαρκῆς is a dominating force in an age, or framework, in which the law of sin is the primary operating principle. This means that Christian existence in the present αἰών is riddled with the dominance of the law of sin. Accordingly, Paul moves on to conclude that he is, at least, not fully responsible for his sinful actions. This does not mean that existence is itself sinful, nor that one is deterministically bound to sin. Rather, Paul expresses the difficulties of living in a time period in which the forces of evil reign supreme. This idea has to be understood in the context of its contrast to πνεύμα, in which the spirit of God reigns supreme. The antithesis between σαρκῆς and πνεύμα, therefore, is not between immoral or sinful *flesh* and obedient *vous* but, rather, between the sin-ridden *realm of flesh* and the preferred and imminent *realm of spirit*.

In addition, it needs to be noted that Paul is not necessarily proposing a universal thesis about human agency. He could be understood, instead, to be simply articulating a type of psychological experience that moral agents experience from time to time: I couldn't help myself; I don't understand my actions; wretched man that I am. This does not mean, however, that Paul is expressing symptoms of *akrasia* and that it follows that the interpretation of Paul as having internalist views is nullified. Instead, Paul's difficulty arises *because of his internalist assumptions*. His very predicament itself, especially his statement that he cannot understand his own actions, reveals his frustration with the fact that there *should* be an internalist connection between a person's perspective and his/her behaviour but there seemingly is *not* when s/he *still* commits sinful acts.

Paul's internalist views figure most prominently in what Bultmann terms the indicative-imperative connection. According to Bultmann, Paul attempts to persuade the believers that, given that their perspectives on life have changed since their conversion, what should follow is an accompanying change in their behaviours and ways of living. In emphasising this 'be what you are' dictum, Paul is not merely assuming that the imperative is based upon or proceeds out of the indicative. Rather, the imperative is fully integral to the indicative.<sup>19</sup> In other words, what Bultmann seems to be pointing out is that Paul, in reasoning with the believers, uses the following naturalistic argument: given that their ontological status is changed because of Christ's work, then there should be an accompanying moral change in their behaviours.

According to Bultmann, this accompanying moral change is not merely another event connected with the ontological change. The two

transformations are, rather, two aspects of the same event. The believer is a 'new creation' (II Corinthians 5:17) and the perceptible changes brought about by that new creation are manifest in the believer's behaviours (Romans 3:24; 12:2; 12:9-15:6; I Corinthians 4:1-13; II Corinthians 4:1-16; Galatians 4:8-9; 4:31-5:1). Paul's reasoning strategy often involves reminding the believers of Christ's work and then drawing the conclusion that their lives and behaviours should reveal this event. Thus, it seems that Paul's indicative-imperative is a cognitivist theory. What he is asserting is that the appropriate *response on the part of the believer, on his/her recognition of the Christ-event, is to become like Christ.*

A cognitivist understanding of the indicative-imperative construction is upheld by Morna Hooker who, in discussing the Romans epistle, remarks that Paul's concepts of divine grace and human response are so intimately intertwined that the latter is a consequent imperative of the former.<sup>20</sup> Hooker writes:

Paul's logic holds divine grace and human response firmly together: without the mercies of God, men are not able to respond to God in true worship; when they experience them, then response to the demand to acknowledge God and to give him glory becomes both imperative and feasible.<sup>21</sup>

Hooker's reading captures the cognitivism which Paul presupposes.

However, as Hooker points out, although Paul assumes the indicative-imperative construction, he does not rely only on the idea of the interchange in order to urge a change of life. Rather, he backs up his indicative-imperative, all through the epistles, with encouragement, with warnings of future judgment, and even with demands for obedience. As much as Paul would like to maintain an internalist connection between attitudinal

perspective and behaviour, he finds, even in his own personal experience, that the implied connection is not as internalistic as he assumes it to be.

Paul's statements in Romans 7 could simply express his struggle to be moral or, more specifically, to be obedient to the will of God.<sup>22</sup> He alludes to instances in which moral or appropriate behaviour does *not* come easily to the agent, even to those who have adopted a new attitude and perspective. He is discussing a feature of the human predicament: he desires to be moral but at times is not; he feels almost as if he were powerless, almost as if there were another agent at work independent of himself and beyond his control, working through his body. He almost wants to say he is not responsible because he cannot reconcile his attitude—which he considers to be positively affected by the law of God—with his sinful actions. In these sinful acts, Paul's internalist assumptions come under scrutiny and are proven to be questionable. Paul, without disclaiming responsibility, names the source of the problem as a factor beyond his control: the fact of his existence within a particular realm of power.

In doing so, however, Paul does not then take the line that his *bodily* existence itself, or his bodily existence *within the present αἰών* is evil, sinful, worthless or to be repressed. On the contrary, he affirms the importance of living out the present life as it is in its bodily manifestation and, indeed, of doing that well; Paul proposes what would then have been an unusual idea: that the body should be presented, holy, as part of one's spiritual worship (Romans 12). Paul's belief in the moral neutrality of the body or of bodily existence, as contrasted with the then contemporary gnostic views as well as with the views held by some of the enthusiastic believers, is the topic of the next section.

### 3.1.4 Body: Σωμα

Paul's most frequent usage of the concept σωμα is in morally and theologically neutral reference to human bodily existence. For Paul, physical bodily existence is, in itself, without significance for the moral or theological life of the believer in the sense that the physical body, being inanimate and without intention, did not or could not, either positively or negatively, affect those aspects of the believer's life. While the term is used in phrases such as "Body of Christ" to designate the collection of believers and their corporate life, σωμα used on its own refers to the physical, this-worldly aspect of the human being.<sup>23</sup> In other words, it is used to establish otherness, not only from God, but also from other human beings, and, in addition, from other species.

Unlike other contemporary views of human nature in his time, Paul's concept of human nature was not a dualistic one in which the body, as opposed to the mind, the spirit or the soul, was depreciated. This belief of Paul's led to frequent debates with the libertinists and the gnostics, both of which upheld dualistic conceptions of human nature. The enthusiastic believers believed that, given that the spiritual dimension of human existence was most important and significant, and that since the body was mortal and the spirit immortal, it followed that the former was morally indifferent and incapable of affecting the pneumatic core of the person. This belief led to serious ethical and other practical difficulties as, for example, with some enthusiasts in Thessalonica who, in expectant hope of the day of the Lord, decided that it was unnecessary to work for a living (II Thessalonians).

The other group that Paul had to deal with in regard to the concept of σωμα were the gnostics. They not only emphasised the spiritual existence over the bodily, some of them believed that the body was evil or was

associated with sinful deeds. Such depreciation of bodily existence had several undesirable practical consequences for the early Christian communities. For example, some of these gnostic Christians engaged in sexual immorality on the grounds that the body was necessarily associated with such acts. Paul felt the need to deal with this situation and, in doing so, drew a disanalogy between food meant for the stomach and fornication that was *not* for the body (I Corinthians 6:12ff).

There was also, amongst these gnostic Christians, some suggestion of bodily mutilation in the quest for the spiritual life. In I Corinthians 9:27, Paul writes as if he himself was involved in such activity:

I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

This statement, however, is followed immediately by its rejection. Referring to the wanderings of the Jews in early Jewish history, Paul claims that although they participated in appropriate spiritual activities, most of the Jews were not accepted by god (I Corinthians 10:1-5). In spite of their fulfilment of the necessary requirements with regard to spiritual activities, these people were disqualified; this event, according to Paul, should serve as a warning to gnostic Christians regarding their warped conceptualisations of the physical body.

This pattern of reasoning—whereby Paul first states a view and subsequently rejects it—is utilised as well in the Romans epistle with regard to conceptions of  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ . Debating with the gnostics here as well, Paul refers to the body in association with death and sin: body of sin (6:6); body of death (7:24); dead body (8:10); mortal body (8:11). Following each of these conceptions, however, Paul offers a competing, often positive, alternative understanding. In the case of the body of sin, Paul makes the point that it is

the *sinful* body rather than the body itself which is to be subject to death. In addition, although the body is mortal, neither materiality nor embodiment are, in themselves or in combination, sufficient conditions for sin or death (8:10-11). Furthermore, Paul construes death positively, as a necessary stage in the believer's life: one dies with Christ so that one can be raised with him (6:5-11). Indeed, the redemption of the body does not entail *release from*  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$  but rather its *positive transformation* (8:23).

From the Pauline perspective, embodied existence was a necessary feature of life. For Paul, this belief led to the view that, although the body was intentionally inert, what one did to and with one's body was important and significant in that bodily activities were a reflection, as well as an expression, of one's attitudes and beliefs or, in other words, of the inner spiritual and moral aspects of the individual. For Paul, the expression of oneself *in and through one's embodiment* is not merely a revelation of the thinking and intentional self but is to be understood more integrally as an important aspect of one's worship of God (Romans 12:1,2; II Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:21).<sup>24</sup> Jewett expresses this idea succinctly:

"Body" here [in Philippians 3:21] is the necessary constitution which enables one to re-enact in the life of faith the destiny of Christ.<sup>25</sup>

In Romans 12, Paul presents what would then have been a new dimension of Christian ethics: the (holy) *body* is to be presented in response to God's divine righteousness; to "offer your bodies" is but one and the same process with "the worship offered by attitude and heart" (Romans 12:1; also II Corinthians 7:1). With regard to the aspect of moral behaviour, the body is to be kept unblemished and sanctified for God (I Thessalonians 5:23); being moral is expressed in terms of "glorify[ing] God in your body" (I Corinthians 6:12-20) and of making oneself acceptable to him (II Corinthians 5:6-10).

What emerges from this discussion of Paul's conception of *σωμα* is Paul's innovative construction of the concept which allows not only for the expression of the person through the body but, more significantly, for that expression to be seen as relevant to, and as an integral part of, one's spiritual worship. More generally, it can be seen that Paul maintains a holistic conception of the human person: attitude is connected internalistically to one's behaviour and actions; intention, belief, emotion and affection derive from the one source, *καρδια*. In addition, embodied existence is both necessary and integral to human existence. For Paul, thus, the human being is an intentional, responsible agent held accountable for his/her behaviours and acts as well as for the kinds of activities he/she engages in.

At a more fundamental level, Paul holds the agent responsible for his choice between two possible, contrasting modes of life. Because, for Paul, perspectivity is important in that it is the ground of all intention, motivation, affection and emotion which are, in turn, sources of human action and behaviour, he urges the believers to make a change in their perspectives by making a determinate choice to live a Christ-like life or, in other words, a choice for life in the spirit. Paul sets up a dualistic conflict, using two sets of metaphors, to express these modes of life. The first is the dualistic contrast between the lives of Adam and Christ, used respectively as exemplars of mortality and sin, on the one hand, and of immortality, righteousness and obedience on the other. The second dualism is the contrast between life in the spirit and life in the flesh, a dualism, it is argued, not of human nature but, instead, of human existence within these respective realms of power. These dualisms are dealt with in the following section.

### 3.2 Modes of Life

The contrasting ways of life which Paul sets up as options for the believers are based, in large part, on his eschatology and his theology. The believers have to make their choices because new possibilities for human existence have arisen as a consequence of Christ's work. Paul emphasises, in a variety of ways, that Christ's death and resurrection have effected an ontological change in the conditions and statuses of the believers in a variety of ways:

- (a) the old man has died (Romans 6:5-6);
- (b) the believer is a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17);
- (c) there is freedom from slavery to sin (Romans 6:15-23);
- (d) there is freedom from the requirements of the Jewish laws (Galatians 5:1-16);
- (e) believers are servants of Christ (I Corinthians 4); and
- (f) believers are sons of God (Galatians 4:4-5).

In recognition of their changed status, the appropriate way in which the believers are to respond is to manifest the set of actions and behaviours that are defined in the epistles as being Christ-like and as exhibiting, most prominently, the quality of love (*αγαπη*).

On the other hand, however, in spite of his/her newly-defined life, the believer, in his/her very existence in the current time and age, is confronted by opportunities and options offered and dominated by the powers which are operative in that realm of *σαρξ*. The convert to Paul's Christianity was not merely in between two times but actually *in* two times.<sup>26</sup> This meant, for Paul and his converts, that human existence during that time was fraught with tension: the tension of choice between contrasting and conflicting powers and loyalties. While Christ's work marked the beginning of a new *αιων*, the change had yet to come to its completion—its *τελος*. This was the difficult

time of the 'already but not yet'.<sup>27</sup> In this period, transformation had begun but was not complete, and its result was still outstanding (Romans 6:3-8)<sup>28</sup>.

The new had begun for the believers; yet, it was not realised because the forces of the old  $\alpha\lambda\omega\nu$  still ruled. While Christ had completed his work, the possibilities of conducting an Adamic life were still available. The two modes of life, as Paul presented them, were incompatible and inconsistent with each other. The dynamics of these two lifestyles are discussed in the following section.

### **3.2.1 Dualism: Christ and Adam**

In the dualistic contrast he sets up between Adam and Christ as exemplars of contrasting modes of life, Paul repudiates any possible suggestion that Adam, for the Jews the father-figure of all humanity, was an adequate example of Christian life.<sup>29</sup> In doing so, Paul was rejecting any Jewish claim to the religion and to special rights to interpret Christ's death and resurrection.

In setting out (in Romans 5:12-21) the respective characteristics of lives modelled upon the lives of Adam and Christ, Paul claims that because of Christ's work, the Adamic life and its values are no longer relevant and are, indeed, inferior to the values and characteristics of the Christ-like life. He reiterates the Jewish concept of the pervasiveness of original sin and names Adam as the representative of sinfulness and disobedience (Romans 5:12; 18; 19). In contrast, Christ's work is an act of grace, freeing all from death due to sin. Freedom from condemnation to death implies life: Paul refers to death and life as metaphors of the two possible modes of existence. Because to live 'in Christ' ('in newness of life': Romans 6:4) is to embody a particular set of values—a set drastically different from and incompatible with all

previously existing ones—the believer has first to 'die' to previous modes of life incompatible with those of the coming age (Romans 6:6-11). The difference in the two modes of life could be represented tabled thus:

<u>εν Αδωμ</u>	<u>εν Χριστω</u>
death	life
sin	righteous
judgment (realm of law)	free gift of grace
condemnation	justification
disobedience	obedience

In Paul's exhortation of the believers to choose to live a life inspired by Christ, he again uses an indicative-imperative construction: Christ's work has been done and grace abounds (Romans 5:20,21). It follows that the appropriate response of the believer, in practical terms, is to stop indulging in acts of sin (Romans 6:1-2): "How can we who died to sin go on living in it?"

Although Paul presents two modes of life to the believers, it is implied by the indicative-imperative construction that there is only one real option for their existence: life in Christ. Paul's point is a prescriptive one; he believes the converts *should* choose life in Christ although, existentially, there remains the possibility of living the Adamic life. The possibility of reverting to an Adamic life is implied in Paul's statement that:

... you also must *consider* yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, *do not let* sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. *No longer present* your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but *present* yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and *present* your members to God as instruments of righteousness.  
(Romans 6:11-13; italics mine)

Paul's encouragement to the converts places the responsibility of choice on the converts themselves. The idea of choice, in turn, implies the availability of options. There is ongoing debate, however, regarding the connection between the two options, and the nature of the choices available. Karl Barth, a major interpreter of Pauline theology, was of the view that although Adam and Christ are representative figures of human life, they do not, in Pauline thought, represent equally possible options.<sup>30</sup> According to him, the special anthropologies of Jesus Christ and of Adam are both representative of human nature but there is no symmetry between the two because the relationship of the believer to Adam is only secondary whereas that to Christ is primary and fundamental. Because essential and original human nature is embodied by the Christ figure, it follows that Adam's humanity is a *provisional copy* of the real humanity that is in Christ.

In explaining Paul's construction of the Adam-Christ dualism, Barth felt the need to ground moral superiority in essential priority: life in Christ is the preferred option because ontologically, or essentially, our identity is with Christ rather than with Adam. Barth considers the believer's relationship with Adam as a 'secondary truth' which "depends for its reality on [one's] relationship to Christ."<sup>31</sup> He bases this reasoning upon the statement that Adam is "a type of the one who was to come" (Romans 5:14)—although it is not clear what Paul means by 'type' (τύπος). Barth's interpretation of the Adam-Christ connection and of the believers' choice between the two rests on his interpretation of τύπος. For him, the notion of type—of *being* a type— involves standing in a particular relation to that of which one is a type. Specifically, the type is not merely ontologically derivative of (and existentially dependent upon) that of which it is a type, it is also evaluatively inferior to the original.

It seems that Barth is imposing on Pauline thought a conception of human nature built upon too tight a connection between human nature and Christ-like nature. A problematic implication of Barth's reading is that with his assertion that the believer's relationship with Christ is 'original' and 'essential', he appears to be excluding the possibility of the convert choosing to revert to an Adamic way of life. There is, on his account, the idea that the believer chooses not between two equally opposing systems embodying contrasting values but rather between what is primary and secondary; and it seems that the believer has no choice but to choose that which is primary. Thus, as Barth states:

We have come *to* Christ as believers and Christians, because we had already come *from* Christ, so that there was nothing else for us to do but believe in Him.<sup>32</sup>

Although Barth's statement takes the form of a logical conclusion, it states what is merely and trivially true: choice for the primary (Christ-like life), as opposed to choice for the secondary (Adamic life), is a foregone conclusion. In seeking to understand this dualism, Barth has confused and conflated the evaluative and the ontological: in effect, he has assumed ontological priority from evaluative superiority. For Barth, the preferred option is also, at the same time, the only possibility.

Because he conflates the two issues, Barth's account presents a particularly deterministic interpretation of Pauline theology and ethics. The idea that there is 'nothing else for [the believer] to do' is problematic in that it does not account for tensions in human motivation and action as expressed, for example, by Paul in passages such as Romans 7.

Another difficulty with Barth's account is that he fails to place the Adam-Christ connection within Paul's eschatology. Indeed, he evades the

whole issue of the believer in this in-between time when the believer seems to be living in two times. The only sense of time his reading encompasses is in the idea that the Adamic life is now past and believers should live a life in Christ. This understanding of the temporal sequence, while not incorrect, is inadequate and thus reduces Pauline theology. The Adamic and Christ-like lives are not to be simplistically construed in terms of one being obsolete and the other current. Rather, *both* modes of life are available while the believers await the full realisation of an  $\alpha\omega\nu$  in which the law of sin no longer operates. Kasemann, another prominent scholar of Pauline thought, captures the difficult predicament of the believer in Paul's time:

Apparently, Paul viewed his own time as the hour of the Messiah's birth-pangs in which the new creation emerges from the old world. Spirits, powers and dominions part eschatologically at the crossroads of the gospel. We thus arrive at the dialectic of 'once' and 'now', which is absorbed into anthropology in the form of 'already saved' and 'still tempted'.<sup>33</sup>

The same predicament in human existence is expressed in the dualistic tension between  $\sigma\alpha\rho\xi$  and  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ , a tension which, it seems, Barth's account cannot accommodate. While the representative figures of Adam and Christ are used metaphorically to signify modes of *human* existence, the  $\sigma\alpha\rho\xi$ - $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  dichotomy applies more widely to encompass tension in human existence as well as the conflict of forces in which all of creation is trapped.

### 3.2.2 Flesh and Spirit: $\Sigma\alpha\rho\xi$ and $\Pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$

That  $\sigma\alpha\rho\xi$  and  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  refer, in Pauline thought, to competing spheres of power is an idea almost unchallenged.<sup>34</sup> Apart from various points in the

epistles in which *σαρξ* is used in place of *σωμα*<sup>35</sup>, *σαρξ* and *πνευμα* are most frequently presented as forces in opposition operative at a cosmic, extra-personal level; trapped in this opposition is the whole of creation, including humankind (Romans 8:19-23).<sup>36</sup>

The *σαρξ-πνευμα* tension, like the Christ-Adam dualism, is necessarily situated in Pauline eschatology: the realm of *πνευμα*, a phenomenon of the future, has begun since Christ's death and resurrection. Given, however, that the dominion of *πνευμα* is not yet fully realised, what it co-exists with (and is in tension with) is the power of *σαρξ*. The difficulty, from the point of view of human existence, is that of conflicting loyalties to these domains of power. From a socio-ethical point of view, life according to *πνευμα* yields behavioural characteristics such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, while life according to *σαρξ* manifests itself in deeds including fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness and carousing (Galatians 5:16-26).

From an existential point of view, what had to be determined were the implications for human agency of being caught in between the conflict of two competing powers operating at the cosmic level. This is important because, in the two significant sections dealing with the *σαρξ-πνευμα* tension (Romans 6-8; Galatians 3-5), Paul relates law and sin with the realm of *σαρξ* and, in contrast, justification and (certain senses of) freedom with the realm of *πνευμα*. Paul's conception of sin—with its important implications for human agency—needs to be examined within the frameworks of the *σαρξ-πνευμα* conflict.

In each of his letters to the Galatian and the Roman churches, Paul questions the believers' adherence to the Mosaic law, specifically with respect to its requirement for male circumcision. Paul not only challenges attempts to fulfil the requirements of the law (Romans 7:5-7; 8:3; Galatians 5:2); even more forcefully, he emphasizes that doing so has negative outcomes in that it leads to condemnation (Romans 7:9-13; Galatians 3:10; 5:4). This issue had arisen because of the nomistic tendency of certain groups of believers who felt the need to express their faith in observable ways through adherence to the Jewish law. In connecting the operation of law with the sphere of *σαρξ* (Romans 7:1; 7:5ff; Galatians 5:18), Paul claims that, whereas the fulfilment of the criteria of the law was once a necessary condition of (Jewish) life (Romans 7:1-13; Galatians 3:19-4:31), it is now obsolete because the sphere of *σαρξ* has been replaced by the sphere of *πνευμα*:

... the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death ... so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit. (Romans 8:2,4)

In passages such as this, Paul interprets the *cosmic* *σαρξ-πνευμα* tension in terms of its implications for the daily lives of the believers. The present situation is presented as an unsatisfactory one: because the law of sin is a dominating force within the realm of *σαρξ* (Romans 7), what is necessary to deal with it is the application of rules (Judaic laws) to behaviour. Referring to law as the 'old written code', Paul is keen to point out that it is not law itself which is the source of sin or which causes sin, although it creates the context for sin (Romans 7:6-8): "... if it had not been for the law, I would not have

known sin." Indeed, Paul at times seems to draw and necessary and sufficient connection between law and (the possibility of) sin.

From the perspective of human agency, the human being is situated, during the period of the early Christian church, in an *αιων* within which both the forces of *σαρξ* and *πνευμα* are active. There is, therefore, a choice to be made: the choice to live according to the dictates of the Jewish law which, according to Paul, are operative in the sphere of *σαρξ*, or according to faith in the salvatory effects of Christ's work. In this choice, the believer is a fully responsible agent. S/he is asked not to present her/his members to sin but rather to present oneself to God: *you* present your members (Romans 6:13-19).

In that connection, it could be argued that what Paul constructs as sin is belief in the effectiveness *and* necessity of obeying the dictates of law in spite of the recognition and acknowledgment that the Christ event has brought about *both* ontological *and* moral changes in one's life. Paul asks the Galatian converts: "Having started in the spirit, are you now ending in the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3). What the newly-converted believers are supposed to do, according to Paul, is to live a life that has been transformed by the Christ event and not to revert to a life in conformity with Jewish law—which, Paul suggests, is a human and merely cultural construct (Romans 7:7). In the Philippians epistle, too, when Paul gives as an example his personal experience, he claims that his own achievements according to the requirements of the law—born a Jew, circumcised, a Pharisee, blameless under the law—are, in the light of the Christ-event, to be considered loss '... because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus' (3:8). He asks the converts to 'forget what lies behind' in order to '[strain] forward to what lies

ahead' (3:13). In these sections of the epistles, the crux of the problem, in Paul's view, is the commitment of the believer to both systems, the new as well as the old.

In line with the construal of *σαρξ* and *πνευμα* described above, Robert Jewett, who emphasises the necessity of analysing the *σαρξ*–*πνευμα* conflict in the Galatians and Romans epistles in terms of Paul's need to deal with the nomistic believers, believes that Paul is, in these sections, dealing with the issue of allegiance:

The key to the "flesh" concept is not that it weakens man's will to do the good, but that it lures him to substitute his own good for God's. The "flesh" is Paul's term for everything aside from God in which one places his final trust.<sup>37</sup>

Jewett's analysis throws light on why, although the law itself is not sinful, allegiance to it leads to sin. In Paul's view, it is not merely inconsistent, but sinful, to be committed to both systems. For the convert to Paul's Christianity to seek salvation through obedience to the law is reflective of an attitude which is confident in the effectiveness of obedience to the law and, with this, a lack of confidence in the potency of the Christ event. This is important for Paul because a fundamental commitment to the effectiveness of obedience to the law as bringing about the believer's salvation necessarily results in law-dictated behaviour: "... those who live according to *σαρξ* have perspectives which are focussed on or controlled by (*φρονουσιν*: from *vous*) *σαρξ* (Romans 8:5). To live according to *σαρξ*, however, is directly in opposition to how Paul conceives of Christian life: certainly, it should not be lawlike and, specifically, not restricted to the laws of a particular cultural tradition. In this connection, Paul stresses that those who rely on the works of law (*εξ εργαων*

νομου εἶσιν) are in fact under a curse (Galatians 3:10) because what is a requirement of Christian life is that one be obedient from the heart (καρδία) (Romans 6:17).<sup>38</sup>

What emerges from this discussion of Paul's σαρκῶς-πνεύματος conflict as well as the Adam-Christ contrast is, among other things, a clear demonstration of Paul's conception of human life and agency. He holds the human being fully responsible for his or her action and behaviour. In this connection, what bothers Paul about aberrant and disruptive behaviours and actions—more significantly than their consequences—is that they are manifestations of one's beliefs and attitudes.

Regarding the substantive content of these modes of life, Paul upholds a series of community-building and community-sustaining values.<sup>39</sup> In upholding these values, Paul presents the early church communities not with rules but rather with principles and values for acting and behaving. These principles and values are derived from Paul's conception of the ideal life—life as a believer within a community of believers. The problem of the believers not abiding by Paul's principles and values was not the only problem for Paul. Apart from motivational issues, some of Paul's ideals were extremely radical and there were, therefore, difficulties associated with their realisation. He believed, for example, that certain existing social categories should be abolished. Advocating the rejection of established and accepted social conventions, Paul makes remarks such as: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). This is the ethic which governs the life to come, the life which is, on the other hand, available for the

believers *now*. However, Paul seems to back away from this progressive ideal and advises the converts to, during this in-between period, 'remain in whatever condition you were called' (1 Corinthians 7:24). This dilemma is discussed in the next section.

### 3.2.3 Slavery, Womanhood and Marriage<sup>40</sup>

Part of Paul's concern as the apostle to the Gentiles was to define a new set of values and beliefs that, he believed, marked the difference between a life that was affected by the Christ event and one that was not. The value system constructed by Paul to guide the life of the early church community was, in some ways, a critique of existing contemporary practices, beliefs and attitudes. Among some of the values and practices he questioned were those of slavery and those relating to the status of women.

The issue of slavery is mentioned only occasionally in the epistles. Apart from his letter to Philemon, Paul's two other references to slavery are in 1 Corinthians 7:21-24 and Galatians 3:28. In each of these instances, Paul seems to be challenging either the slave-master distinction or the institution of slavery itself, or both. There is no doubt that Paul was aware of the predicament of the slave.<sup>41</sup> However, to postulate that Paul construed slavery as social injustice is merely conjectural. There is, for example, much debate concerning Paul's letter to Philemon and what he intends to achieve through the letter.<sup>42</sup>

In this letter, Paul encourages through love (*αγαπη*)—though he later commands obedience in v. 21—that Philemon should treat Onesimus '*no longer as a slave, but more than a slave*' (*ουκετι ως δουλον αλλ' υπερ δουλον*: v.16). What Paul actually meant by 'more than' or 'above' a slave is

difficult to interpret. A weak interpretation (of what Paul is seeking in the Philomen letter) is that Paul is simply claiming that he disapproves of the subordination of slavery. Stronger readings of Paul's intention include the manumission of Onesimus.

One aspect of Paul's directive to Philemon is, however, clear: Paul wants Onesimus to be treated as a brother.<sup>43</sup> The very fact of this epistle demonstrates Paul's concern, though perhaps more for Onesimus than for the institution of slavery. The larger issue of slavery as a social institution is only indirectly addressed and it is not clear whether Paul is indeed concerned with it. Barclay, who deals with Paul's treatment of slavery expressed in the letter to Philemon, offers the following reasons for Paul's failure to deal with the issue more thoroughly:

If we are right to detect in this letter a sense of tension in grappling with the question of Christian brotherhood and slavery, we cannot conclude that Paul was wholly uninterested in the social realities of the master-slave relationship or considered that the gospel had nothing to do with the social structures of the world. To ask why he did not advocate the abolition of slavery in its entirety is perhaps to pose an anachronistic and inappropriate question: no-one in the ancient world could imagine the social economy operation without slaves ... and, in any case, Paul shows little concern with social questions beyond the boundaries of the church.<sup>44</sup>

Barclay's analysis is right on several counts:

(a) it is inconclusive, from the letter to Philemon, that Paul as not interested in the social realities of the master-slave relation;

(b) it is inconclusive, from the letter to Philemon, that Paul considered that the gospel had nothing to do with the social structures of the world; and

(c) to ask why Paul did not advocate the abolition of slavery in its entirety is to pose an anachronistic and inappropriate question.

Barclay's analysis presents some of the difficulties involved in attempts to unravel Paul's intention. In addition, an examination of the sections of the Galatians and I Corinthians epistles on slavery reveal that the understanding that Paul was seeking to abolish the institution of slavery is not the only possible interpretation of Paul's stance.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul reminds the believers that the conditions of their lives are now different: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (3:28). In I Corinthians 7, Paul discusses issues pertaining exactly to these three topics; he deals with slavery, marriage and circumcision. The Corinthian letter itself reveals the difficulties Paul had in attempting to define the practical manifestations of the new life. With regard to marriage, for example, he deals with the fundamental issues including the concept of and the rationale for marriage within the framework of the new life of the believers. With circumcision, he advocates that those who are circumcised remain so, and that those who are uncircumcised remain so as well. Affirming his stance on the impotence of circumcision as a means of salvation, he asks that the believers "... remain in the condition in which [they] were called" (I Corinthians 7:20). Similarly, with slavery, Paul first overturns existing attitudes and expectations: "...whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when

called is a slave of Christ" (I Corinthians 7:22). His views on these topics in this letter are, however, somewhat diffuse for he writes, in I Corinthians 7:24: "In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God." With each of the three issues in I Corinthians 7, Paul first advocates a new condition of life which involves a rejection of previous modes and subsequently—and surprisingly—moves on to ask the believers to *accept* and to *remain in* their existing conditions.

There are at least two ways in which Paul's apparent indecision could be understood. Clearly, he is bringing into question the categories associated with the social divisions of culture, status and gender. The first possible understanding of Paul's stance is the simpler interpretation that Paul is merely asserting the invalidity of these distinctions and, accordingly, questioning the use and usefulness of the categories associated with the distinctions, *within the community of believers*. Paul's remark in Galatians that "... all of you are one in Christ Jesus" could serve to indicate that his remarks on slavery are applicable made within this frame of reference. In this connection, Paul's statement in I Corinthians 7 for the converts to 'remain' in their existing conditions could be understood to mean that, given that these categories are irrelevant anyway, it did not make a difference to their *membership in the community* whether they were Jew, Greek, slave, master, male or female. This conception of Paul's attitude toward existing norms and values is not inconsistent with the idea that Paul was attempting to outline and define a new set of values and codes appropriate to the new lives of the believers.<sup>45</sup>

A second, and stronger, interpretation of Paul's attitude toward slavery is that considered by Barclay: that Paul seems to be urging the abolition of slavery. This reading leaves it as an open question, though, whether Paul

was addressing only the communities of believers or whether he intended his statements to apply to the larger community.

Regardless of what conclusions are drawn regarding Paul's intended audience, Paul's difficulties and seeming indecision regarding the abolition of slavery could be attributed to the fact that, given that I Corinthians was one of his earlier epistles, Paul, was still hoping that the 'day of the Lord', (*παρουσια*) was imminent. If Paul believed that the *παρουσια* was at hand, he may have thought to avoid social and political confusion and unrest—within the community of believers as well as the larger community—brought about by overturning social structures. It could be said that Paul, being idealist as regards the obliteration of social structures, is also realist in wanting to avoid social conflict and tension, especially since this community was a newly-formed one and given that it was expected to change again soon.

In summary, therefore, the fact that Paul writes against the slave-master distinction could mean any of the following:

- (a) that the categories are irrelevant with respect to membership in the communities of believers; or
- (b) that the institution of slavery should no longer be accepted. In other words, the forms of existence pertaining to the institution of slavery, whether as master or slave, are irrelevant *and* obsolete. This abolition should take place either
  - (i) within the believing communities; or
  - (ii) for all people, both within and outside the believing communities.

Paul's approach to culture and gender is similar to his approach to slavery. Specifically with regard to the status of women, Paul seems to have, in I Corinthians, conservative views. He affirms the custom that women should wear veils when praying or prophesying while men should not. He justifies this practice by asserting that, whereas man's glory is in the Lord, woman's glory is in man (11:1-16). Another section in which Paul condones the maintenance of gender inequality is when he argues that it is according to the law that women should not speak in church because it is shameful for them to do so (14:33b-36).<sup>46</sup>

With respect to the former issue, Paul's discussion of the need for women to wear veils when performing an active role in church turns on his view of the respective glories of men and women; he justifies the custom by appealing to the more fundamental issue of a difference in respective glory. Paul simply states that man reflects the *image and glory* of God, while woman reflects the *glory* of man (11:7).<sup>47</sup>

While Paul's concept of glory (δοξα) is unclear, it would be especially problematic if δοξα is understood to mean some kind of attainment and/or excellence.<sup>48</sup> This is because woman—Paul shifts between woman *qua* gender category and woman *qua* wife—does not have or is unable to have a glory apart from man or her husband. Whichever sense of woman Paul means in this discussion, the implications are problematic.

What Paul specifically concludes from the distinction between the respective glories of men and women, or wife and husband, is that if woman or wife does not wear a veil, then she disgraces her head—man or husband, respectively. It is not clear, given the ambiguity in the meanings of the terms 'head' and 'glory', how the notion of headship is connected to that of glory. The term head (κεφαλη) is used equivocally: there is, first, the concept of the

physical head itself (veil on head or shorn head); secondly, head is used symbolically to represent a relation (man as head of woman, God as head of Christ, Christ as head of man).

Hooker, who attempts to explain the concept of authority in this passage, argues that making a clear distinction between the two meanings of head will illuminate the differences in the glory of male and female.<sup>49</sup> From the two meanings of κεφαλη, she concludes:

(a) head being covered or shorn: distinguishes between the man and the woman;

(b) head being disgraced: distinguishes between the glory of Christ and the glory of man.<sup>50</sup>

Hooker argues that Paul is concerned to show that, given that woman's uncovered head reflects *man's* glory, it must be covered when she is in the presence of God. This act, she contends, symbolises the (proper) effacement of man's glory in the presence of God. However, as Hooker herself is aware, her analysis does not account for the silence in the epistles regarding the situation of unmarried or widowed women; nor does it explain how a married woman works out her relationship with God and her relationship with her husband.

What further frustrates analysis of this passage is that it is unclear whether for man to be the head of woman, or God to be head of Christ, or Christ to be head of man, sets up a relationship of dominance and subordination. Furthermore, the larger unresolved question remains: that if Paul was seriously questioning the roles of gender categories (in Galatians and I Corinthians 7), why then was he still subscribing to the various

distinctions between males and females, *especially with regard to the requirements of worship* (in I Corinthians 11 and 14)?

Paul discusses three different practices pertaining to the maintenance of gender distinction in worship: women wearing veils; male and female hair lengths; and women speaking in church. With regard to veils and speaking in church, Paul falls back to Old Testament norms: woman was created *for* (or *because of*) man (v. 9)<sup>51</sup>; women should not speak in church because that is what the 'law says'. With regard to the issue of different hair lengths, Paul presents it as if it were rooted in the metaphysical makeup of the world—he writes that nature (φύσις) teaches that men should have short hair and women long. Paul appeals to a naturalistic justification for different hair lengths.

It could be said with regard to these issues that Paul is uncertain or confused and so falls back on exactly those practices and values which he, at other points, claims are defunct or irrelevant. Thus, on the one hand he derives standards from Judaism and from the social mores of his time, on the other, he questions practices and structures such as circumcision and slavery. Whether the inconsistent ideas arise as a result of the inability to transcend preceding Jewish standards or simply from confusion, the appeal to Jewish norms and values reflects the general difficulties Paul faces in setting up a new community with a new value system.<sup>52</sup>

Also interesting in the context of Paul's attitude to women are his views on marriage. Paul deals with various aspects of marriage from a range of different perspectives. From the point of view of the commitment normally required or expected of one to the marriage partner or to the marriage itself, Paul advises the unmarried and widows to remain single. He reasons that,

especially in light of the imminent παρουσία, it is important for people to be "anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:32). This is, Paul claims, what the unmarried or widows would be committed to: 'unhindered devotion' to the Lord (7:35). The married, on the other hand, have divided interests because they are concerned to please their marriage partners and are focussed on the anxieties related to family life (7:26; 28; 32).

It is interesting that, in his assessment of the practicalities of commitment to the 'affairs of the Lord', Paul, in line with his statement that '... there is no male and female ...', does not distinguish between the work and commitment of men and women. This idea is inconsistent with the section in I Corinthians 11 that deals with the differing glories of men and women. It is, however, consistent with Paul's constant reminders to the converts that the functions and responsibilities of all members of the communities are equally valuable and that no one member is more important or significant than another (Romans 12:3-8; 15:1ff; I Corinthians 12; 13; Galatians 3:28). In this connection, it is important to note that Paul had many female co-workers: Prisca (Romans 16:3-5); Phoebe, a deacon (Romans 16:1); Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2) and a number of other women (Romans 16:6,7,12,15). Although it is difficult to clearly ascertain the roles of his female co-workers, his acknowledgment of their significant efforts and roles is no less enthusiastic than that for his male co-workers.<sup>53</sup>

The second aspect of Paul's views on marriage is his focus on sexual immorality. Constructing sexual immorality as a problem of incontinence, he writes that one should have his/her 'own desires under control' (I Corinthians 7:37) rather than to be 'afire with passion' (7:9). Where the latter is the case, however, Paul argues, then "it is better to marry".<sup>54</sup> Focusing on what

he deems appropriate codes of sexual behaviour, Paul deals at length with the sexual needs both of men and of women (I Corinthians 7:3-4), arguing not only that the husband 'rules over' his wife's body but also that the wife 'rules over' that of her husband's (I Corinthians 7:4). According to Verhey, who examines ethics in the new testament, the suggestion to the first century Christians that the husband rules over the wife's body is hardly surprising. However, it would have been "... quite surprising—indeed shocking—that Paul says the wife "rules over" her husband's body."<sup>55</sup> Just as surprising, too, would have been the idea, which Paul entertains, that a woman might divorce her husband (7:13). This kind of view of the relationship between men and women as marriage partners is hardly common either in the writings of early Judaism or in (the then contemporary) non-Christian social codes.<sup>56</sup> For example, Paul's conception of the function of marriage differs radically from the Old Testament one. Instead of seeing marriage as primarily for procreation, he introduces the idea of marriage as 'no more than a defense against desire'.<sup>57</sup>

In spite of sense of confusion or inconsistency in the ideas expressed in the epistles regarding slavery, issues pertaining to womanhood and cultural norms, it can be argued that there are clearly innovative or progressive strands in Paul's thinking on these subjects. In spite of his occasional reversion to conservative, traditional norms, Paul seeks, in general, to set up communities of believers founded upon equality and to recognise the equal value of each member's tasks and functions within the community.<sup>58</sup>

Paul's notion of equality within the Christian community is connected with his ideal of love (*αγάπη*) as a community-building and community-sustaining value. This ideal had to be emphasised because, apart from the

fact that these church communities were newly-formed, they were also culturally, morally and socially diverse. Added to this confusion of codes and values was Paul's eschatology. The implications of Paul's eschatological views for the lives of the believers was that they had to adopt a new and different perspective on life *within* the same environment while awaiting the full realisation of the forthcoming  $\alpha\omega\nu$ —yet without knowing when it would happen. Paul's eschatology thus created, both for himself and for the believing communities in the churches he set up, great confusion regarding the question of how one should live. The answers Paul gave were often far from definite. Paul attempted to design a new and different set of values. Thus, one of the features which marked his system as distinct from existing Jewish codes was the view that the attitude and perspective of the moral agent was the basis of all action and behaviour. To this effect, Paul emphasised *both* that the recognition of the effects of the work of Christ was internalistically connected to a change in behaviour *and* that the fulfilment of the requirements of laws was inconsequential in the life of the believer because laws merely required external compliance which Paul construed as leading necessarily to excessive formalism. What Paul sought as the basis of communal life was not behavioural conformity but, rather, the valuing of the community and of interpersonal relationships. It was upon such an outlook that Paul hoped the believers would establish their behaviours and actions.

The themes of community and of personal relationships are taken up in Chapter Six, which analyses  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  as a central concept in Pauline thought.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>. There have been significant challenges to this theme, that Paul's task was in fact to mediate between the *Jewish Christians* and the *Gentile Christians*. Stendahl in Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1976), for example, sets out this thesis, arguing that the only way to study the Pauline epistles is to understand its social context in the light of Paul's attempts to mediate between the two *Christian* groups.
- <sup>2</sup>. Paul was not, however, advocating nor practising Situation Ethics, as some might claim, because there were some themes and principles he adhered to consistently through the epistles; the most notable of these concepts was love (*αγάπη*). See Wolfgang Schrage, The Ethics of the New Testament (trans. David Green) T and T Clark, Edinburgh, 1982. Schrage argues convincingly that although Paul was not concerned to proclaim universal and/or a-historical ethical principles, his exhortations are not to be considered as being determined primarily by the situation. Rather, Pauline ethics addresses the whole person, places emphasis both on intention and on action and is thus aptly termed 'concrete ethics' (see especially pp.186-239).
- <sup>3</sup>. The terms 'Internalism' and 'Internalist' denote a wide-ranging variety of views. Internalist theories of moral motivation in general hold that motivation is in some sense inherent in moral obligations or judgments. Externalists, on the other hand, believe that motivation is external to obligations, judgments or the justification of moral claims. For discussions of internalist and externalist theories of moral motivation, see W.D. Falk, "'Ought' and Motivation", in Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1948, pp. 111-138; W.K. Frankena, "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy" in A.I. Melden (ed) Essays on Moral Philosophy, University of Washington Press, 1958; as well as the arguments of G.C. Field, W.T. Stace, Nowell-Smith and C.L. Stevenson. More recent

discussions of the debate include the works of Bernard Williams, Michael Smith, Rodger Beehler, Gilbert Harman, E.J. Bond and Mark Platts.

- <sup>4</sup>. Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, SCM Press, London, 1956. The indicative-imperative is discussed in detail in Section 3.1.3.
- <sup>5</sup>. Note, though, that the cognitive aspect of καρδία in I Corinthians 2:9 is compared negatively to πνευμα (spirit).
- <sup>6</sup>. These are elements in an individual-oriented focus (familiar of course in Greek philosophy) while not incompatible of course with insistence on communal and relational considerations.
- <sup>7</sup>. There are two uses of vous which seem out of place with this description of the concept:
  - I Corinthians 14:14; 19: vous is associated with understanding; this argument is used against the pneumatics.
  - Philippians 4:7: the human vous cannot understand the peace of God.
- <sup>8</sup>. This distinction that Paul draws between the vous of God and the vous of Christ is an expression of his general thesis that it is through Christ's work that the (up till then) distinctly Jewish beliefs and Jewish God have been made accessible to non-Jews as well. The deeper theological implications of the distinction will not, however, be dealt with here.
- <sup>9</sup>. Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. E.C.Hoskyns, Oxford, New York, 1933.
- <sup>10</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 266.
- <sup>11</sup>. C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1932.
- <sup>12</sup>. Gareth Matthews, "It is No Longer I that Do it", in Faith and Philosophy, Vol 1, Jan 1984, p. 47.
- <sup>13</sup>. *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
- <sup>14</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 49.

- <sup>15</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 48.
- <sup>16</sup>. *ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup>. Robert Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings, E.J. Brill, Netherlands, 1971; pp. 391-401.
- <sup>18</sup>. While these antithetical forces are expressed primarily in metaphysical and religious terms in Paul's epistles, they could be explained less mystically in terms of prevailing modes of life and ways of thought. Section 3.2.2 deals specifically with the concepts of  $\sigma\rho\xi$  and  $\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\mu\alpha$ , and the connection between them.
- <sup>19</sup>. Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, *op.cit.*
- <sup>20</sup>. Morna D. Hooker, From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 13-25.
- <sup>21</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 57. Paradoxically, notes Hooker, the behaviour which is required of those who are in Christ and who wish to be like him conforms to the attitude which he showed in becoming like us: obedient; emptied himself; humbled himself; became poor; identified himself with the sinful and outcasts.
- <sup>22</sup>. The struggle between morality and God's will is expressed by Plato as well, in the Euthyphro dilemma.
- <sup>23</sup>. The phrase 'body of Christ' used as a metaphor for membership in the Christian community will be discussed in Chapter Six.
- <sup>24</sup>. Alternatively, the (ungodly) self is revealed, too, in acts which degrade the body. Sexual immorality is, according to Paul, such an act (Romans 1:24).
- <sup>25</sup>. Robert Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings, *op.cit.*, p. 253.
- <sup>26</sup>. See Albert Schweitzer, The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity, (tr. L. Garrard), New York 1968, pp. 167-8.

- <sup>27</sup>. Robert C. Tannehill, Dying and Rising with Christ, Alfred Topelmann, Berlin, 1967, discussed in Jack T. Sanders, Ethics in the New Testament, SCM Press, 1975, London, p. 54.
- <sup>28</sup>. Jack T. Sanders, Ethics in the New Testament, (*ibid.*) points out that further complication with this time overlap is that Paul's imperative loses its credibility—in fact, it appears to be nonsense—if and when the eschatological end loses its imminence. It is only the expectation of the imminence of the *εσχάτον* (Romans 12:1 - 13:10) which makes the imperative possible (pp. 57ff).
- <sup>29</sup>. Paul rejected, as well, the highly-regarded Jewish patriarch, Moses, as a suitable paradigm of Christian life. See Romans 4 and 5.
- <sup>30</sup>. Karl Barth, Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5, (tr. T.A. Smail), Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 5, Oliver & Boyd, UK, 1956.
- <sup>31</sup>. *ibid.*, pp. 6; 24.
- <sup>32</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 43.
- <sup>33</sup>. Ernst Kasemann, Perspectives on Paul, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1971, p. 67.
- <sup>34</sup>. It was only in later Christian writing that the body was considered synonymous with flesh and both were construed negatively as sources of sexual and physical desire. This desire was seen to distract a person from the pursuit of the spiritual or divine life or life of the soul, and thus as rebellion against God. See, for example, Peter Brown, The Body and Society, Columbia University Press, 1988, USA, especially pp. 48-49.
- <sup>35</sup>. See, for example, I Corinthians 15:39; 6:16; II Corinthians 7:1 (cf I Corinthians 7:34); II Corinthians 4:11b (cf 4:10 b); II Corinthians 12:7, Philemon 16.
- <sup>36</sup>. For a comprehensive survey of interpretations of the *σαρξ*-*πνεύμα* conflict, see Robert Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings, *op.cit.*, pp. 49-95. In addition, *σαρξ* and *πνεύμα* could be further elucidated through an examination of related terms such as *κόσμος* (usually translated 'world'), *αρχαί*

(rulers), στοιχεια (basic elements), αρχοντες του αιωνος τουτου (rulers of this age), αγγελιοι (angels), and δυναμεις (powers).

See Romans 8:38; 8:19-23; 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:24; 2:6-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4;

Galatians 4:3-9; 1:4. The characterisation of these forces and/or agents is even more vivid and various in the deuterio-Pauline epistles to the Colossian and the Ephesian churches. Literature on the classification and interpretation of these forces/agents include:

G.H.C. Macgregor, "Principalities and Powers: the Cosmic Background of Paul's Thought", (in New Testament Studies, Vol 1., 1954-55) describes the σαρκῶς-πνευμα tension in terms of the conflict between cosmic spirit forces controlling the course of the universe; in terms of earthly conditions, this manifests itself in the subjection of human beings to the rulers of this αἰών (see especially p.18).

George Johnston provides a comprehensive review of the different ways in which κόσμος may be understood, in "οικουμένη and κόσμος in the New Testament" (in New Testament Studies, Vol. 10, pp. 352-60).

Wesley Carr, in "The Rulers of this Age—I Corinthians II. 6-8" (New Testament Studies, Vol 23, pp. 20-35), argues that αρχα refers to actual human rulers.

Ernst Kasemann, (*op.cit.*), understands σαρκῶς as being the sphere of demonic influence.

Stephen Charles Mott's Biblical Ethics and Social Change (Oxford University Press, 1982) points out that the term κόσμος refers to the order of the social world and this indicates that evil has a social and political character beyond the isolated actions of individuals. It is therefore unfortunate, he argues, that the term has been translated as 'world', and thus often interpreted to denote a merely physical place.

Leander Keck, Paul and His Letters (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 2nd ed, 1988); Keck argues that σαρκῶς is a domain of power.

- <sup>37</sup>. Robert Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: Their Use in Conflict Settings, *op.cit.*, p. 103.
- <sup>38</sup>. See Section 6.1 for detailed discussion of Paul's rejection of Jewish law.
- <sup>39</sup>. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.
- <sup>40</sup>. A few of the important discussions by Paul on these topics also includes references to the Jew-Greek distinction. Paul's Jew-Greek distinction will, however, not be examined in detail here because it is intimately connected with the much larger issue of his views of Jewishness and Judaism. There is the obvious attempt by Paul, as mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, to advocate that Jewish codes and practices are, in the light of the Christ event, obsolete, in order to support his view that non-Jews can have access to the faith and beliefs that were once the special possession of Jews. For this reason, Paul has been criticised, as well as defended from the criticism, that his Christianity is anti-semitic. This, debate is not a concern of this thesis, however.
- <sup>41</sup>. There were a variety of ways in which freedom was available to slaves; Francis Lyall presents a scholarly discussion of the dynamics of those processes, and of their theological implications, in Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles, Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, 1984.
- <sup>42</sup>. See John G. Barclay, "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership", in New Testament Studies Vol. 37., 1991, pp. 161-186.
- <sup>43</sup>. Barclay (*ibid*) points out that it is not clear what Paul is suggesting here: that the brotherly relationship *supersedes* the slave one; or that the brotherly relationship is *superimposed* upon the slave one. Given this, Barclay wonders about the practical difficulties that might arise in contexts of brotherly correction—wherein the slave would clearly be accused of insolence; and during the communal supper—for would someone like Onesimus then be allowed to join in? If so, who does the serving?
- <sup>44</sup>. *ibid.* p. 183.

- <sup>45</sup>. In I Corinthians 7:29-31, Paul overturns certain existing conditions including: marriage, mourning, rejoicing, possession and 'dealings with the world'. With all these conditions, Paul asks the believers to live 'as though they were not' or 'as though they had none'.
- <sup>46</sup>. Note the inconsistency between these two sections of I Corinthians. While the former section recognises the practice of women praying and prophesying (11:5) but places a qualification on that practice that women should wear veils while engaging in such, the latter section, 14:33b-36, does not allow women to speak or to have any position of authority in the gathering of the community. Whether this is an inconsistency on Paul's part, or whether one or both sections are non-Pauline, or if there is textual corruption, is open to debate. This issue will not be dealt with here.
- <sup>47</sup>. In this connection, Morna Hooker (in "Authority on Her Head: an Examination of I Corinthians 11:10", in Morna D. Hooker, From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul, Cambridge University Press, 1990) points out that although Paul seems to be deriving his distinction from the creation story (Genesis 1 and 2), he in fact has changed the story in that while Genesis 1:27 reports male *and* female as being created in the *image* of God, Paul's statement does not allow for the idea that woman, too, to be in the image of God—indeed, there seems to be an intentional exclusion of this possibility in the case of women. Thus, according to Hooker, in his discussion of the image of God theme, Paul has shifted the idea of man in the generic sense—*ανθρωπον*—to that of man *qua* husband or male: *ανηρ*.
- <sup>48</sup>. See, for example, Romans 8:18; Galatians 6:14.
- <sup>49</sup>. Morna D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: an Examination of I Cor 11:10", *op.cit.*
- <sup>50</sup>. *ibid.*, pp. 113-120.
- <sup>51</sup>. Incidentally, as Hooker writes, v. 10 seems to be nonsense: "for this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels"; *ibid.*

- <sup>52</sup>. See Gager (in Kingdom and Community, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1975, pp 35ff) who, in the context of discussing the dynamics of millenarian movements, argues that millenarian movements often fail with regard to the setting-up of a new system of morality, especially if the new system is to be a clear rejection of the previous one. Citing the work of Burrige (New Heaven, New Earth, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1969, pp. 166ff), Gager considers that Paul and his communities are going through the 'no rules' stage before the community moves to a 'new rules' stage. At this 'no rules' stage, old practices are overthrown and quickly superseded by new ones. Yet many of those new practices bear a striking resemblance to the old ones. This is clearly demonstrated, for example, in Paul's letter to the Galatian church in which he argues that the old law is no longer binding on the believers. Yet, on specifying the *content* of the new law, he cites Leviticus 19:18.
- <sup>53</sup>. For an interesting discussion of the ministries of women in the Pauline epistles, see Susanne Heine, Women and Early Christianity: Are the Feminist Scholars Right?, SCM Press, Great Britain, 1987, Chapter Five: Paul the Scapegoat.
- <sup>54</sup>. It needs to be noted that Paul is addressing the Corinthian enthusiasts who were considering, among other things, nullifying their marriages on the basis that their partners were unbelievers (I Corinthians 7:12-16, 27). See also, Peter Brown, The Body and Society, *op.cit.*, pp. 53-55.
- <sup>55</sup>. Allen Verhey, The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament, William B Eerdmans Publishing Co., Michigan, 1984, p. 118.
- <sup>56</sup>. See Ben Witherington III, Women and the Genesis of Christianity, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 137.
- <sup>57</sup>. Peter Brown, The Body and Society, *op.cit.*, p. 55. Brown also comments that what was notably lacking in I Corinthians was the idea that the sexual urge "...was capable of socialization and of ordered, even warm, expression within marriage." Rather, for Paul "...the dangers of *porneia*...were allowed to hold the center of the stage." Thus, Paul

"...had left a fatal legacy to future ages...In the future, a sense of the presence of "Satan," in the form of a constant and ill-defined risk of lust, lay like a heavy shadow in the corner of every Christian church."

<sup>58</sup>. Unfortunately, none of Paul's progressiveness was taken up either by the early churches or even in the deuter-Pauline texts themselves: Colossians and Ephesians advocate the subjugation of both slaves and women, arguing on the one hand that slaves and women be submissive and, on the other, that masters and husbands in love, should not cause hurt. Note, too, the classification of woman and man as different categories and, following from that, the difference in norms and standards applicable to their behaviour discussed in I Timothy 3 and 5. For discussions of this topic, see:

John Gager's Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1975, pp. 35ff; David Verner, in The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles (Scholars Press, California, 1983), presents an analysis, among other topics, of the distinction between men and women in the I Timothy epistle.

See also Margaret MacDonald's analysis in The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings, (Cambridge University Press, Great Britain 1988). MacDonald provides an interesting analysis of the movement of ideas in the epistles as reflecting a socio-historical progression in church history. She classifies the epistles according to three church generations:

- (a) authentic epistles (written by Paul)
- (b) Colossians (written by a fellow-worker of Paul)  
Ephesians (dependent on the ideas in Colossians and written after Colossians)
- (c) pastoral epistles (written by apostolic fathers between 100-40 C.E.)

MacDonald argues that whereas, in the authentic epistles, the concern was to build up the community, with the Colossian and Ephesian epistles, the concern was for community-stabilising institutionalisation. MacDonald discusses in detail the significant

changes between the thought patterns and the norms and ideals from the authentic epistles to Colossians and Ephesians in the first place, and, in the second, from the Colossian and Ephesian epistles to the pastoral epistles (MacDonald considers I Timothy, II Timothy and Titus as the pastoral epistles and places them in the stage of community-protecting institutionalisation).

PART II  
RELATIONSHIPS AND CARE

*Filial piety rests in this: parents are  
concerned when their children are ill.  
(Analects 2:6)*

*If I give away all my possessions, and if I  
hand over my body so that I may boast,  
but do not have love, I gain nothing ...  
(I Corinthians 13:3)*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A MORALITY OF CARE

Within the tradition of western moral philosophy, there has been significant criticism of moral theories which overemphasise (purely) formal principles and which lack moral content. In general, these criticisms highlight the view that moral agents are situated selves in the sense that they live within societies bound in some ways by social, historical and cultural constructs, institutions and norms. Furthermore, it is within these frameworks that human persons *qua* moral agents live, work, have relationships with others, make choices about themselves and about others, and seek to resolve their moral problems and dilemmas.

One of the most notable critics of formalistic formulations of morality was Georg Hegel (1770-1831). He argued, against Kant's morality, that the requirement that moral agents adopt some kind of objective, 'universal' standpoint was an impossible task for moral agents. This is because moral agents live *within* communities which operate according to certain customs or conventions specific to particular communities. Arising out of a critique of Kant, Hegelian ethics is based fundamentally on themes of relationship and the idea of community.

Within contemporary moral philosophy in the western tradition, there have been significant criticisms of moral theories which uphold notions such as impartiality and universality as requirements of, or ideals in, morality. Significant work has been done, in this respect, by philosophers such as Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum, Bernard Williams, Michael Walzer, Michael Stocker, Lawrence Blum, John Kekes and Susan Wolf.<sup>1</sup> The points of criticism made

by these philosophers vary according to a range of different themes such as, the demands of impartialist and/or impersonalist morality and their effect on the psychologies of moral agents, the connection, or lack thereof, between moral theories and human life, the proper contextualisation of morality within historical, social and cultural frameworks, and properly situating moral agents within such frameworks, the moral significance of human relatedness and independence, rather than dissociation and interdependence as ideals.

It is within this context of dissatisfaction that some have voiced a concern that some conceptions of morality require that moral agents consider themselves essentially as detached individuals in their moral deliberation. It has been argued that such a conception of moral agency has, basically, two undesirable outcomes. The first is that moral theories with such emphases might rule out interaction within personal relationships as having moral significance. The consequence of a tendency to exclude personal or intimate relationships from morality could have the effect that interaction within those realms is regarded as unregulated and arbitrary. The corollary of viewing personal relationships as beyond the boundaries of morality is that such relationships might come to be viewed as non-moral and thus free of structures, principles or norms. For instance, certain principles or values upheld within contexts of close personal relationships—such as, for example, maternal affection—are perceived by some to be 'natural' rather than moral.<sup>2</sup>

The categorisation *both* of morality as essentially impersonal and impartial *and* of personal relationships as non-moral is based on the presupposition that what counts as 'personal', on the one hand, and what as 'impersonal', on the other, are clearly definable and are contrastive categories. As argued previously in chapter one, a classification of

relationships as either 'impersonal' or 'personal' could oversimplify important aspects of relationships. It could, for example, distort the nature of certain relationships (as, for instance, relationships between colleagues) by construing them simply as either personal or impersonal.

Secondly, moral theories which promote impartiality and impersonality as fundamental criteria of moral deliberation might ignore morally significant features of relationships such as loyalties, responsibilities, affection and commitment. This, in turn, could negatively affect the moral agent's conception of himself. In this connection, the concepts of impartiality and impersonality need to be clarified.

Of itself, the requirement for moral agents to put aside their attachments and particular loyalties is not unreasonable. For example, it would not be strange or unreasonable to suggest that I donate some amount of money to victims of war instead of spending that sum on a lavish birthday celebration for my father.

If the example were modified, however, such that I had to choose between donating some amount of money to victims of war and paying for my father's hip replacement operation, it becomes somewhat less clear that I should choose to promote the best possible state of affairs in general (ie. the former). Clearly, the modified example is more difficult because here, the two cases of need involve different kinds of commitment, loyalty and responsibility and, *ceteris paribus*, are comparatively urgent and compelling.

It would seem harsh and unrealistic to require that I should forego my father's health and comfort in order to procure the well being of others (whom I do not know). However, given existing literature on impartialist and impersonalist theories, it is not certain that the proponents of such theories would insist on the overridingness of impartiality.<sup>3</sup> In other words, an

impartialist is not necessarily committed to advocating that, in this case, I should donate my money to victims of war instead of paying for my father's hip replacement operation; an impartialist could in general uphold principles which promote global moral concern and, in addition, recognise the competing demands of relational attachment.

From the preceding discussion, what a proponent of relational morality might correctly object to is not that impartiality theses *eo ipso* view all aspects of relational attachment as morally insignificant. Rather, what is problematic about impartiality and impersonality theses is their corresponding views of moral agency: the moral agent is to view herself *primarily* as a detached, atomistic self. It is the commitment to this view of the self, and the implications of such a conception for personal identity and moral psychology, which is unacceptable to most proponents of relational morality.

The care ethic is a proposal for a moral theory which upholds the theme of human connectedness and which aims to deal with and account for relationships in which care and concern for the other's well-being is the primary operative principle. It is a proposal which arises from the feminist critique of rule- and justice-based moralities. From the point of view of feminist moral philosophy, criteria of impersonality, impartiality and universality are closely connected with notions of the individual as a detached, atomistic self. Within feminist philosophy, this notion of the individual is deemed to be male-oriented and biased against women's experience of relationships and of morality in general. Proponents of care morality, in upholding the two concerns discussed above, suggest that a re-examination of the domain and content of morality as conventionally

theorised is required. For some others a more extensive renovation of the structures of morality is required.

The first of two sections of this Chapter discusses the care ethic and its prominent features. It focuses primarily on the work of Carol Gilligan who carried out various empirical investigations of male and female subjects, on the basis of which she argued that the ways in which males and females respond to hypothetical moral problems is drastically different, both in terms of how they reason and what they deem to be morally significant.<sup>4</sup>

The second section critically analyses various versions of the care ethic. It demonstrates that certain formulations of the care ethic are, for a range of reasons, inimical to womens' morality. In particular, it argues that while care morality provides a fresh and different view from justice- and rule-based moralities, it is important to realise that certain norms and values which are operative within the latter forms of morality should be retained. The argument in this section cautions that proponents of care morality need carefully to address important notions such as autonomy, universalisability and caring affection in order that womens' interests are not compromised.

Generally, one of the concerns of this Chapter is to establish that care morality provides valuable insights into the content, domain, forms and structures of morality. It at least offers persuasive challenges to essentially rule-based moralities and to conceptions of the detached self. It could be argued, too, that the values which care morality seeks to address and to promote—values such as connectedness, concern, trust, responsibility, commitment and loyalty—provide for a more robust conception of morality and moral agency than those which require detachment. Consequently, it is suggested that a significant re-examination of justice-, rights- and rule-based

morality, on the one hand, and care morality, on the other, needs to be carried out in order to ascertain how the systems might work together to promote the good life of all concerned.

#### **4.1 The Care Ethic**

The rejection of principles of impartiality, impersonality and universality as overriding concerns in moral deliberation is a significant and fundamental motif of the care ethic. Arising from psychological studies first carried out by Carol Gilligan, the 'care perspective' has been clearly distinguished from what Gilligan terms the 'justice perspective'. The justice perspective is characterised primarily by a concern for personal liberty. In accordance with this primary concern, values such as individual autonomy, formal equality and human rights are emphasised and upheld. On the other hand, the care perspective views morality as being defined by relational attachment. On this account, "... the relationship becomes the figure, defining self and others. Within the context of relationship, the self as a moral agent perceives and responds to the perception of need. The shift in moral perspective is manifest by a change in the moral question from "What is just?" to "How to respond?"<sup>15</sup>

The difference between the justice and the care perspectives is, according to Gilligan, not merely a difference in the process of moral deliberation. Gilligan contends that the difference is more significant in that it involves moral, epistemological and metaphysical issues. She characterises the difference in terms of a 'shift in perspective from justice to care'—because our current ways of thinking are dominated by the justice perspective—and suggests that in this shift:

"... the organizing dimension of relationship changes from inequality/equality to attachment/detachment, reorganizing thoughts,

feelings and language so that words connoting relationship like "dependence" or "responsibility" or even moral terms such as "fairness" and "care" take on different meanings. To organize relationships in terms of attachment rather than in terms of equality changes the way human connection is imagined, so that the images or metaphors of relationship shift from hierarchy or balance to network or web. In addition, each organizing framework leads to a different way of imagining the self as a moral agent."<sup>6</sup>

The differences in the two perspectives are connected to differences in the categories and concepts of morality *as well as* in definitions of what constitutes a moral problem and, more fundamentally, in conceptions of the self, personal identity and moral agency. Gilligan's work is significant, to say the least, in drawing attention to the fact that, up till very recently, conceptions of moral excellence in Anglo-American philosophy have tended to emphasise a limited range of ideals and values which, Gilligan argues, are based on an ignorance or underrating of the difference between male and female perceptions and experiences. Emphasis on equality, justice and rights is—as the results of Gilligan's studies have been used to demonstrate—generally characteristic of man's moral reasoning and they therefore disadvantage and tend to downgrade women's moral reasoning.

In spite of the value and relevance of Gilligan's conclusions in the area of feminist ethics, there have been a range of criticisms of her thesis. One of the most commonly-made and general criticisms is that Gilligan's analysis of women's morality is a system which simplistically complements Kohlberg's moral developmental theory and, as such, inherits many of the problems in Kohlberg's analysis. In this regard, three specific criticisms of Gilligan's theory

will be examined here. The first is Gilligan's adoption of several features of Kohlberg's methodology and categories. The second deals with the specification of the connection between the kind of moral response, on the one hand, and gender, on the other; it examines the concept of the 'different voice' of women's morality. The third and final criticism analysed here follows on from the first two: given that there is a different voice, how might that be incorporated into moral theory? Is the different voice merely complementary to existing dominant moralities, or does it necessitate a reconstruction of morality?

With regard to the first point that Gilligan has adopted too readily Kohlberg's methodologies and categories, a notable shortcoming of Gilligan's test samples is that the subjects were predominantly from middle- and upper-class, white and educated backgrounds. Kohlberg's sample was similarly skewed, except that he worked with male subjects instead of female ones. His choice of subjects is not merely gender-biased but also, and just as importantly, class- and culture-biased.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Gilligan's moral paradigm draws on data from the lives typical of Western professional women. Her models of moral reasoning therefore disadvantage and exclude non-Western, non-white and non-middle-class women. Linda Nicholson writes succinctly that Gilligan's views of morality are open to the same set of problems "... as was Kohlberg's, only now minus the sexism."<sup>8</sup> In particular, the cultural specificity and narrowness of both Kohlberg's and Gilligan's analyses have been noted. Diana Baumrind questions why Kohlberg takes what is measured by his categories as indicating *real* moral development if all the subjects are asked to do is to think about hypothetical dilemmas, where ability to think hypothetically is taken as a universal given.<sup>9</sup> Because Kohlberg's schema of measurement is based on one's ability to manipulate

cognitive judgments, there is a significant amount of presupposition regarding the level of sophistication in thinking through these hypothetical problems. Baumrind argues that Kohlberg's use of hypothetical moral situations reflects an ignorance of cultural differences in the social construction of the individual. This oversight, it has been argued, is apparent in Gilligan's studies as well.<sup>10</sup>

Another example of Gilligan's neglect in questioning Kohlberg's structures of analysis is seen in her adoption of Kohlberg's construction of developmental stages in morality and his notion of rationality. Gilligan's classification of moral responses and sensitivities is based, as is Kohlberg's, essentially on *stages* in moral development corresponding to Piaget's account of cognitive development.<sup>11</sup> In noting that Kohlberg has, in his developmental theory, obscured the distinction between cognitive value-free assessments and moral, value-laden assessments, John Broughton comments that Gilligan has inherited Kohlberg's framework in classifying the moral decision-making process in terms of degrees of competence. Broughton also argues that instead of questioning Kohlberg's definition and use of 'rationality', Gilligan simply assumes that it is the correct one and proceeds to reject that notion; a more careful approach would be to examine Kohlberg's usage of rationality and to seek to redefine the term.<sup>12</sup>

The second criticism of Gilligan's thesis is her lack of clarity regarding the connection between gender and moral reasoning. For example, she claims that her articulation of the two perspectives is based on theme and not on gender, thus denying any affinities with biological determinism. On the other hand, it is important and undeniable that Gilligan's different-perspective theory is derived from empirical studies of different responses to moral problems from male and female subjects. Clearly, while rejecting the view that these perspectives are gender-based in a biologically determinate way

(especially in her later analyses), Gilligan's position is that the two perspectives are characteristic of male and female perception and experiences and that there is an association (though Gilligan does not clarify the nature of the association) between moral orientation and gender.<sup>13</sup> In a study asking subjects to describe a moral conflict the subjects had faced, Gilligan noted that people do tend to focus their attention on one set of concerns (care or justice) and to minimally represent the other:

The men and women involved in this study (high school students, college students, medical students, and adult professionals) were equally likely to demonstrate the focus phenomenon [*focus* being defined as 75 percent or more of the considerations raised pertaining either to the justice or the care perspective]. There were, however, sex differences in the direction of focus. With one exception, all of the men who focused, focused on justice. The women divided, with roughly one third focusing on justice and one third on care.<sup>14</sup>

From these data, three conclusions that Gilligan draws are:

- (i) "... if women were eliminated from the research sample, care focus in moral reasoning would virtually disappear."
- (ii) "... the fact that the women were advantaged means that the focus on care cannot readily be attributed to educational deficit or occupational disadvantage."
- (iii) "... the moral domain is comprised of at least two moral orientations ... The present findings further suggest that men and women tend to lose sight of different perspectives."<sup>15</sup>

In her analysis of data from her studies, Gilligan classifies the care and justice perspectives as different orientations. Whilst she acknowledges that there might in fact be more than just these two perspectives ('... the moral

domain is composed of *at least two* moral orientations<sup>16</sup>), her construction of the care perspective as being typically female and of the justice perspective as typically male is problematic given that the connection between gender and moral orientation is generally unclear due to the number of variables that might be involved.

The transposition of this opacity to the domain of feminist ethics could be inimical to a feminist conceptualisation of morality in that the care perspective might be construed as a mere adjunct to the justice perspective. This is the third criticism of Gilligan's work alluded to above. It is an important criticism which deserves serious consideration given that the construction of a feminist morality is closely interrelated with conceptions of the female self.

Gilligan's interpretation of her data and her construction of a feminist morality on empirical foundations has been a point of concern for some philosophers who feel that her conception of women's morality is merely compensatory. On a particular reading, Gilligan could be understood to be upholding the 'different voice' morality as a mere complementation to morality dominated by male ideals. Thus, it has been commented that her work could be interpreted to involve the trivial "... discover[y of] a different voice that complements the long-known male moral chorale."<sup>17</sup> Such a conception of morality will have similar deficiencies to views of the feminine self as a mere appendage of the male self; of the female as merely the 'other'. A feminist morality that construes women's moral thinking in such fashion is problematic "[b]ecause morality is deeply about what people do, this approach carries presuppositions about what men and women do"<sup>18</sup>—and that what women do is merely complementary to what men do.

Addelson's comments reflect a concern that a construction of feminist rationality, epistemology or ethics as merely complementary to existing male-

biased constructions in these areas simply fits into the structures and frameworks of the latter; there is no attempt to analyse critically nor to challenge existing structures. Conceptions of femininity and, in that connection, of female virtues and values should involve more than mere complementarity (of male values and virtues):

Unless the structural features of our concepts of gender are understood, any emphasis on a supposedly distinctive style of thought or morality is liable to be caught up in a deeper, older structure of male norms and female complementation. The affirmation of the value and importance of 'the feminine' cannot of itself be expected to shake the underlying normative structures for, ironically, it will occur in a space already prepared for it by the intellectual tradition it seeks to reject ... Making good the lacks in male consciousness, providing it with a necessary complementation by the 'feminine', is a large part of what the suppression, and the correlative consituation, of 'womankind' has been all about. An affirmation of the strengths of female 'difference' which is unaware of this may be doomed to repeat some of the sadder subplots in the history of western thought."<sup>19</sup>

A failure to challenge existing frameworks may even lead to a theory which is in fact *pernicious* to women in the sense that it defines the moral excellence of women in a way that is *already* limited by these existing frameworks.

Discussing this criticism within the framework of the private-public dichotomy, Joan Tronto demonstrates that because "[t]he contours of public morality in large part determine the shape of private morality ..."<sup>20</sup>, what Gilligan might in fact be proposing is a conception of women's morality as 'moral leftovers':

... questions that gain significance *only because* they are left somewhat open-ended by the commandments and boundaries of

public morality ... In other words, the requirements of justice have traditionally set the boundaries of care ... insofar as the boundaries of the private (in this case, private morality as expressed by care) are set by the categories and definitions of the public (in this case, public morality, i.e., the ethic of justice), that which is relegated to the private is not judged on its own terms. Private morality is not perceived as independent of the "more important" public realm. It is by nature dependent and secondary.<sup>21</sup>

In the light of comments such as these, it has to be realised that Gilligan's data is only the first phase of a construction of feminist morality. The analysis and interpretation of these data needs to transcend existing structures and frameworks which are faulty and/or inadequate; the care perspective *need not* be construed as a mere addition to the justice perspective. If Gilligan is offering a women's morality that is merely added on to men's morality, she is not doing justice to her test results. The problem remains even if the care perspective is held to be more significant or important than the justice perspective. Gilligan does, indeed, hold this view: "The promise in joining women and moral theory lies in the fact that human survival, in the late twentieth century, may depend less on formal agreement than on human connection."<sup>22</sup>

The arguments presented in this section demonstrate that Gilligan's results are used much less effectively and adequately than they might be and that this is because of the limits of her analysis. The next section of the Chapter considers the plausibility of various proposals for morality deriving from the morality of care and attempts to highlight some valuable insights that a care ethic might offer to moral philosophy.

## 4.2 Caring Relationships

One of the important conclusions of the previous section is that proposals for a morality of care must focus not only on the substantive content of morality but also on how the system might be placed amongst existing moral systems. Gilligan, for example, argues that the two perspectives cannot be integrated because the assumptions, ideals and procedures associated with each perspective are dramatically different; they operate on 'different logics':

... one seeking grounds for agreement, one seeking grounds for understanding, one assuming separation and thus the need for some external structure of connection, one assuming connection and thus the potential for understanding. These assumptions run deep, generating and reflecting different views of human nature and the human condition.<sup>23</sup>

It seems that Gilligan's classification of the two perspectives as mutually exclusive is arbitrary.<sup>24</sup> Gilligan's data at best demonstrate that different people *do* adopt different perspectives in their perception and judgment of moral issues. The data do *not* show that the two perspectives *cannot* be integrated. The data which Gilligan cites merely indicate tendencies, based either on differences between individuals or on the issue in question, toward one or the other of the perspectives.

A primary difficulty associated with Gilligan's assertion that the two perspectives cannot be integrated is that it renders the care perspective unstructured and arbitrary: the substantive content of a care ethic becomes a matter of determination by the individual given the kinds of relationships she has.

It is not a point of contention that a morality based on care would focus on aspects of particular relationships and, following from this, that universally-

applicable principles or rules will have to be adapted or modified according to, or overridden by, considerations of these particulars. It is, however, a matter for debate whether, and to what extent, principles and rules figure in a morality of care. This issue is important because it points to the *content* of care morality. Thus, for instance, when Gilligan asserts that the care and justice perspectives are mutually exclusive, she does not allow that elements of the justice perspective play a role in care morality.

In her discussion of the care and justice perspectives, one of the key elements of the justice perspective that Gilligan understands to be irrelevant to care is that the former looks at solving moral problems in the style of solving a mathematical problem: characterising problems at a high level of generality so that rules and principles can be applied to each particular case as an instance of the general case.<sup>25</sup> A morality of care developed along such lines—rejecting rules and principles as irrelevant in care morality—could lead to undesirable outcomes. This is especially important in cases in which the relationship between the carer and the cared-for involves power hierarchies: the carer, seen as the mentor, decides on behalf of the cared-for what is best for the latter; the cared-for, seen as weaker and dependent, seeks to oblige.

Proponents of care morality need carefully to consider if moral decision-making should be fully independent of rules and principles. If there are no rules or principles in such a system to guide interaction between myself, say, and another person, the justification for my refusal to consider the other's interests could lie simply in the fact that that person and myself are only distantly related, or not related at all. On that view, I could also argue that the significantly more trivial interests of others more closely related to me, and whom I prefer, should be given consideration and priority over those of the distant other.

Such bias, it seems, is a feature of Nel Noddings' account of the care ethic. She argues that there should be different priorities in caring for people because some people are more closely related to us (which is not *per se* objectionable). The conclusion she draws, however, is questionable because she claims that we have a more 'natural' obligation to them. Her conception of caring based on appeals to naturalism implies, she feels, that she is not obliged to care for starving children in Africa, nor for other animals:

I am not obliged to care for starving children in Africa, because there is no way for this caring to be completed in the other unless I abandon the caring to which I am obligated. I may still choose to do something in the direction of caring, but I am not obliged to do so. When we discuss our obligation to animals, we shall see that this is even more sharply limited by relation.<sup>26</sup>

What is alarming about Noddings' conclusions is not that there are certain persons-in-relation that one is more directly responsible for but rather, that the criteria for moral deliberation are ultimately determined by the nature of the relationship. The arbitrarily-allocated tribalist sentiments are one of the characteristics of human action and behaviour that utilitarian, contractarian and deontological moral theories have been attempting to deal with. Such arbitrary allocation of moral sentiment is not the only contingency in Noddings' account. Indeed, the fundamental distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' is treated with disdain by her:

[In opposing capital punishment] I do not begin by saying, "Capital punishment is wrong." Thus I do not fall into the trap of having to supply reasons for its wrongness that will be endlessly disputed at a logical level. I do not say, "Life is sacred," for I cannot name a source of sacredness. I may point to the irrevocability of the decision, but this

is not in itself decisive, even for me, because in many cases the decision would be just and I could not regret the demise of the condemned.<sup>27</sup>

The implications of Noddings' theory seem chaotic. She even suggests that, in the end, it is up to the free choice of the agent whether one wishes to be caring to another and, therefore, to be moral: "Everything depends, then, upon the will to be good, to remain in caring relation to the other."<sup>28</sup>

Clearly, something as important as morality cannot be subject to the whims and the subjective desires and interests of each individual. There needs to be a degree, at least, of unconditionality in the responsibilities humans as moral agents have to each other—for example, the responsibility to dissuade, and perhaps to counsel, someone contemplating suicide—even in the case of someone we intensely dislike. Noddings' version of the morality of care is practically unworkable.

The aversion to rules and principles in Noddings' and Gilligan's proposals for a morality founded upon caring and responsibility could prove detrimental to care morality. A particularly pressing concern is that a care morality totally dissociated from rules and principles could leave hierarchies in relationships unchecked and, additionally, could overlook modes of subordination which are, ironically, one of the concerns of feminist ethics. Virginia Held articulates her concern that:

On ethical views that renounce principles as excessively abstract, we might have few arguments to uphold the equality of women. After all, as parents can care for children recognized as weaker, less knowledgeable, less capable, and with appropriately restricted rights, so men could care for women deemed inferior in every way. On a view

that ethics could satisfactorily be founded on caring alone, men could care for women considered undeserving of equal rights in all the significant areas in which women have been struggling to have their equality recognized. So an ethic of care, essential as a component of morality, seems deficient if taken as an exclusive preoccupation.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of principles or structure leads to a compromise in the significance of the care ethic. *Precisely because* the care ethic upholds the ideal of relational tie and affection as fundamental, there needs to be safeguards preventing the exploitation of the person-in-relation; whether the person-caring, or, more likely, the person cared-for. Held discusses how the lack of principles in the articulation of a care ethic might be connected to the exploitation of certain persons:

Caring may be a weak defense against arbitrary decisions, and the person cared for may find the relation more satisfactory if both persons, but especially the person caring, are guided, to some extent, by principles concerning obligations and rights. To argue that no two cases are ever alike is to invite moral chaos. Furthermore, for one person to be in a position of caretaker means that that person has the power to withhold care, to leave the other without it. The person cared for is usually in a position of vulnerability.<sup>30</sup>

Held's comments highlight the possibility under the care ethic of the determination of the self by others given that it is based upon a relational conception of the human person. If it is true that women tend to focus on personal concordance and self sacrifice rather than on autonomy and individual rights<sup>31</sup>, then the care ethic, if not properly constructed, would leave women, in particular, open to determination by others.

A possible way in which the self could be determined by another in a (supposedly) caring relationship is when, by virtue of her role, the carer acts in an authoritarian way and, correspondingly, the cared-for's subjection or obedience to the carer's directives is seen as normative for one in her role. In essence, in spite of the ideals of affection, concern, responsiveness and responsibility associated with the care ethic, a care ethic poorly constructed could easily lead to domination based on hierarchy.

There are, in this connection, several elements integral to morality in general that care morality should address. Three of them will be discussed here: autonomy; universalisability and caring affection. The concept of autonomy needs to be dealt with because, being construed often in terms of detached and disinterested self-governance, it plays a significant role in the definition of personal identity and of moral agency in justice- and rights-based conceptions of morality. In this regard, given that care morality emphasises relatedness rather than detachment, careful analysis needs to be made of the concept of autonomy within care morality: whether it is important to maintain the concept; whether it has to be forgone; or if it can be modified in a manner consistent with the ideals of the care ethic. Secondly, the possible significance and role of universalisability within care morality needs to be examined because it appears that care morality, emphasising the special and irreplaceable features of particular relationships, must discard the universalisability criterion as a feature of moral consideration. Thirdly, the notion of caring affection and its place within care morality are important issues that need to be addressed particularly in the case that caring affection is the motivational source of caring actions and behaviours.

#### 4.2.1 The Care Ethic and Autonomy

The notion of the moral agent as an autonomous individual figures prominently in moral theories, most notably in those which emphasise detachment, impartiality, and agent-responsibility and accountability as important aspects of moral agency. Such a construal of autonomy is brought into question in the context of care morality which stresses connectedness rather than detachment and impartiality, and responsiveness rather than individual accountability. Indeed, if impartiality is seen as an important constituent of action then the inconsistency between autonomy and the project and ideals of the care ethic will be obvious.

One possible way of resolving this inconsistency is to assert that autonomy has no place in care morality. Such a move is, however, somewhat impetuous because there are aspects of moral agency connected with the notion of autonomy which are critical in accounting for personal identity. For example, Gilligan articulates a concern that, given that connectedness rather than individuation is the primary motif in self development, it might be (mistakenly) inferred that the related self is not a subject, but merely an object.<sup>32</sup> In other words, if the self is understood to be defined solely or mainly by others and/or by its relationships, a possible outcome might be that the self is viewed as a 'selfless object'.<sup>33</sup>

In the light of this difficulty, it is essential that care moralities are not perceived as fostering a conceptions of the cared-for or person-caring as being without a self. For this reason, while it might be important to demonstrate that care morality is consistent with notions of autonomy associated with impartiality and with rights to autonomy<sup>34</sup>, what seems to be of fundamental importance insofar as the definition of the self is concerned is the idea of self regulation or self governance. On most accounts of moral

agency—whether the moral agent is seen as an individuated self or a connected self—moral action and deliberation necessarily presupposes an extent of volition and choice initiated and owned by the moral agent.

From this discussion, it follows that proponents of care morality should seek to maintain a paradigm of the moral agent as a related, yet self-governing, individual. This is the view, for example, of Diana Meyers who constructs a notion of autonomy that serves as a viable alternative to autonomy characterised essentially as impartial reason.<sup>35</sup> She argues that autonomy *qua* self governance has an important place in care morality. More specifically, the thrust of her argument is that the caring ideal is consistent with and, indeed, yields a convincing account of autonomy that is quite different from those derived from Kantian conceptions of moral agency. Meyers' proposal arises from the context of criticisms that the care ethic is inconsistent with ideals of autonomy because the former focuses on relatedness while the latter on actions based on freely and rationally chosen moral principles.

Meyers argues that there is at least one other way (other than in terms of impartial reason) to conceptualise autonomy. Meyers draws here on the concept of responsibility reasoning. While reflective equilibrium is the measure of moral competence for impartial moral reasoning, responsibility reasoning is the measure of moral competence in care morality. Meyers' account is not only consistent with the care ethic, it provides a paradigm of moral reasoning which provides safeguards against exploitation.

This latter issue, referred to in the previous section, is an important concern in care morality because the carer / cared-for relationship could be misinterpreted or misrepresented as a power hierarchy which subordinates

the cared-for. In Meyers' account the responsible reasoner exercises 'imaginative introjection'. In other words, she imagines herself in a range of situations, asking herself questions such as "Could I bear to be the sort of person who can do that?"; she also examines a range of solutions open-mindedly, being attuned to self-referential responses guided by moral emotions such as shame and pride. All these skills, according to Meyers, are complex ones which allow the individual to consult herself. It is in this sense that one might say the responsible reasoner is self-governing.

On this account of responsibility in moral reasoning, the source of value is one's self or, more specifically, one's perception of one's self. Meyers' characterisation of personal identity and moral agency are promising in that they take into account agent autonomy. Moreover, caring need not be servile or self-sacrificial. Indeed, in subordinating oneself to others one would, in Meyers' terms, be compromising on or undermining one's self-respect; the moral agent who is capable both of self-referential assessment and of self-governing would not allow this.<sup>36</sup>

It needs to be noted that the point of Meyers' argument is not to demonstrate that all carers are responsible reasoners but that there is at least one plausible conception of autonomy that is consistent with the care morality and different from the Kantian approach. The next section discusses the dynamics of universalisability and of particularity, as they might figure in care morality.

#### **4.2.2 Universalisability and Particularity**

Some proponents of care morality—Noddings, for example—have sought to undermine the universalisability criterion as overriding in moral deliberation. That the universalisability criterion is subject to such scrutiny is not new; for

instance, even a justice- or rights-oriented approach to morality such as the one Kohlberg subscribes to in his research does not idealise universalisability; indeed, Kohlberg upholds as paradigmatic a form of moral reasoning which involves the agent's exercise of self-governance in his choice of which principles to apply in particular situations.<sup>37</sup>

It needs to be kept in mind, however, that if a critical appraisal of the universalisability criterion is seen to entail an aversion to all kinds of norms or standards in moral reasoning, such a move could be detrimental to care morality because it leaves the person being cared-for in a position of vulnerability; it is in this way that the issues of universalisability and autonomy are connected. In other words, if it is felt that behaviours and actions are not open to more public and objective standards of scrutiny and that morality is sufficiently and wholly defined by a particular relationship, then there seems to be little one could do—especially the one in the position of the cared-for—to question the unfair, inappropriate or wrongful treatment of oneself by a particular other, within the context of a relationship. For example, although the care ethic wants to say that the mother-child relationship is a distinctive one and is quite different, say, from an employer-employee relationship (there is nothing really controversial about this point), it should not hold, as well, that whatever a mother does with her child falls entirely within the boundaries of that special relationship and therefore that there are no norms or standards that apply universally to instances of maternal caring.

Universalisability is important in care morality because it at least helps in curtailing arbitrary moral decision-making based solely on how one happens to feel for another. In this respect, it should be noted that because it is sometimes assumed that caring for another is nothing more than a feeling that it cannot be regulated in any systematic or universal way. Such an

assumption is, however, simplistic because it fails to consider other morally significant factors of relational attachment such as, for example, duties or obligations specific to particular roles within relationships. In this connection, the proponent of a care morality needs at least to make a distinction between caring affection on the one hand, and responsibilities pertaining to caring relationships, on the other. The responsibilities to another within a particular relationship are quite different—and are largely independent—of how one might feel about that other person from time to time or even all of the time. For example, as those who have had the experience of caring for children will know, there are many moments when the feeling of outflowing love and care as a parent seems remote; even at such times, however, caring acts still need to be performed because the responsibilities of the caring relationship need to be met. On such a view, both the affection and the responsibilities arising from personal involvement and commitment are integral to the relationship itself.

In the case of responsibilities specific to particular caring relationships, it is clear that at least certain responsibilities can be specified and can be held to be universally binding. (For example, in a parent-child relationship, caring about the physical, emotional and mental well-being of one's child is typically expected of parents.) This does not mean that all parents must necessarily feed their children the same kind of food, say, nor that some person other than the parent—say, a teacher—cannot care for a child in the way parents normally do. A teacher, or someone other than the child's parents, might indeed care for a particular child in the way a parent normally does. It is, however, neither required nor typical for a teacher to do so; nor, in all respects, is it normally appropriate.

In the area of parental care, certain forms and expressions of caring—such as monitoring the child's social and moral development, getting the child to eat nutritional food, and, more generally, ensuring as far as possible that the child leads a happy life—are paradigmatic and, one could say, universalisable obligations. It follows from this that if a particular parent does not see these as crucial aspects of the parent-child relationship, we want to say "There's something not right here", rather than "Well, it's basically up to her; after all, she's the child's mother."

An emphasis on particularity need not be inconsistent with the specification of some principles or norms which limit what is not applicable or undesirable in care moralities. On the other hand, it is insufficient merely to address these limits because they provide the boundaries, but not the *content*, of caring.

The issue at hand is how a person in a relationship might, in taking into consideration certain aspects of a relationship, express care and concern for a particular other in ways that are morally desirable. Given the uniqueness of each relationship and of individuals involved in the relationship, there is an unavoidable arbitrariness when the content of care is discussed.

While noting these difficulties, some philosophers have attempted to articulate how caring persons might act or behave in certain contexts and, in that connection, have discussed the dynamics of paradigmatic forms of caring. For instance, Sara Ruddick<sup>39</sup> discusses a range of aspects of maternal caring (often considered paradigmatic of care morality), demonstrating how particular features of the mother-child relationship might figure in the mother's moral reasoning. She argues that good maternal caring requires sensitivity as well as cognitive grasp of both the mother-child

relationship and the character of the child itself:

A child is itself an “open structure” whose acts are irregular, unpredictable, often mysterious. A mother, in order to understand her child, must assume the existence of a conscious continuing person whose acts make sense in terms of perceptions and responses to a meaning-filled world. She knows that her child’s fantasies and thoughts are not only connected to the child’s power to act, but often the only basis for her understanding of the child and for the child’s self-understanding.<sup>39</sup>

Ruddick’s depiction of the resources required of the mother *qua* carer in the context of a real, lived relationship, captures the amount of commitment and involvement that is required in mothering. In addition, it reveals that the dynamism inherent in relationships in part creates new and often unexpected situations which exact spontaneous responses.<sup>40</sup>

The assessment of how appropriate or desirable a particular response is, will depend in part on the ability and willingness of individuals to grasp the morally salient features of a particular relationship in a given circumstance. It will, as well, depend on the ability and willingness of individuals to take these factors into account when constructing a response. In other words, it needs to be acknowledged and recognised that a moral system that emphasises particularity is *just* this vague.

An important aspect of the ethic of care that has not been dealt with thus far is that of caring affection. In general, the emotions that operate within relationships further add to the complexity of taking particulars into account. Some of these emotions such as love and caring affection are most often construed positively both in motivational and consequentialist terms: a mother tending to a sick child might, for example, take great pains to

encourage her child to maintain his intake of fluids, and to ensure that he does.

The role of caring affection in care morality is, however, not always as straightforward or simple as portrayed in the preceding example. For instance, in dealing with mothering and 'letting go', a dialectic of control and 'letting go' is constantly at work,<sup>41</sup> and for some this process is marred by the intensity of emotional attachment to the other.

While 'letting go' is most often used within the context of parent-child or carer-child relationships, questions regarding control of the other and respect for (the autonomy of) the other do arise in many other relational contexts. The role of caring affection in care morality is discussed next.

#### **4.2.3 Caring Affection**

The issue of caring affection as an important motivational source of acts of caring is important in discussions of the *content* of care morality as well as its structures. In relation to content, what needs to be considered is how the different kinds of caring or, in other words, the different ways of expressing care, might figure in moral practice. For example, caring for a child is a different kind of activity and involves different sentiments, sensibilities and responsibilities from caring for a close friend. Or, to use a more striking example, the way I cared for my father when he was 51 years of age and I was 19 (insofar as someone at 19 years of age *does* care for his parents) is different *kind* of caring which calls for a range of different sentiments, sensibilities and responsibilities when father is 72 and myself 40.

To some extent, Nel Noddings attempts to discuss expressions of care. She models caring upon the paradigm of motherly concern and affection, elaborating that paradigm in terms of ideals of responsibility,

responsiveness, emotional attachment etc. Two criticisms of Noddings' view are discussed here. The first is a lack of clarity regarding how the paradigm of motherly concern might differ from other forms of caring. Thus, as pointed out previously, care expresses itself in different ways in different relationships, and it seems naive to assume that maternal caring is appropriate and paradigmatic in all relationships.

The second problem with Noddings' paradigm of maternal caring is that it is based on an empirical claim (that mothers often care in supererogatory and admirable ways for their children). Because this is the case, she seems at a loss, at one point, regarding what might be said or done about mothers who do not exhibit appropriate maternal care.<sup>42</sup> Noddings appears to be unaware that she is, in effect, utilising independent criteria to assess that some mothers are caring ones and others are not; she does not at any stage attempt to specify these criteria, apart from stating that they are 'natural'.

The remarks made above are not meant to suggest that a morality based on empirical claims is untenable. The point is, rather, that Noddings' treatment of empirical data is inadequate. Her theory does not seek to justify *why* certain expressions of care, and the emotions and affection associated with them, are appropriate, others inappropriate and still others, perhaps, impermissible.

From the preceding discussion of Noddings' proposal for a care ethic, it appears that it involves a primary confusion between the *emotions* and the *duties* associated with caring. Noddings seems to be saying that there are certain things mothers do for their children which are morally praiseworthy and which arise from emotional attachment. While this assertion is empirically

sound, her thesis that caring affections are natural and thus nonmoral<sup>43</sup> is based on the questionable assumption that emotions do not belong to the moral realm.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, Noddings' construal of caring affection as natural rests on two mistakes: the first is the failure to distinguish between the duties and the emotions relevant to relational interaction; the second, arising from the first, is that she does not adequately represent the role of caring affection in care morality. As argued in the previous section, there are certain features of caring relationships which ought to be regulated. There are, for example, duties associated with caring which are subject to rules, norms and standards which are non-subjective and universal. These duties to another in a particular relationship are quite different from, yet intimately intertwined with, the feelings one might have for that other person. For example, the concept of moral blame is applicable in judging a mother's neglect of the health of her child as morally reprehensible. Even if it were, up till this instance, convincing that the mother was in general a loving and affectionate mother, such neglect of the child—the failure to fulfil her responsibilities to the child—could understandably be construed as a symptom of a failure to love her child (which, in itself, might be seen as morally reprehensible). Implicit in this picture of maternal caring is the view that, while caring affection is seen as an important motivational source of relational attachment, either the lack of caring affection itself or the failure to perform acts of care are moral shortcomings of the carer.

The connection between caring affection and the duties of care can be illuminated by examining Michael Stocker's views of friendship and duty as contexts and forms of moral reasoning.<sup>45</sup> In his attempt to demonstrate an

interconnection between rights-based morality and responsibility-based morality (*contra* Gilligan), Stocker discusses the above mentioned components of caring. Using the example of friendship as an instance of responsibility-based morality, and duty as an instance of rights-based morality, Stocker argues, first, that friendship and duty are not as different as they are often thought to be and, secondly, that they are in fact connected in important ways. He contends that responsibility-based morality, in the instance of friendship, provides an important vantage point from which to assess a rights-based morality. Thus, he claims that *because* friendship offers a corrective for contemporary accounts of duty and duty-centred ethics, a theory of duty that leaves no room for friendship is an inadequate theory of duty. More generally, he proposes a synthesis of the two moralities, noting that traditional ways of conceptualising friendship as a natural category in the sense that it is premoral or extra moral imply that friendship is a natural good and not a moral good.<sup>46</sup>

Stocker acknowledges that his proposal is at a preliminary stage in the sense that it does not investigate the content of friendship or of duty, and, thus, how they differ; he simply points out that there are general norms and standards regarding how friends should or should not treat each other. On the other hand, he does demonstrate that friendship may give rise to *duties of friendship* such as certain special forms of care and consideration that are different from what is owed nonfriends. Stocker maintains a clear distinction between relating to people as friends and relating to people from duty. He argues, making a distinction between the *duty of friendship* and *duties of friendship*<sup>47</sup>, that much of what is constitutive of, and importantly valuable about friendship is not a duty, not even a duty of friendship; an example of this is spending time together.

In his conception of friendship, Stocker includes both the emotions associated with caring<sup>48</sup> and the duties associated with caring as integral elements. The fulfilment of duties of friendship, he argues, are necessary but not sufficient for friendship: while a good friend will take care not to violate any duties of friendship, a friend who is concerned only to fulfil such duties is not much of a friend. This is because, Stocker believes, "[d]uties of friendship are at once constitutive of, and grounded by the friendship".<sup>49</sup>

It is not only in the case of friendship but in other intimate relationships as well that both the affection and responsibilities arising from personal involvement and commitment are integral to the relationship itself. One of the important contributions of the care perspective is its emphasis on the recognition of the moral status of such involvement in intimate relationships. The preceding discussion points to a need for the clarification of concepts and issues pertaining to the nature and dynamics of personal relationships; two of the issues in question will be discussed here.

First, the distinction between caring affections and external acts of caring needs to be maintained. As demonstrated in the discussion above, a failure to distinguish between the two aspects of a caring relationship could lead to the conceptualisation of caring which is unnecessarily subjective, feral and not subject to regulation—as *per* Noddings' account. The distinction is crucial, too, in maintaining the interdependence between acts of caring and the emotional involvement in a caring relationship. While the appropriate caring affection might not have generated nor accompanied particular caring acts, relational attachment characterised primarily or solely by the fulfilment of duties or responsibilities, and devoid of personal attachment or commitment, are not the interactions we associate with personal relationships. In the case of friendship, Stocker remarks that:

... it is clear that a good person who is, in all senses, a good friend will take care not to violate any duties of friendship. But it is equally clear that much of what is constitutive of, and importantly valuable about, acts of friendship is not a duty, not even a duty of friendship.<sup>50</sup>

The complexity of the interdependence between acts and emotions of caring deserve detailed examination which the scope of this discussion does not allow. However, what could minimally be said is that it cannot be assumed that there is a necessary causal connection between particular caring emotions and particular caring acts. Because of the subjective nature of emotions, it is idealistic to hold that all caring action within intimate personal relationships *must* be generated by caring emotions. In the context of particular intimate relationships, while one might be praised for *feeling* appropriate caring emotions which are motivationally generative of admirable actions—for example, the paradigm of maternal sacrifice—it would be questionable to hold that a mother who fails to call forth loving and self-sacrificial emotions is culpable and morally blameworthy.

How caring emotions might figure in a morality based on care is the second issue that needs to be clarified. What has so far been discussed regarding affection for another in a personal relationship is merely preliminary, in part because of the subjective, personal and inscrutable nature of emotions in general. In addition, there are certain general standards and norms that apply to caring affections such that a particular affection might be deemed inappropriate in a particular caring relationship; these standards and norms are largely empirical, depending heavily on socio-cultural norms of appropriateness in relational interaction. The multifaceted aspects of these norms add to their complexity, reflecting the richness and depth of human relationships within specific socio-cultural frameworks with

shared modes of life. In a liberal context, for example, the concept of paternalistic caring has acquired a sense of negativity and is distinguished from (appropriate) paternal care of a father for a child.

The precise specification of *appropriate* emotions of care in particular caring relationships involves a complex combination of factors including sociocultural norms and accepted forms and modes of life in one's moral community, as previously mentioned. It also involves the particular characteristics of each of the participants in the relationship, whereby the historical narratives of their lives, their moral maturity, their sensitivities, needs and interests, and their involvements with other persons and projects. In summary, care morality is not different from other moral systems or norms in terms of requiring structures of justification. For even if it is acknowledged that the material and concrete content of caring relationships is sociologically and culturally variable, there needs to be frameworks and structures which allow the assessment of these forms.

In conclusion, while this chapter is critical of certain proposals of the care ethic (for a variety of reasons), it should be noted that its aim is not to dismiss the care ethic altogether. Rather, an important theme is that although the care ethic is essentially a feminist critique of contemporary moral theory, it nevertheless has important implications for moral philosophy in general. In other words, the motif of human connectedness is important not only for women (in how they construe themselves and their lives), but for all persons. Relatedly, a theory which attempts to capture morally-salient aspects of connectedness is more realistic and robust than one which sees the moral agent as an atomistic individual. In particular, because the care ethic emphasises affectionate concern as an important motivational source of

moral action, it is able to give theoretical recognition to a range of behaviours which would generally be regarded as praiseworthy (or blameworthy) but which are not taken account of by rule- or justice-based theories. Indeed, the commitment required of carers, as well as those cared-for, by care morality, properly construed, is much more exacting and intense than what most rule- or duty-based moralities in general require of moral agents. For example, instances of caring such as one's spending many hours with a friend who has lost her job, or concern that one's child is exhibiting aggressive behaviours, and dealing with that, call for a significant amount of time, energy and other resources that many moral theories would classify as supererogatory.

Furthermore, there have been interesting issues raised by feminist moral philosophers, regarding the relative status of care- and justice- or rule-based moralities. The general thrust of these arguments suggest that many aspects of the care ethic—content, process, affection, moral deliberation and attention to particularity—are indeed fundamental and integral to the proper functioning of human lives. In that connection, proponents of the care ethic have advanced a range of proposals regarding the place of care moralities in contemporary ethical practice.

While Gilligan speculates on the possibility of the care perspective superseding the justice perspective in importance<sup>51</sup>, others such as Held and Walker have put forward somewhat more restrained views. Held argues for pluralist ethics in the context of which maternal nurturing, rather than marketplace, contractual ethics, is central.<sup>52</sup> Walker contends that particularity should procedurally and conceptually precede universality, in moral deliberation.<sup>53</sup> In other words, moral deliberation should not be conceived of as a process whereby one applies a general rule to a particular situation.

Rather, "...moral adequacy falls off in the direction of generality..."<sup>54</sup> because focusing on the details of a particular situation is the 'best case', given that one is able to grasp 'fully and directly' the morally salient features of the situation. On the other hand, resorting to the application of general standards—Walker terms these 'surrogates' for paradigmatic caring—to a particular case is a 'degenerate instance' of moral reasoning.

The following two chapters analyse, respectively, Confucian and Pauline views of human relatedness. Both traditions construe personal involvement with particular others as an integral part of the life of the community. Confucianism emphasises differentiated attachments, loyalties and responsibilities to particular others as the basis of a communitarian socio-political structure, stressing the necessity of maintaining a hierarchy founded upon differential loyalties and obligations. Pauline Christianity, on the other hand, upholds a relatively egalitarian community in which love (*αγαπη*) is considered the primary motivational source of other- and community-directed actions and behaviours.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. See the discussion in the opening section of Chapter One. Refer to note 3 in Chapter One.
- <sup>2</sup>. Nel Noddings, for example, who proposes an account of caring and relatedness (in Caring, University of California Press, USA, 1984), argues this point: that maternal caring is 'natural', rather than moral. See the discussion of this issue in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.3. One of the points made there is that while Noddings proposes a system of morality based on relationships and rejects morality based on rules and principles, she nevertheless

subscribes to a categorisation of the former as unregulated and the latter as being the proper concern of morality.

- <sup>3</sup>. Marilyn Friedman cautions critics of impartiality, that what they are advancing might in fact be fallacious straw person arguments (in "The Practice of Partiality", Ethics, **101**, July 1991, pp. 818-835). Friedman outlines the view of William Godwin (Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, K. Codell Carter (ed), Oxford, Clarendon House, 1971), who states explicitly that, in the event of a disaster in which he can only save one person, he should choose (on grounds of social worth) to save the archbishop rather than his "... beloved but socially worthless mother, a mere chambermaid". Friedman argues that even amongst impartialists, extreme views such as Godwin's are in fact very rare. She writes that "Contemporary impartialists have clarified that impartial moral theories do not require each of us to devote all our resources to helping the world's needy" (p. 832).
- <sup>4</sup>. The findings of this study are discussed in Gilligan's In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, Harvard University Press, 1982.
- <sup>5</sup>. Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development", in Eva Kittay and Diana Meyers (eds), Women and Moral Theory, Rowman and Littlefield, USA, 1987, p. 23.
- <sup>6</sup>. *ibid*, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>7</sup>. The conclusions he draws from his tests reflect the bias of his choice of subjects: because his subjects are males of predominantly of Anglo-American origin and belong to the higher classes of industrialised societies, his model of moral decision-making uses the moral reasoning of higher-class, white, males as normative and paradigmatic. See Addelson, Impure Thoughts, *op.cit.*, p. 206. Addelson notes that in Kohlberg's conclusions, the moral reasoning of some higher class men has been classified as being 'genuine', thus endorsing this mode of moral reasoning as normative.

- <sup>8</sup>. Linda J. Nicholson, "Women, Morality and History", in Mary Larrabee (ed) An Ethic of Care, *op.cit.*, p. 100.
- <sup>9</sup>. Diana Baumrind, "Sex Differences in Moral Reasoning: Response to Walker's (1984) Conclusion that There Are None", in Mary Larrabee (ed) An Ethic of Care, *op.cit.*
- <sup>10</sup>. See especially Joan Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care", in Mary Larrabee (ed) An Ethic of Care, *op.cit.*, especially pp. 243-4. It is highly unlikely that Gilligan is not unaware of these problems with Kohlberg's theory—these criticisms have, after all, often been made of Kohlberg's studies and conclusions. It could perhaps be the case that Gilligan is only interested in focusing on the gender bias of his interpretations of data. This explanation is, however, unsatisfactory because the qualities of care, responsibility and commitment (as characteristic of the care perspective) are complements to Kohlberg's justice, obligation and impartiality; the derivation will be flawed if the original is flawed.
- <sup>11</sup>. See John Broughton, "Women's Rationality and Men's Virtues", in Mary Larrabee (ed), An Ethic of Care, *op.cit.*
- <sup>12</sup>. Broughton makes the critical point (*ibid*) that Gilligan's analyses in fact obscures many significant implications her test results might have to moral philosophy. For example, Gilligan, in moving away from Kohlberg's theory, is offering a virtues-based approach to morality as opposed to the deontological approach taken by Kohlberg. This, claims Broughton, has implications for human psychology especially in a pedagogical sense. Another important implication of Gilligan's results which she seems unaware of is that while her construction of women's morality is content-oriented (ie particulars of concrete selves and their ongoing personal relationships to concrete others that ground moral decision-making and action), Gilligan ignores the important range of opposite notions which characterise content-oriented morality on the one hand, and form-oriented morality, on the other. For example, Gilligan conceives of content not in

the way it affects moral decision-making but, rather, in the way in which such content is cognised, analysed and utilised in behaviour. This move, Broughton argues, takes the notion of content almost to the level of form. More generally, Gilligan seems to confuse and obfuscate important distinctions between "...form and content, thought and action, structure and function, concept and experience, abstract and concrete" (p. 129) See especially pp. 127-133.

<sup>13</sup>. John Broughton argues that although Gilligan acknowledges that there are moments when men speak out in the female voice and when women speak out in the male voice, her dualistic psychological classification of the two voices is problematic when either of the situations described above *does* happen. Broughton writes, "Is a man speaking in the feminine voice at that moment a woman? Or is he merely a female impersonator? At least at the intuitive level of "Who is female and who is male?" gender is a relatively clear distinction, and when slippage is permitted between gender and "voice" the latter loses its power to serve as either an explanation or an illumination of the former." (pp. 135-6; *ibid*).

<sup>14</sup>. Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development", in Eva Kittay and Diana Meyers (eds), Women and Moral Theory, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup>. *ibid*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>16</sup>. *ibid*, p. 21, italics mine.

There could be other perspectives from which to view and analyse moral problems. These include: community; honesty; courage and prudence. See Lawrence Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory", in Mary Larrabee (ed) An Ethic of Care, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup>. Kathryn Addelson, Impure Thoughts: Essays on Philosophy, Feminism & Ethics, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1991, p. 190. Note that this is not Addelson's

interpretation of Gilligan's work. Addelson makes the point that this is one *possible* understanding of Gilligan's analyses.

Paul Crittenden makes a similar note regarding this point. See Learning To Be Moral, Humanities Press, USA, 1990, pp. 87-98.

<sup>18</sup>. Kathryn Addelson, Impure Thoughts, *ibid*, p. 190.

<sup>19</sup>. Genevieve Lloyd, The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy, Routledge, London, 2nd ed., 1993, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup>. Joan Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care", in Mary Larrabee (ed) An Ethic of Care, *op.cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>21</sup>. *ibid*, italics mine.

<sup>22</sup>. Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development", *op.cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup>. Working from a set of experimental data, Gilligan's findings are that, of 80 subjects, 55 (69%) raised considerations of *both* justice and care. 54 out of 80 (2/3) focused their attention on one set of concerns - focus being defined as 75% or more of the considerations raised pertaining either to justice or to care.

<sup>25</sup>. In In a Different Voice, *op. cit.*, especially Chapter two.

<sup>26</sup>. Nel Noddings, Caring, *ibid*, p. 86. It seems that Noddings is aware of the dramatic implications of her theory that she attempts to back it up with what she calls 'ethical caring' (as opposed to 'natural caring'). She argues that in cases where a mother does not care naturally, then she "must summon ethical caring to support her as one-caring" (p. 89) In construing the caring relation as a natural category, Noddings seems to accord to the mother-child relationship a *supernatural* status: there is an *obligation* of the mother to care for the child—but this already moves the mother and the child from the naturally caring relationship (which she seems at pains to maintain). Indeed, the 'natural' status of the mother-child caring relationship is threatened in the case of a

mother who refuses to (naturally or ethically) care for her child. Unwilling to admit this, however, Noddings simply states that the mother in this case has a diminished ethical ideal. This is like, she argues, the case of someone who retreats away from human beings in order to care for ideas, animals, God, or even humanity-at-large (see pp. 89-90). Noddings's preoccupation with establishing an ethic of care modelled on *motherly* affection is so extreme that she is able to view Abraham's story only from a limited perspective: in refuting the relevance of (the Christian) God for women—a God 'wrought in the image of man' (p. 97)—Noddings characterises Abraham's approach to his dilemma (and Kierkegaard's defense of Abraham) as a 'masculine approach to ethics'. She fails to see that Abraham had a moral dilemma simply *because* of his relatedness and of the different sets of obligations associated with his different relations with his child and with his God.

<sup>27</sup>. *ibid*, p. 101.

<sup>28</sup>. *ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>29</sup>. Virginia Held, "Feminism and Moral Theory", in Kittay and Meyers (eds) Women and Moral Theory, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>30</sup>. *ibid*, p. 119.

<sup>31</sup>. See Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, *op.cit.*

<sup>32</sup>. Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development", in Kittay and Meyers (eds) Women and Moral Theory, *op.cit.*

<sup>33</sup>. *ibid*. pp. 28-29. Gilligan discusses Nancy Chodorow's work ("Family Structure and Feminine Personality" in L. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds) Women, Culture and Society, Stanford University Press, California, 1974; and The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender, University of California

Press, Berkeley, 1978), alluding especially to the problems associated with the latter's reliance on the Object Relations Theory which sustains these oppositions.

- <sup>34</sup>. Thomas Hill argues this in "The Importance of Autonomy", in Eva Kittay and Diana Meyers (eds) Women and Moral Theory, *op.cit.* Hill seeks to maintain that three interpretations of autonomy as (a) impartiality; (b) right to non interference; and (c) a goal for personal development are consistent with care morality. His first two arguments—that impartiality is consistent with the care ethic because it does not entail that moral agents be detached and calculating, and that one's right to autonomy is consistent with compassion—still seem to presuppose impartiality and rights as valuable.
- <sup>35</sup>. Diana Meyers, "The Socialised Individual and Individual Autonomy: An Intersection between Philosophy and Psychology", in Kittay and Meyers (eds) Women and Moral Theory, *op.cit.*
- <sup>36</sup>. Meyers' notion of open-mindedness derives from Charles Taylor's 'strong evaluation'. Taylor's strong evaluators (as contrasted with 'weak' ones) have a capacity for evaluative self-reflection at a level beyond one's basic desires and inclinations, a meta-level ordering of one's raw desires, so to speak. There is a strong ethical component in Taylor's conception of strong evaluation: reflective self-evaluation is constitutive of personal identity in that it is an important feature of moral agency; this is a feature that weak evaluators lack: a weak evaluator looks only at how his first-order desires can be satisfied whereas a strong evaluator considers how the pursuit and/or satisfaction of these first-order desires are related to the quality of his life. This conception of the self is elitist because although Taylor claims that we are all strong evaluators: "... the human beings we are and live with are *all* strong evaluators" and, furthermore, "... our identity is defined by our [strong] evaluations" ("What is Human Agency?" in The Self, Psychological and Philosophical Issues, T. Mischel (ed) Basil

Blackwell, 1977, p. 34; italics mine). It is obvious, however, that it is *not* the case that everyone is a strong evaluator in Taylor's sense. See, for example, Owen Flanagan's criticisms of Taylor's views (Taylor's "Responsibility for Self" in Amelie Rorty (ed) The Identities of Persons, University of California Press, USA, 1976) in "Identity and Strong and Weak Evaluation" in Owen Flanagan and Amelie O Rorty (eds) Identity, Character and Morality: Essays in Moral Psychology, MIT Press, USA, 1990.

<sup>37</sup>. See Lawrence Kohlberg, The Philosophy of Moral Development, Harper and Row, New York, 1981, especially his description of the seventh stage of moral reasoning. In this connection, some care ethicists reject the Kohlbergian construction of autonomy as presupposing a disinterested, unattached reasoner.

<sup>38</sup>. See Sara Ruddick, Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace, Ballantine Books, New York, 1989, and "Maternal Thinking", in Feminist Studies, Vol. 6, pp. 342-367, 1980.

<sup>39</sup>. Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking", *ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>40</sup>. Ruddick's treatment of motherhood is multi-dimensional and much more complex than what is presented here. For instance, a significant aspect of her thesis is that mothering is antithetical to violence.

It needs to be mentioned, too, that Ruddick's view of maternal caring has attracted many criticisms. Many are critical of her theme of maternal nonviolence; some others are concerned that her analysis is specific to a concept of mothering operative only in middle-class, heterosexual, nuclear families in developed nations. See, for example, Victoria Davion's and Lorraine Code's work on these issues.

<sup>41</sup>. Refer to Sara Ruddick's "Maternal Thinking", *op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup>. See note 26 in this chapter.

<sup>43</sup>. Using the mother-child relationship as a paradigm of the ethic of care, Noddings argues that "[t]he most intimate situations of caring are...natural. I do not feel that taking care of my own child is "moral" but, rather natural." (p. 83); in Caring, *op.cit.*

- <sup>44</sup>. There is much recent literature dealing with the moral significance of emotions and with the control of one's emotions. These issues, however, are not the central concern here.
- <sup>45</sup>. Michael Stocker "Duty and Friendship: Toward a Synthesis of Gilligan's Contrastive Moral Concepts" in Kittay and Meyers (eds) Women and Moral Theory, *op.cit.*
- <sup>46</sup>. Stocker warns that to think of friendship—or, more generally, of relationships—as natural categories could imply the view that relationships are only naturally and not morally important. See his discussion of generative and constitutive naturalism, pp. 60-63, *ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup>. The former refers to a duty to seek, have or maintain friendship; the latter to duties we might have as a result of friendship. See p. 65, *ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup>. He feels that affections are subject to moral praise and blame. See pp. 65-66, *ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 65.
- <sup>50</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 66.
- <sup>51</sup>. Refer to note 22 of this chapter.
- <sup>52</sup>. Virginia Held, "Feminism and Moral Theory", *op.cit.*
- <sup>53</sup>. Margaret Walker, "What does the Different Voice Say?: Gilligan's Women and Moral Philosophy", Journal of Value Inquiry, Vol. 23, pp. 123-134.
- <sup>54</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 130.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONFUCIAN COMMUNITY

An important theme in Confucian thought is that the self can only properly be defined with reference to other individuals. The notion of a connected self—is opposed to that of an atomistic individual—is a dominant motif in Confucian views on personal identity, morality and political and social structures. Within the framework of Confucian thought, the human person is in part defined by the nature of the different relationships he or she has with particular others. It follows from such a conceptualisation of the individual that a critical aspect of being human rests in the cultivation of meaningful relationships; thus the question of whether the individual can actualise himself or herself apart from other individuals within society is absurd in the context of Confucian philosophy.

The classical Confucians placed significant emphasis on the socio-political aspects of the community as the framework within which the cultivation of the self would occur. The political structure of society upheld by Confucius in the Analects is based on hierarchical order, the ideal structure of society being derived from Confucius' idealisation of Chou feudalism (Analects 3:14, 2:23, 7:19, 8:18-21). According to this picture, people within the upper levels of the hierarchy (the elite minority) should have greater political and social power because of their capabilities—and, accordingly, greater responsibility—while those at the lower levels of the hierarchy were the common peoples whose roles were much more restricted. Confucius expressed this in the following passage:

When good government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music and punitive military expeditions proceed from the son of Heaven ... When

these things proceed from the princes, as a rule, the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in ten generations ... When right principles prevail in the kingdom, government will not be in the hands of the great officers [but in the hands of the son of Heaven]. When right principles prevail in the kingdom, there will be no [political] discussions or causes for complaint among the common people.<sup>1</sup>

This passage expresses an authoritarian viewpoint. Negatively interpreted, the hierarchical structure imposed by Confucius may be considered a tool for government oppression of the common peoples. However, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that certain passages of the Analects presuppose a more generous and less power-oriented approach to government. Thus while there are authoritarian elements in the Confucian notion of government, there is, at the same time, insistence on the increased responsibilities of those at the top of the hierarchy.

One of the responsibilities of the Confucian gentleman (*chun tzu*) was, in cultivating his relationships with others, to extend his sphere of influence by providing paradigmatic forms of relational interaction upon which other people (the common people) could model their own relationships (Analects 13:10,11). In other words, as Confucius saw it, the *chun tzu* was obliged to foster norms and structures conducive to the formation and maintenance of meaningful relationships within the community. In this connection, statements in the Analects such as the following reveal the significance of the communal context in an individual's moral development:

It is *jen* which constitutes the excellence of a neighbourhood (community). If one, in selecting a residence, does not seek one where *jen* prevails, he is not wise. (Analects 4:1)

It is clear that Analects 4:1 refers to the notion of neighbourhood not merely and trivially in terms of spatial proximity but, more crucially, in terms of the values and norms upheld by a community. This passage, together with Analects 1:8.3: "Have no friends not like yourself", reflect the Confucian conception of the self as necessarily relational and, accordingly, of moral development as a process of learning to cultivate meaningful relationships with others in the community.

This chapter considers the classical Confucian account of the nature and role of relationships as the basis of social, political and moral order. As pointed out previously, moral development, in Confucianism, consists in working out one's relationships with particular others. More precisely, the cultivation of relationships involves, centrally, the performance of accepted actions and forms of behaviour *motivated by appropriate affectionate concern for a particular other within a relationship*. On this view, moral concepts such as responsiveness and responsibility are crucial in moral evaluation. Similar themes also play a central role in the articulation of the care ethic. Because the care ethic has sometimes been characterised as an ethic of the oppressed in the sense that it marks a feminist move from an exclusive focus on autonomy, universalisability and impartiality (characteristic features of masculine moral reasoning) as primary considerations in moral deliberation, it is interesting that Confucian philosophy, which has unmistakable patriarchal tendencies, espouses an account of morality that has important features in common with the care ethic.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the range of structures and norms operative in human relationships in the ideal Confucian community. To this effect, the first section of the chapter analyses the Confucian concept,

*cheng ming* (correcting [usage of] names), a concept fundamental to the Confucian emphasis on relationships. For the Confucians, a person has certain obligations arising from his or her position in a particular relationship with a specific other (eg. father and son, *chun tzu* and subject). A useful way to illuminate the notion of obligations arising from one's position within a relationship in Confucian thought is to compare it with the concept of roles within role morality (ie role of father, role of *chun tzu* etc). In this connection, it needs to be stated at the outset that in Confucian philosophy, a person's having related well with particular others is deeply intertwined with issues of personal identity. By contrast, the concept of moral agency in contemporary Anglo-American moral philosophy appears to be closely linked to a marked distinction between private and public spheres of life. Confucian philosophy does not make this distinction; there are no clear boundaries in Confucianism between cultivating relationships with others and the development of the self. There is indeed, in Confucianism, a marked absence of distinction between the private and public selves and, at a connected but different level, between individual good and the common good, distinctions which are fundamental to the more individualist conception of the human person and of morality. The connection between the concept of a person as a related self and the structures of a society in which these related selves live and function is another important focus in this first section.

The second section analyses the dynamics of three different relationships which are significant in Confucian philosophy. These are: husband-wife; father-son; and *chun tzu*-subject. In examining the structures and norms of these relationships, this section aims to demonstrate the distinctive features of the Confucian system and to point out its merits and its difficulties.

The themes articulated in the first two sections are drawn together in the final section. The thesis of the final section is that while the Confucian emphasis on relational attachment to particular others is a fundamental and irreducible aspect of morality, relational attachment, if it is based simply or primarily on affectionate concern, is not in itself *sufficient* to constitute a moral system. To assume that it is, it is argued, is one of the failings of Confucian philosophy. The argument in this section proceeds to stress that an emphasis on relational attachment needs to be situated within a framework of somewhat more objective norms and principles. A problematic—and subjectivist—stance whereby morality is dependent on the feelings one happens to have (or not to have) for a particular other is thereby avoided. It is suggested that this naive conception of relational morality needs to be avoided as well by those proponents of the care ethic who seek to promote clear discontinuities between the care perspective on the one hand and rights- and justice-based perspectives on the other.

### **5.1 Role Relationships Within the Community: *Cheng-ming***

That the Confucian view of morality is essentially relational is obvious from an examination of the important Confucian concepts such as *jen*, *li*, *chung*, *shu* and *hsiao* (as discussed in chapter two). Another Confucian concept, *cheng ming* [lit. correcting names], even more readily exemplifies a conception of morality which stresses relational attachment. *Cheng ming*, broadly speaking, refers to the view that specific requirements and/or obligations arise within the context of relating to others, the requirements varying according to one's position within particular relationships. In other words, fulfilling the requirements of one's role in a particular relationship is a necessary condition

of one's standing in that relationship and, connectedly, of one's suitability to bear a particular title (eg, '*chun tzu*').

The term '*ming*' in *cheng ming* is literally translated 'name', although 'title' better captures its Confucian usage. In emphasising the correct usage of titles, Confucius was making the point that titles used to designate the range of roles in human relationships are not merely indexical or referential but also have normative significance (Analects 13:3.1-5). It is stated, for example, in Analects 4:5.2 that the *chun tzu* without virtue cannot fulfil the requirements of his title. The concept *cheng ming* is best illustrated by analogy as in an example Confucius himself used:

A cornered vessel without corners; a strange cornered vessel indeed,  
a strange cornered vessel indeed.

[lit. A *ku* that is not *ku*; a *ku* alas, a *ku* alas.] (Analects 6:23)

The *ku* was a drinking vessel used in pre-Confucian times.<sup>2</sup> According to the symbolism of the separate characters which make up the term '*ku*', the character on the left, *jiao*, means 'corner'. In Confucius' time, the shape of that particular kind of drinking vessel (*ku*) had changed (presumably, the corners were eliminated), while the name '*ku*' remained. The distinctive characteristic of the object specifically highlighted in its name was no longer a feature of the object but, despite that, the name meant specially to pick out that distinctive feature was still in use. In making this remark, Confucius was criticising existing socio-political structures: while titles from a previous age<sup>3</sup> (such as *chun tzu*) were retained, Confucius felt that they had empty referents because existing governments were not fulfilling their responsibilities (see, for example, Analects 13:20.4; 6:27; 8:18; 4:6 and 2:7;

the Analects itself is rife with Confucius' comments regarding the follies and wrongs of named people involved in government).

Expounding on the theory of *cheng ming* was one way in which Confucius sought to bring for the leaders of the community a realisation of their responsibilities. The first step toward political reform lay in the moral self-cultivation of these people (*Ta-hsueh* 10:6; *Chung-yung* 20:4; *Analects* 13:6, 13). Such reform, beginning with the government, would filter through to the lives of the people.<sup>4</sup> The view of classical Confucianism is that a ruler who has successfully attained some level of moral development can influence his subjects, and that positive changes toward an ideal Confucian society would thereby be made in the ways of thinking and modes of life of all within the community (*Ta-hsueh* 3:5; 9:1-4; *Analects* 2:1; 8:2; 13:1, 11, 16; 12:19).

Expressed somewhat more abstractly, Confucius is reported to have said that if titles are not correctly used (ie, people in particular roles are not fulfilling their responsibilities), then language itself cannot be properly used; this in turn leads to the situation whereby deeds cannot succeed:

Tzu-lu said, "If the ruler of Wei left the administration (government [*cheng*<sub>2</sub>]) of his state to you, what would you do first?"

The master said, "If something has to be put first, it is (instilling) the correct usage of titles (*cheng*<sub>1</sub> *ming*).

Tzu-lu said, "What a roundabout way you take! Why even refer to correction (*cheng*<sub>1</sub>)?"

The master said, "Yu, how boorish you are. A *chun tzu*, in regard to what he does not know, shows a cautious reserve.

If titles (*ming*) are not correct (*cheng*<sub>1</sub>), language will not be in accord (with reality).

If language is not in accord (with reality), the affairs (of the state) will not be accomplished.

If the affairs (of the state) are not accomplished, *li* and music will not flourish.

If *li* and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly administered.

If punishments are not properly administered, the common people do not know even how to move hand or foot [ie, there are no guides for acceptable behaviour].

Therefore, a *chun tzu* considers it necessary in his usage of titles that these titles, when referred to in speech, can be realised. The *chun tzu* is anything but casual where his use of language is concerned.

(Analects 13:3)

There is a pun in this passage on the terms government (*cheng*<sub>2</sub>) and correct (*cheng*<sub>1</sub>). In Chinese, the character for 'governing' is made up of two other characters, the one on the left being the term 'correct' (*cheng*<sub>1</sub>). For Confucius, to govern (politically) is to bring about order. Confucius' concern here is not with metaphysical theories of how titles function as signs or symbols nor with how those symbols are connected with reality.<sup>5</sup> Rather, titles have evaluative force: one who does not act according to the requirements implied by the particular title he holds should alter his attitudes, behaviours and actions to bring them into conformity.

To some extent, this idea is articulated by Chad Hansen. Commenting on *cheng ming*, he argues that this Confucian doctrine was intended to have a regulative function:

The terms and names involved in the rectification of names [*cheng ming*] are those that function in the traditional code: *man, king, brother,*

son. The purpose of the rectification is to create an ideal language for moral discrimination, evaluation and action ... Thus while in early Western philosophy there is a kind of assumption that the primary role of language lies in describing the world and communicating ideas or beliefs about the world, Confucian ... 'rectification of names' operates on the presupposition that the primary function of language is to instil attitudes guiding choice and action. Language use should be manipulated as a means of social control."<sup>6</sup>

It is debatable whether, as Hansen suggests, one can read into Confucius' use of *cheng ming* an intention to manipulate the use of language 'as a means of social control'. This seems to be a one-sided and unjustified interpretation of *cheng ming* because Confucius proposed codes of behaviour not only for the common people but for those in government as well. In fact, as pointed out previously, the first phase in the process of *cheng ming* is the regulation of the behaviour of the latter. Hansen's reference to 'social control' seems to imply that *cheng ming* is a tool for socio-political oppression: while this might have in fact happened in the course of Chinese history, to read it as Confucius' intention is inconsistent with many of Confucius' views expressed in the Analects (see the discussion of Analects 6:23 above).

Hansen's other proposal, the idea that Confucius emphasised a regulative function, is a less controversial one: Confucius is insisting that individuals have to live *appropriately* according to the titles by which they are referred to. These titles have evaluative content and thus have practical implications for human behaviour. They prescribe how values upholding the various rôles are to be realized within the fundamental reality of the lived human world. For Confucius, what is central to these titles is not the simple

naming function of the terms, but the normative codes associated with certain socio-political positions. Confucius never quite contemplates the form or the functionality of these titles but instead emphasises their semantic content. Indeed, at the semantic level, Confucius conflates the *meaning* of titles with their *morality*; the question "What does the title 'son' mean?" is, for him, the same question as "What should a son do?": one arrives at the same answer for both these questions. Thus, anyone having a title should ponder these questions; the subject as well as the *chun tzu*, the father as well as the son.

The discussion above highlights Confucius' use of *cheng ming* as a rhetorical device—as alluded to above in the discussion of the term '*ku*'—to criticise, first, inefficient or evil rulers and, secondly, the undesirable frameworks and structures in their societies which have eventuated as a result of their inability to rule properly.

Another important feature of Confucian thought, and of the concept *cheng ming*, is that Confucius does not make a clear distinction between the socio-political and the personal domains. This point is made not to suggest that Confucian philosophy *should* have included such categories but in order to note that the absence of such reveals interesting aspects of the philosophy. As discussed previously, *cheng ming* applies not only to the obligations of those who take on the more public socio-political roles, but to obligations in relationships which have a distinctly more personal and private aspect as well. This is manifest in two ways: the first is that while *cheng ming* begins with the moral self-cultivation of those involved in government (especially the *chun tzu*), moral self-cultivation, in more practical terms, refers to the cultivation of one's relationships:

The administration of government rests in getting the right kind of person. These men are available only because the ruler has cultivated himself well; the ruler cultivates himself according to *tao*; the cultivation of oneself according to *tao* rests, in turn, in *jen*. *Jen* is the defining feature of humanity and is most centrally manifest in relational attachment to one's relatives ... The *chun tzu* may not neglect his self-cultivation. (Chung-yung 20:4-5a; 7a)

What emerges from this picture of the *chun tzu* is the fusion of the different spheres of his life. An interesting contrast can be made between this feature of Confucian morality and role morality in Anglo-American philosophy. Role morality asks questions like: are roles like hats, to be 'put on' whenever one is acting, or to be seen as acting, from a particular position, and 'cast off' otherwise; how important are roles in the formation of one's character and, thus, of personal identity; and, if roles are professional codes dictating how incumbents should perform certain functions, how is professional competence related to personal integrity.

In Confucian philosophy, such questions do not even arise. The fundamental point here is that such questions are critical only when there is an assumption of difference between the public and the personal aspects of life.<sup>7</sup> The absence, in Confucian philosophy, of distinction between public and impersonal, on the one hand, and private and personal, on the other, has two important and interesting implications. The first is that while the notion of the requirements of a role is not specific to Confucian thought, what is distinctive in *cheng ming* is that certain role-like requirements apply in the domain of public, as well as of personal relationships. Contrastively, within a system which maintains the distinctness of the modes of life and moral codes within the public and the private domains, and which views roles as being specifically

applicable to the more 'public' domains of behaviour and action, it would seem odd to suggest that there are roles, and role requirements, operative in more 'personal' arenas such as father-hood, mother-hood, husband-hood, and son-hood. Secondly, this absence of a sense of carrying or crossing over from public to personal life operates in the other direction as well: the classical Confucians, because they did not distinguish between 'public' and 'personal' spheres, simply assumed that a subject was or could be relationally attached to the ruler, just as a child might be to his parent.

The second and connected way in which *cheng ming* is understood to apply both to public and private domains of human life goes beyond the life of the *chun tzu* to the lives of the common people. Thus titles such as 'son', 'elder brother' and 'wife'—titles signifying relationships often thought to be personal and belonging to the domestic realm, as opposed to the public arena—are open to some sort of scrutiny by the larger community because the ways the members of the community relate (as son, elder brother or as wife) are seen as having discernible social and political effects:

From the Son of Heaven (the divine ruler) to the common people, all must consider the cultivation of themselves as fundamental. It cannot be the case that when the root (ie self-cultivation) is neglected that that which eventuates from it will be well-ordered ... (*Ta-hsueh* "The Text of Confucius", 6; 7a)

In Analects 12:11, Confucius describes a well-governed society:

*chun chun* (*chun tzu*), *chen chen* (official), *fu fu* (father), *zi zi* (son)  
(Analects 12:11).

There are various translations of this passage into English. Translation is difficult, however, as the original saying in Chinese is itself vague. A most

plausible interpretation consistent with other themes in the Analects is to consider the first term of each pair as the title or noun, and the second as verb; each noun-verb pair signifies that the people filling the various positions carry out their responsibilities in a way fitting their titles: the minister ministers, the father fathers, etc. The second term of each pair describes an activity: that of being a son, a father, an official or a *chun tzu*; titles carry normative content such that the person referred to by the title acts and behaves, necessarily, according to his designation. These are signs of good government; indeed, one could argue that a situation where all the members of the community fulfilling the responsibilities arising from their relational attachments is *synonymous with* good government.

Analects 12:11 assumes that the well-governed polity is synonymous with the well-ordered society in which the members understand their specific obligations arising from their positions in particular relationships. There is overwhelming emphasis, in many Confucian texts, on not behaving in ways which are considered 'out of place' given one's status. This idea of acting appropriately—say, as wife, son, or younger sibling—was a theme deeply entrenched in Confucian philosophy. For instance, the Analects records an case when Confucius commented that the adult-like abilities of a child were indeed inappropriate:

A boy from the village of Ch'ueh used to come with messages.

Someone asked him saying, Is he improving himself? The master said, "Judging by the way he sits in grown-up people's places and walks alongside other people older than himself, I should say that he was bent upon getting on quickly rather than upon improving himself."

(14:47)

This negative example of development describes the boy acting inappropriately through his attempts to 'walk alongside', or, in other words, to assume equal status with people older than himself. The behaviour calls for reproach because such violations have the potential to undermine the finely-balanced homeostatic model of the ideally ethical society. A particular phrase in the Analects sums up the undesirability of such attempts: "He who works on a different strand destroys the whole nature" (2:16). The connection between good government and the conditions of life of the people in a community is intimate: while the well-regulated society is essential for the good life of the individuals that make up the society, society is possible only when people carry out their responsibilities appropriately according to their particular places in the social structure; it is only with the cooperation of each individual within the community that the common good can be attained.

This way of thinking about the the connections between members of a community is akin to—one could even say paradigmatic of—structures within the *Gemeinschaft* community, as opposed to the *Gesellschaft* one, a distinction made by Tonnies in 1887.<sup>8</sup> The *Gemeinschaft* society is one built upon relational ties; it stresses notions of kinship, friendship, family and neighbourhood. It has a feudal, village-type focus, in which personal affection and attachments are emphasised. According to Tonnies, the *Gemeinschaft* relationship finds its paradigm in marriage. In contrast, the *Gesellschaft* society is run along legalistic, contractarian principles, with a clear means-end distinction centering on personal profit. Kamenka,<sup>9</sup> commenting on Tonnies' conceptualisation of the two separate and distinct organisational structures, suggests that Tonnies derived the structure of the *Gesellschaft* society from the Hobbesian idea of war of all against all. Apart from the

strong sense of commercial gain, in Tonnies' conceptualisation, of this model of society, one of the principles which is emphasised is equality.

Writing on the conception of law and the connection between law and the ways of life of the ancient Chinese, Ch'u T'ung Tsu captures well the sense of *Gemeinschaft* structures when he expresses the different statuses and their implications within ancient Chinese society which were articulated in the Confucian system:

The distinctions between noble and humble, superior and inferior were ... based upon the talent and virtue of each member of the society, and constituted a type of social selection conditioned by social success. In addition further differences found expression in the kinship system. These were based on criteria of generation, age, degree of relationship and sex. Status and modes of behavior in the larger society were determined by the fact of superiority and inferiority, in a family, by the degree of nearness and remoteness, superiority and inferiority, and seniority and juniority. The primary rights of consumption belonged to the father as against the sons, to the elder brother as against a younger brother, all types of labor or services being demanded from the junior groups, thus establishing relationships of subordination and superordination. The so-called rules of filial piety and brotherhood, and also of feminine behavior, were based on this."<sup>10</sup>

The idea of a public, impersonal and autonomously-acting self, a concept presupposed by *Gesellschaft* structures in which individuals are of more or less equal standing and an important element of moral reasoning is the universal application of rules and norms, runs counter to Confucian ideals.

Depending on one's interpretation of the Analects and its project/s,<sup>11</sup> it might be argued that the finely-tuned intricacy which underlies the establishment of such a communal structure does not allow for variations based on individual differences; to assert the autonomy of the individual in any of the senses described above (personal responsibility, personal gain and self-regulation) is to threaten the web-like structure. To 'work on a different strand' is to assert the importance of the self over the familial and/or the communal. Thus, the son conceals the father's crime—and *vice-versa* (Analects 13:18)—because working on a different strand would upset the whole (family system). Analogously, and on a much larger scale, to assert the importance of the self within the communal context would have the effect of upsetting the moral, social and political fabric of society.

The *Gesellschaft* picture of society is founded upon a conception of the human person as an atomistic individual—thus emphasising concepts such as personal responsibility, personal gain and self-regulation; *Gemeinschaft* structures are based on a conception of the human person as being irreducibly interrelated.

In the case of Confucian thought, the related self is the basic social unit and, thus, of moral deliberation. Within Confucian philosophy, to clearly identify and define a self is to isolate it and to remove it from the concrete reality of webs of interdependence. Motifs of the embeddedness and connectedness of human beings in webs of relationships are made emphatically; human persons cannot be decontextualised and superordinated in any final sense. The human person is interdependent with others to whom she is related, simultaneously shaping these others and being shaped by them.

This account of the self differs in important respects from conceptions of the self, and of morality, which identify and isolate *the* discrete agent responsible for a particular event. It is clear that in Confucian thought, notions of appropriate behaviour vary according to status and to relationships. Connectedly, different accounts of responsibility and accountability arise from such fundamental differences in the conceptions of the self and of action.

If responsibility is an issue in Confucian thought (it is debatable whether it is), the point that needs first to be resolved is not that the notion of responsibility varies across relationships (for instance, the responsibilities one has as a father is different from those one has as a ruler) but, rather, who is (are) *althe bearer(s) of responsibility?*<sup>12</sup> In other words, given that it is a basic tenet of Confucian thought that the self is a self-in-relation, does it follow that the concept of responsibility takes on a more fluid character? If the related self, rather than the (individual) moral agent, is the locus of agency and hence, of responsibility, then perhaps causal explanations that seek to identify individual agency are inappropriate and need to be replaced by explanations that take into account the whole range of relevant causal conditions and the relations that obtain among them as they come to sponsor any given occurrence.<sup>13</sup>

The fluid character of the self and of responsibility described above is predicated on the hierarchical differentiation of society based on social, moral and political features: a 'division of labour' hierarchy is suggested, with some having more responsibility than others, and with some having responsibility *for* others. It was previously argued that the Confucian system does at points (in the Analects) seem to call for the maintenance of the superior-inferior balance of power in relationships. A clear drawback of such an ideology is

that individuals within such frameworks could emerge as mere cogs in the big machine of mass coercion.

The next section extends the examination of the dynamics of moral behaviour in Confucian thought. In particular, it analyses the issue of subordination with regard to requirements for the inferior person in a particular relationship to subject his or her moral judgments, and even moral development, to the maintenance of the relationship.

## 5.2 Relationships

There were five kinds of relationships which the classical Confucians held to be fundamental in that they are foundational in social life: *chun tzu*-subject; father-son; older brother-younger brother; husband-wife; and friendship (*Chung-yung*, 20:8). Of these five, the first three—especially the first two—receive most emphasis in the Analects. There is considerably less, though still a significant emphasis on friendship.<sup>14</sup> The case of the husband-wife relationship is, however, hardly mentioned.

As discussed in chapter two, the father-son relationship is characterised by *hsiao*, one of the values deemed fundamental in Confucian thought. The Confucians considered the family context as the first training ground for relational interaction and, in addition, believed that the cultivation of emotions and affections within the structures of family relationships would equip the moral agent with the necessary skills to develop other relational ties in extra-familial contexts. This can be contrasted with the *chun tzu*-subject relationship which is not articulated in terms of a basic moral principle (cf. *hsiao* in the father-son relationship). Indeed, it seems that learning to be filial

and being filial has implications both for social and political life such that *hsiao* is the action-guiding principle for the *chun tzu*-subject relationship as well. Thus, *hsiao* is fundamental in the young man's cultivation of himself (Analects 1:6) and in his involvement in the life of the community either as a subject (Analects 1:2) or as *chun tzu* (Analects 2:20; 8:2.2). In the case of one's involvement as a subject, Analects 1:2 describes the connection between filial piety, fraternal submission and participation in the community:

Yu Tzu said, "It is rare for a man whose character is such that he is filial and respectful of his older brother(s) to offend his superiors; it is unheard of for one who has no such inclination to be inclined to cause social and political unrest ... Filial piety and fraternal submission are the roots of a man's character."

The desirable effects of filiality are not confined to the domestic sphere; they are tangible within the context of the larger community insofar as individuals within the community have cultivated their characters according to *hsiao*.

It is, however, not merely the effects of *hsiao* that are perceptible—*hsiao* is applicable as the guiding principle such that, for example, one treats a *chun tzu* according to the principles of *hsiao*. A passage from the Ta-hsueh affirms the fundamental significance of *hsiao* in the social and political life of the community:

What is meant by "In order to properly govern the state, it is necessary first to regulate one's [ie the *chun tzu*'s] own family," is this: If one cannot teach one's own family, one will not be able to teach others. Therefore the *chun tzu* [if he handles the affairs of his family well] can attain success in teaching the country without stepping beyond family boundaries. The *chun tzu* should be treated according to the principles of *hsiao*; elders should be treated according to the principles of

fraternal submission; the people of the country should be treated kindly ... Indeed, when the ruler as a father, a son and a brother, is an exemplar, the people imitate him. This is what is meant when it is said, "The government of a country depends on the ruler's management of family affairs."<sup>15</sup>

One of the striking features of this picture of the ideal community is the absence of a distinction between what constitutes common good (good for the society as a whole), and what individual good. One of the emphases in this section is that the conflation of common and individual goods leads to certain awkward structures and norms in the Confucian construction of the ideal community.

As we shall see in the following sub-sections, there are problems with the Confucian emphasis on the five relationships because of the power structures inherent in the relationships (excluding friendship because it is the only one of the five relationships amongst equals). The following sub-sections deal with three of these relationships and their definitions, often seen to be particularly problematic.<sup>16</sup> They are the husband-wife relationship, the father-son relationship and the ruler-minister relationship. Three types of subordination are present here: gender (ie. male) superiority; authority of the parent; and political subordination, respectively.<sup>17</sup> Each of these types of subordination will be dealt with in turn.

### **5.2.1 The Status of Women**

Within regard to the status of women and attitudes toward women, Confucius' thoughts seems to reflect the thinking characteristic of the culture of his time. Within the context of a patriarchal and patrilineal society, Confucius sketched an ideal polity in which only men were involved in government. Given that

Confucian theory accords to those involved in government the highest ranks of social status, power and authority, the significance of women within the community was almost completely neglected.

In Confucian thought, social differentiation between persons in their various relationship roles involves corresponding norms that override any notion of gender equality. In other words, gender difference is coded into norms of social appropriateness, biased against women. The female person is recognised only in her roles as wife, and/or as mother. In her role as wife, the status of the woman is inferior to that of her husband. There are different codes of appropriateness which apply to the wife and to her husband, even within the context of their personal relationship.

From the moral perspective, Confucius made little allowance for the development of character or individual achievement in women. Values appropriate to womanhood were explained solely in terms of the woman's relationships and of her place within the family. The wife excels insofar as she fulfils her wifely obligations; the mother, her mothering obligations; the daughter, her daughterly obligations. Women not having any of these abovementioned roles were not accounted for in Confucius' philosophy. In the case of women, social and moral excellence are explained in terms of their respective successes as daughters, wives and/or mothers. However, even the role of the mother is marginalised. Little, if anything, is mentioned in Confucian writings about the role of the mother and of her relation to her child, although much is made of the father-son relationship. The exclusion of women is also obvious in Confucius' articulation of the primary principle of relational attachment, *hsiao*, solely in terms of the father-son relationship. Although one was required to be filial to one's mother as well as to one's father (see, for example, Analects 4:18), exemplary conduct and wisdom are

explained in terms of the father-son relationship. The idea that a mother might serve as an exemplar and as a teacher to her daughter, or for that matter, to her son, is non-existent.

One of the two references to women in the Analects, 17:25, seems to place women in a demeaning category:

The master said, "In one's household, it is the women and the small men that are difficult to deal with. If you let them get too close, they become insolent. If you keep them at a distance, they complain."<sup>18</sup>

It has been pointed out, though, that the phrase translated 'women' (*nü tzu*) should be translated instead as "young women"; therefore, 17:25 was a statement about young women rather than a theory about women in general.<sup>19</sup>

Li Chenyang, who argues against the view that the subordination of women was upheld in the Analects, remarks, regarding the passage, that "[it] probably reflects a social prejudice that already existed in his time. Given Confucius's later illustrious status in China, this short comment on (young) women may have considerably influenced people's view on women in general and probably reinforced people's prejudice against women. However, there is no reason for one to think that this view is an inherent or essential part of Confucius's thought or an inevitable consequence of his general philosophy."<sup>20</sup>

Li's explanation of the passage is unconvincing and too readily excuses Confucius in the Analects.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the explanation in itself fails to account for the other passage in which women are mentioned,

Analects 8:20.2-3:

King Wu said, "I have ten able ministers."

Confucius said, "Is not the saying that talents are difficult to find, true? Only when the dynasties of Tang and Yu met, were they more abundant than in this of Chou, yet there was a woman among them. The able ministers were no more than nine men."

In this passage, King Wu (1027-1005 BC), who founded the Chou Dynasty, is quoted as having remarked that he had ten able ministers, the number ten apparently signifying the difficulty of finding able ministers. Confucius' comment, while it agreed with the view that talented people (as leaders of the community) were difficult to come by, contested that King Wu actually had ten able ministers, arguing that he in fact had only nine, given that one of the ten was a woman.

In this passage, Confucius marks the boundaries of feminine excellence, excluding women, first and foremost, from the arena of political involvement. While men could excel according to the *chun tzu* paradigm, there was no feminine equivalent. This move is more insidious than it first seems because in classical Confucianism, moral social and political achievement and participation were irretrievably intertwined. Thus, the stance in the Analects—given that there is a marked absence regarding the moral development of women, together with this last-quoted passage—is that women should be excluded from any such forms of participation. In Confucian thought, the concept of a worthwhile and meaningful life for a woman is defined largely in terms of, and thus restricted to, the above-mentioned achievements.

A similar kind of subjugation is present in the description of the various obligations of children to parents. It needs to be made clear at this point that references to 'child' or 'children' are almost always translations of the Chinese

term 'tzu', meaning 'son'. Secondly, it seems that what is significant about being a child or son is the biological fact itself; by contrast, neither the age (whether 4 or 40) nor the moral development of the child is seen to have moral significance. The fact that the biological offspring may have grown to adulthood and be an adult in his own right is not an acceptable basis for considering parent and child as equals in the moral sense (ie they have similar kinds of obligations or duties to each other and to others, they deserve equal moral consideration, etc.). The dynamics of parent-child relationships are discussed in the following section.

### **5.2.2 Being Good as a Son (*Hsiao*) ... is the Root of a Man's Character<sup>22</sup>**

The discussion of *hsiao* in chapter two (Section 2.2.4) presents it in a positive light. In the Analects *hsiao* is held to be fundamental to moral development. Many passages support the view that the family context serves as an ideal starting point for the developing individual in that it provides the primary locus of meaning and care; the family context provides a sense of the dynamics of relating to others (including obligations and caring affection) which, for the developing person, serves as the preparatory basis for relationships in extra-familial contexts. It is in this way that the man of *jen* loves all (Analects 4:3). The process of cultivation begins at home; relating to others will be easy if one is well-equipped with such skills. This seems to be fairly straightforward: theoretically, the boundaries of the family are merely widened to include others. Accordingly, non-familial relationships are modelled upon family relationships such that eventually, all become brothers (Analects 12:5.4).

There is, however, an inherent inconsistency in this position: while it seeks to emphasise the special and fundamental status of the family, it yet

advocates that all other relationships should be like familial ones. A society which aims to function in the Confucian sense as a large family is unworkable because it wants to maintain, at the same time, *both* a demarcation between family and non-family *and* the extension of family to non-family.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, *hsiao* marks the special bonding between, in particular, father and son; on the other hand, it is meant to provide the basis for extra-familial relational interaction. It seems inconsistent to maintain both that "*hsiao* ... is the root of a man's character" and that "the man of *jen* loves all". Antonio Cua, commenting on the tension involved in Confucian thought, expresses the situation thus: "The problem of *jen*-realization is thus a problem of *equalizing* the status of humanity without obliterating existing social distinctions."<sup>24</sup>

This difficulty does not receive sufficient treatment in the Analects.<sup>25</sup> What further intensifies this problem is a different, but related one; namely, that *hsiao* is discussed almost solely in terms of the father-son relationship. Inherent in this idea is the assumption that the father-son relationship is paradigmatic of relational attachment, at least within the family. Indeed, Confucius held the father-son relationship to be of primary importance that at times, he appears to say that immoral means were justified in order to protect it. In discussing the case of sheep-stealing as an example, Confucius remarked that "...the father conceals the misconduct of the son and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. This is uprightness." (Analects 13:18.2). The notion of uprightness is obviously linked to the special relationship between father and son; reciprocal care, as well as obligation, to the other person dictates that they conceal the misconduct. Presumably, concern for the other (in this case, that the latter's interests is in not having the misconduct revealed) overrides other considerations such as the wrongness of stealing, or a duty to tell the truth. As Confucius notes, the

Kung mentioned in this passage, who was otherwise 'upright', inappropriately bore witness against his father. Perhaps most striking of all, in terms of moral reasoning, is the requirement of suspension of moral judgment as dictated by the relationship. Confucius' demand for children to suspend moral judgment of their parents' actions is specifically articulated in Analects 4:18:

In serving your father and mother you ought to dissuade them from doing wrong in the gentlest way. If you see your advice being ignored, you should not become disobedient but remain reverent. You should not complain even if in so doing you wear yourself out.

There is more than a hint of idealism in Confucius' expectation of parent-child relationships. Within such a system, given the power and authority parents have over the moral development of their children—and over their lives in general—the moral agent's success is a matter of luck, being contingent as it is upon whom one happens to get as one's parents. It cannot simply be assumed that the theory of *cheng ming* is inherent and operative in the definition of parenthood; in other words, there are no plausible grounds for assuming that all parents are caring in the right sorts of ways toward their offspring. Clearly, the theory of *cheng ming* has to be understood prescriptively rather than descriptively; that parents *should* be caring, and that their offspring are, accordingly, responsive to the care they receive from their parents is completely different from the assertion that parents *are*, in fact, caring. The former view is not unusual, nor is it specific to Confucian thought.

It is a view which is articulated in Anglo-American moral philosophy as well. In discussing the notion of rights within the context of relationships, Abraham Melden makes the point that the term 'father' has a moral component such

that the mere biological connection whereby one person fertilizes the ovum from which another develops does not mean that the former is a father to the latter. More is required for the concept of a father, Melden argues, since it makes sense to say such things as "He was like a father to me." A paradigm case of a father is, therefore, "... a male parent who plays his social and moral role with respect to his offspring in the circumstances of family life."<sup>26</sup>

Melden makes a case for the rights of a parent and the reciprocal obligations of children. He argues that as a parent, one should have a right to be taken into account, if and when appropriate, in the child's deliberations. On this point, Phillips and Mounce object that the connection Melden draws between being a parent and having a right to special consideration begs the question:

... since the concept of a father is in part evaluative, since by a father we mean someone who is entitled to special consideration, then anyone who understands the concept of father must also assent to the evaluations that go with it, must agree that those beings we call fathers are entitled to special consideration. If a man were to deny that fathers are entitled to special consideration then either he will have failed to understand what is meant by a father or he will have involved himself in a contradiction.<sup>27</sup>

Phillips' and Mounce's criticism of Melden's construction of the notion of family role-relationships (specifically, that of fatherhood) is directly applicable to Confucius' conception of the father-son relationship. Both Melden's and Confucius' accounts reveal an idealism or, one could say, *per* Phillips and Mounce, they beg the question in presupposing that parents are entitled to special consideration based on their moral status. It needs to be noted that, in a later work, Melden, in responding to Phillips' and Mounce's criticism,

agrees that any theorisation of the morality of relationships needs to include processes through which appropriate behaviour of those in relationships can be assessed, rather than to simply presuppose that morality is already 'built into' the roles in question, or is already present in the incumbents occupying those role positions.<sup>28</sup>

The assumption that parents are moral and caring persons is a manifestation of a deeper and larger problem: if there are no avenues or structures through which the behaviours and actions of parents can be assessed, then morality is reduced simply to parental authoritarianism.<sup>29</sup> In discussing the difficulty with the Confucian conception of the father-son relationship, Tu Wei-ming poses the problem thus:

... since "filial piety" is a cardinal value in Confucianism, a salient feature of the father-son relationship is the unquestioned obedience of the son to the authority of the father. For the son to cultivate himself, in this view, he must learn to suppress his own desires, anticipate the wishes of his father, and take his father's commands as sacred edicts ... Understandably, the Confucian son, overpowered by the authority of the father, evokes images of weakness, indecision, dependency, and conformity.<sup>30</sup>

Tu goes on to vindicate the Confucian stance, arguing that this is a 'one-sided interpretation' of the father-son relationship, and suggests that the social and historical context be taken into account: "... it is the willing participation of the son, socialized by a long and strenuous education supported by the community and sanctioned by the political leadership, that underlies the whole enterprise."<sup>31</sup>

Tu's explanation has limited scope because his analysis—that in general these questions are perceived as problematic only by people who have been socialised differently—evades the larger problem that Confucius' system does not allow for redress of the system. It is not sufficient, as a defense of Confucius, merely to point out that one who is properly socialised into such ways of thinking (ie that parental authority is legitimate in all situations) will not deem the Confucian father-son relationship oppressive. The example quoted above of concealing wrongdoings, if extended to other situations, could lead easily to an unprincipled, subjectively-constructed, chaotic community—if it could be termed a community at all—infused with authoritarianism and subjection.<sup>32</sup> The risks that children with uncaring parents, or from dysfunctional families could be subjected to within such a system is potentially limitless.

The lack of assessment structures within the Confucian system is glaring especially given that fathers, and *chun tzu*, are meant to be paradigms of ideal relational interaction; the Analects seems to rely entirely on these paradigms as sources of value.<sup>33</sup>

An associated but different problem with the use only of the father-son paradigm—and thus of the notion of *hsiao*—as foundational in moral development is the assumption that all relationships are, or should be, similar to family ones. Such a view ignores the empirical—and morally significant—fact that family relationships involve a whole different set of values, loyalties, caring, feeling and closeness which are different from non-familial relationships. There is, therefore, the question of whether the same kind of loyalties, caring, feeling and closeness—which involve increased expectations and commitments—is possible on a wider scale, given the human lifespan and other practical restrictions.<sup>34</sup>

More centrally, values and feelings which are appropriate within the family context, for example, that between mother and child, are often inappropriate in others—such as that between employer and employee. From the moral perspective, it would be a peculiar kind of society indeed, if all people were related according to the prototype of family-type bonds. It is questionable whether it is morally expedient for the individual to be subjected to these demands of obedience and to have his or her life determined to such a large extent not only by those within the family but by those outside it as well, given the kinds of obligations family relationships entail.

Furthermore, as regards extending *hsiao* into the political context ("... the *chun tzu* should be treated according to the principles of *hsiao*" (*Ta-hsueh*, 9:1,3)), it is readily apparent that the idea that the moral, political and social leaders of the people are men who have been filial in the ways described in *Analects* 3:18 and 4:19 is open to challenge. Indeed, it seems somewhat incoherent to say that men who have subordinated themselves to parental authority can be expected to be fully and morally equipped to provide leadership. Above all, it appears simplistic to assume the applicability of paradigms across the range of domains.

The concept of the *chun tzu* will be examined in the following section.

### **5.2.3 When a Ruler's Character is Fitting, His Government is Effective Even without Having to Issue Orders<sup>35</sup>**

The idealism in the *Analects* concerning the moral uprightness of people in positions of power, such as parents and educators, is applied, with equal optimism, to the people involved in government. Book IV of the *Shu Ching*<sup>36</sup>, purportedly edited by Confucius himself, sets out in detail a(n ideal) model for

feudal government based on the perfect character of the sovereign and on his perfect administration of government. Section five of this book reads:

The sovereign having established (in himself) the highest degree and pattern of excellence, concentrates in his own person the five (sources of) happiness, and proceeds to diffuse them, and give them to the multitudes. Then they, on their part, embodying your perfection, will give it (back) to you, and preserve and practise it. Among all the multitudes there will be no unlawful confederacies, and among men in office there will be no bad and selfish combinations ... Do not let [the sovereign] oppress the friendless and childless, nor let him fear the high and distinguished. When men (in office) have ability and administrative power, let them be made still more to cultivate their conduct; and the prosperity of the country will be promoted.

This text describes a situation where the ruler is primarily responsible for the condition of the country. The good rule of the sovereign ensures well-ordered hierarchies not only in the political arena but also in the social and familial settings. That these different levels of order in a country were interconnected and interdependent is expressed in different ways by Confucius. Thus he says, for instance, that there cannot be order in the family and in the larger social setting if the emperor fails to order the state; a good ruler will, through his character and deeds, effect changes not only in the conditions but also in the behaviour of the peoples; a ruler who cannot play his role within his own family cannot rule the country well.

One of the unjustified assumptions of the view just described is that people always respond positively to virtue. This assumption pervades much of Confucian philosophy and is especially prominent in Confucius' discussions of the style of government. Confucius he sought men of

developed characters (Analects 15:20; 13:24) who would influence the people, assuming that the people would, in turn, respond positively (Analects 8:2; 9:13; 12:19; 13:16). Clearly, this assumption is an idealistic one that Confucius does not seek to justify in the Analects. Given that relational morality in Confucian thought is largely dependent on initiation and response, it seems surprising when Cua, commenting on the cultivation of the self, suggests that in one's evaluation of oneself, the response of others is not an important factor:

My extensive concern for others is a concern for the *moral being* or condition on the whole. Whether or not another accepts this concern is not a relevant issue, nor is another's reciprocal regard an important issue in my own moral development. In Confucian language, the acceptance and reciprocation of others is a matter of fate (*ming*). So long as my other-regarding desire and conduct is exemplified in my own life, I have preserved my moral integrity. In establishing or developing my own moral character in light of *jen*, I am also engaged in establishing or developing others' moral character, not in the sense of directly urging others to do so nor of asserting myself to be a moral paradigm; but in the sense that my own case serves as an embodiment of the possibility and actuating import of *jen*-realization. In this way I indirectly contribute to the development of others' moral character.<sup>37</sup>

While Cua is correct in saying that for the Confucians, personal integrity does not rest on others' assessment of oneself (see, for example, Analects 4:14), it seems odd to say both that another's reciprocal regard is not important in one's own moral development and that one can, through one's cultivation, contribute to the development of others' moral character. If reciprocal regard

is not an important factor in self cultivation, then it seems unlikely that a person can or should contribute to another's moral development. In addition, it appears that Cua has forced a non-existent dichotomy between the developing self and others within the Confucian context. From the perspective of a person's moral development, it is also necessary to grasp that if the self is understood necessarily as a connected self—in other words, if the notion of the self is that it is irreducibly connected with others in relationships—it follows that moral agency, when understood within such frameworks, is a much more dispersed notion than individualistic approaches to the self suggest. In terms of political leadership, this notion is carried through in the view that the social and moral conditions of the people are a direct reflection of the personal character and success (or failure) of the ruler. This implies that the performance of the ruler is necessarily assessed through the kinds of responses he elicits from the people.

Cua's analysis is also lacking in that it seems to be built upon a notion of equal selves. In other words, he seems to be suggesting that the response of others to oneself should not count as important in one's moral development. However, such an analysis fails to take into account the different statuses of the 'I' that Confucius in the Analects distinguishes. There are statements in the Analects differentiating people into different categories based on their capacities for moral cultivation (9:29; 15:39). For instance, Analects 8:9 states explicitly that "The (common) people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be made to understand it."

Cua's account does not take into consideration the different kinds of individuals referred to in the Analects, some of whom are, presumably, more independent, in a variety of ways, than others. The last-cited passage reveals that while it may not matter to the *chun tzu*, say, that the common people—

who could be misled or mistaken—do not hold him in high regard, it must matter to the 'common' person how his or her actions and behaviours are evaluated by someone of a higher socio-moral standing, say, the *chun tzu*.

It is important at this stage to note that most of Confucius' statements were directed at the *chun tzu* and not at the people in general. The government, Confucius hoped, would be made up of men with moral insight, serving as models for the people. Confucius conceived of a government which would take on (intellectually *and* morally) qualified men who were not *necessarily* of noble birth to help rule the country.<sup>38</sup> The most important criterion was a certain level of moral achievement such that those involved in government could be models for the people (Analects 2:1;13:1), as well as facilitators in their development (Analects 6:28; 16:1). Certainly, one of Confucius' innovations—although he claims to be a transmitter and not a creator (Analects 7:1)—is the questioning, and rejection, of education (and thus of political and moral power and authority) as the sole prerogative of those of noble lineage. Benjamin Schwartz, outlining Confucius' innovation in the ancient Chinese context, points out that:

It has been suggested that what is new in Confucius' conception of *jen* is precisely the notion that moral power is not the prerogative of those in authority—that commoners like himself may possess virtue. Yet even here, one can find in the pre-Confucian literature an adumbration of the idea that men of virtue, such as the ancestors of the Chou dynasty or noble ministers, prove their right to authority by the possession of virtue. What may well be new, however, is the notion that commoners such as Confucius may *teach* other commoners *how* to achieve *jen*—how to become "noble men" ... Like "*gens*" or "*nobilis*",

it referred to high birth and high rank. Yet in the *Analects* it has unquestionably acquired its moral meaning.<sup>39</sup>

In the light of the preceding discussion, it is not clear, that Confucius advocated oppression of the people by legitimating political authority. Indeed, if the *Analects* is understood from the perspective of a moral system which emphasises responsibility and relational attachment, it could be said that Confucius is reminding leaders of the immense responsibilities they have on their hands: Confucius never advocated that a necessary condition of the ideal world order was unwilling subjection to unreasonable and evil rulers.<sup>40</sup>

While one might want to question the justification provided by Confucian philosophy for the interference with ordinary people by the elite, on the other hand, such reminders of responsibility are not always or entirely out of place, as De Bary notes:

... the noble man is a model for anyone who might play a leadership role in society, a life of higher responsibilities (19:7) ... The distinction between gentleman and noble man, though both are combined in the *chun tzu*, is important because, without it, we may miss or misread the significance of much in the *Analects* that has to do with both inward qualities and outward appearances ... when Confucius speaks of the *chun tzu* as someone especially careful and restrained, one who is punctilious about not overstepping the bounds of what is right, it is not because he expects ordinary men to exercise the same circumspection or constrain themselves to the same degree, *but because those he addresses have a heightened visibility and potentially more far-reaching influence on others, to say nothing of their role in directing others' labors (19:21) and in the distribution of material goods.*<sup>41</sup>

For Confucius, (moral) responsibility is an irreducible component of social hierarchy and is directly proportional to it. From another perspective, the two elements, character and public service—or more generally, contribution to the common good—cannot be separately assessed because of the intricate connection between the two. As Hall and Ames suggest:

Confucius did not replace with new moral qualifications the political ones that had previously defined *chun tzu*; what he did was to insist that political responsibility and moral development are correlatives.

The cultivation of one's person necessarily entails active participation both in the family and in the sociopolitical order, not simply in service to others, but as occasions in which to evoke the compassion and concern that leads to one's own personal growth and refinement.

Stated another way, it is inconceivable that full personal growth and disclosure could be achieved in the absence of political responsibility.<sup>42</sup>

Implicit in Hall and Ames' statement is the suggestion that Confucius was not merely propounding a political theory which sought to instill social order by maximising social control (see, for example, Analects 11:23; 13:2; 13:15). Relatedly, it needs to be noted that what Hall and Ames term 'political responsibility' does not refer to direct involvement in the governmental process but, rather, in the Confucian sense, involvement in the sociopolitical order. Confucius in the Analects never sustained a difference between political involvement and personal life, and political responsibility in this context would be understood as a more general form of involvement in society. Thus while Confucius despaired frequently regarding the lack of opportunity for his own involvement in government (Analects 9:12; 11:23; 14:39-42; 17:7; 18:3; 18:7.5), at other times he points out that such direct

involvement is not a necessary condition for participation in one's community: the common man, "... simply by being a good son and friendly to his brothers ... can exert influence on government" (Analects 2:21); his character influences others through moral persuasion (see also Analects 3:24 and 13:1).

The ability to influence others through one's self cultivation seems to be the primary responsibility of the *chun tzu*, with respect to the duties of public office. Upon observing how the *chun tzu* relates to those within his family, the people gain moral inspiration (Analects 8:2; also 18:10). Meticulous in his self cultivation (Analects 1:15; 14:45), the *chun tzu* seeks to facilitate the development of others (Analects 6:28). Confucius' vision of the *chun tzu* is marked by the latter's moral excellence, an ideal which, if realisable, would have in turn brought about the ideal Confucian society. Such idealism is a major flaw in the Confucian conceptualisation of human nature and of human community; it seems naive, above all, to think that such morally excellent paradigms of leadership (the *chun tzu* model), and accordingly, their beneficial and far-reaching influence on other people and on the structures of the community could in fact be actualised.

The idealism in Confucianism regarding political leadership was one of the important issues in the debate between the Confucians and the Legalists. The Legalists were vehemently opposed to the Confucian ideal of rule by moral example. Commenting on the rarity of the Confucian sage kings, Yao and Shun, Han Fei Tzu, a Legalist, remarked that:

If it is peaceful only when Yao and Shun come, this means that there will be one period of peace in a state which will be in disorder for a thousand years.<sup>43</sup>

Being primarily concerned with the maintenance of political power, the Legalists saw laws as instrumental and necessary to its preservation. The Confucians, on the other hand, upheld a system based on differentiation amongst individuals and, accordingly, rejected (penal) laws in favour of *li*.<sup>44</sup> As discussed previously, it was assumed—rather naively—that feudal nobles, being highly educated, would act and behave according to proper modes of behaviour, and thus that it was not necessary to subject them to similar behavioural requirements to which the common people were subject. When in 513 B.C. the State of Chin publicly announced its penal laws, Confucius criticised, saying, "Chin is going to ruin. It has lost its (proper) rules (of administration) ... people will study the [laws], and not care to know their men of rank. And what profession can the superiors keep?"<sup>45</sup>

Unlike *li*, laws are relatively explicit and thus would have enabled the multitudes to question any unfair judgement; this in turn would remove the aura of uncertainty regarding wrongdoing and appropriate punishment, in which part of the power and authority of the ruling nobles lay. For Confucius, rule by penal laws alone is undesirable largely because such laws work on the basis that all human beings are socially and morally equal;<sup>46</sup> penal law is criticised by the Confucians for showing no regard for the particular relationships between people. While law presumes and aims to maintain equality and universality, *li* demands recognition of hierarchically-structured relationships which involve expectations and obligations inherent in their structures, to be clearly understood by the participants in each relationship.

Apart from their disagreement with the Confucians about whether government was best effected through institution or personality, the Legalists were sceptical of the *chun tzu* ideal. They were convinced that even if there were *chun tzu*, there would be so few of them that for long periods of time the

country would be in disorder. Tersely describing the disputes between the Confucianists and the Legalists, KK Lee writes:

The Confucians and the Legalists were engaged in taking sides in what Aristotle called "an old and fundamental question—whether it is better to be ruled by the Best Man or the Best Laws". To the Legalists, as well as Aristotle, the quest for a benevolent father-figure, as sage-king or philosopher-king is doomed from the outset ... The question for political philosophy ... is not 'Who is to rule?' to which the expected answer is the wise, the benevolent, the righteous. The question is not one of personality but of institution ... Exceptional men are few and far between, and it is ludicrous to hinge such a vital matter on the occasional and chancy appearance of a sage or messiah ... Charisma is too ephemeral and mediocrity is too endemic in man. The law, impersonal, enduring, immanent, yet capable of modification, should be the framework of civil/political order.<sup>47</sup>

In this passage, Lee portrays the Legalists' rejection of what is essentially the central focus of the Confucian concern. While it could be said that Confucius' views on political organisation and, more generally, his views on human nature are naively optimistic, some of the Confucian ideals have important implications for contemporary moral philosophy. For example, the Confucian emphasis on connectedness highlights a conception of the moral agent as a related, encumbered self. In contrast to the view of the paradigmatic moral agent as a detached, autonomous self, the former view provides for a more accurate, robust picture of the human person and of moral agency. These competing views of moral agency are, as well, connected with differing conceptions of morality; the next section critically analyses the features,

domain and structures of morality in Confucian thought, comparing it with certain features of the feminist care ethic.

### **5.3 Caring in Confucian Morality**

One of the emphases of the feminist care ethic, as discussed in Chapter four, is its rejection of a conception of morality that is essentially and predominantly rule-based. This is associated with the view, held by a number of care ethicists, that rules apply only to general cases and that they gloss over the special and morally significant features of different moral situations, in particular, the relatedness of the moral agent to specific others. Associated with this latter view are important themes in morality and moral agency, three of which were discussed in chapter four. The first queries the conceptualisation of the moral agent as an essentially autonomous and disinterested self; the second questions the overridingness of moral rules and principles, and the insistence that these are universalisable; and the third affirms the significance of caring affection in morality. The focus of this section is to investigate how these three themes figure in Confucian moral thinking.<sup>48</sup>

#### ***Autonomy***

With regard to the issue of autonomy, it was pointed out that care morality need not be antithetical to autonomy and that notions of connectedness and responsibility can be articulated in conjunction with an ideal of autonomy that sees the autonomous agent as one who is self-governing and who yet sees her connectedness with others and her responsivity to others as important aspects of moral agency and of personal identity.

In the Confucian case, it does not appear that there is a unified, homogeneous conception of autonomy—*qua* self-governance and independent moral judgment—in the Analects. For example, it seems, in some passages, that autonomy *qua* moral integrity should be preserved even in the case where a teacher (15:35) or minister for whom one is working (11:23) demands otherwise. More integrally, because morality is perceived as being irreducible to existing social and cultural norms, the cultivation of oneself is clearly distinguished from the process of merely 'fitting in' or 'interacting well' within the community. To this effect, Confucius remarks that:

Tsze-kung asked, saying, "What do you say of a man who is loved by all the people of his neighbourhood?"

The master replied, "We may not for that reason approve of him."

"And what do you say of him who is hated by all the people of his neighbourhood?"

"The master said, "We may not for that reason conclude that he is bad. It is better than either of these cases that the good in the neighbourhood love him, and the bad hate him." (Analects 13:24).

In this passage, as well as in a few others (Analects 2:3; 1:12; 9:27; 15:20), Confucius seems to be suggesting, with regard to moral independence and the cultivation of the self, that some level of detachment is necessary especially if there are pressures to construct oneself solely in terms of the status quo.

At other points, however, Confucius seems to demand that moral autonomy be forfeited in order to maintain a relationship. Specifically, such instructions apply within the domain of parent-child relationships and, it appears, only within that domain.

What emerges from the preceding discussion in Section 5.2 is that Confucian thought seems to restrict the individual's autonomy—especially as a child—within the domain of parent-child relationships; this could be for the reason that the Confucians felt that the family context is an essential locus for morality and for moral development such that the affection, the structures and the hierarchies within familial frameworks should always be seen as fundamental and never to be challenged. This, of course, entails that compromises to the integrity of sons and daughters have at times to be made.

As commented previously, Confucius exhibits a naive optimism in upholding the family structures as overriding in morality and in assuming that those in the positions of parents, *chun tzu* and, generally, those in positions of carers, have morally developed characters. There is a strong sense of idealism in Confucian thought that carers are (in the Meyerian and Taylorian senses) strong evaluators of their moral stature (Analects 1:4; 5:26, 27; 7:3) such that they can, in a disinterested and sincere way, evaluate their lives in connection with the lives of others such that exploitation of others does not occur. Indeed, at points in the Analects, Confucius seems to be aware of his idealism when he remarks that those who can be effective *chun tzu* are few (4:6; 6:20; 9:29; 15:39).

It appears that autonomy is linked with self cultivation such that the two are directly proportional: the common people are not expected to be self governing (Analects 8:9) whereas the *chun tzu* are presented as being somewhat detached from existing norms. Such a view of socio-political organisation rests on the view that individuals within the community are *not* moral equals in the sense that moral agents are, *ceteris paribus*, not held equally responsible or accountable for their actions. Thus a

conceptualisation of the community as comprising equally volitional, responsible and autonomous moral selves—say, within contractarian or rights-based approaches—is antithetical to Confucian ideals. Although Confucius attempted to abolish access to education, and to moral excellence, as the exclusive prerogative of the ruling classes (Analects 7:7; 15:38), he established *another* hierarchy: that based on moral-political self cultivation. Within the framework of this hierarchy, his attitude to the common people (*min*)—in contrast to his expectations of the *chun tzu* and their responsibilities—is condescending.

Such an attitude towards the moral autonomy of the common peoples is further intensified by and through the Confucian concept, *li*. As pointed out previously, *li*, in contrast to law, operate on the basis of particularity rather than universality of application. In this connection, if the common people are not expected to be self-governing, then it seems that the standards for action and behaviour are determined not by appeal to more or less objective or consensual values but to the *chun tzu*'s deliberations in particular cases.

### ***Universalisability and Particularity***

It is clear that Confucian morality does not deem either generality or universality as important criteria of moral deliberation. The particularistic focus of moral deliberation in Confucianism is clearly manifest in the Analects; Confucius gave different replies to three interlocutors on the same topic, *jen*:

Yen Yuan asked about *jen*.

The master said, "To control oneself according to *li*, is *jen*. If a man can for one day control himself according to *li*, everyone will consider

him to be *jen*. However, the practice of *jen* depends on oneself alone, and not on others."

Yen Yuan said, "I beg to ask the steps of that process."

The master said, "Do not look at what is contrary to *li*; do not listen to what is contrary to *li*; do not speak what is contrary to *li*; do not move contrary to *li*" ... (Analects 12:1)

Chung-kung asked about *jen*.

The master said, "When you go abroad, behave to every one as if you were receiving an important guest. When you employ the people, behave as if you were officiating at an important sacrifice. Do not do to others what you yourself do not wish done to yourself. Do not have murmuring against you either within the nation or within your family ... (Analects 12:2)

Ssu-ma Niu asked about *jen*.

The master said, "The man of *jen* is cautious and slow in speech.

Ssu-ma Niu said, "Is being cautious and slow in speech all that *jen* consists in?"

The master said, "When action is difficult, shouldn't it be the case that one be cautious and slow in speech?" (Analects 12:3)

Indeed, in a specific instance, Confucius gave conflicting answers to two of his disciples, taking care to articulate that his answers were tailored to the respective characters of these two persons:

Tzu-lu asked whether one should immediately put into practice what one heard.

The master said, "Given that your father and elder brothers are still alive [and to be consulted], why would you seek to immediately put into practice what you hear?"

Jan Yu asked whether one should immediately put into practice what one heard.

The master said, "Immediately put into practice what you hear."

Kung-hsi Hua [overhearing these conversations] inquired, "When Yu asked whether one should immediately put into practice what one heard, you said, "Your father and elder brothers are still alive [and to be consulted]." When Ch'iu asked whether one should immediately put into practice what one heard, you said, "Immediately put into practice what you hear." I am puzzled. May I be enlightened?"

The master said, "Ch'iu holds himself back; therefore I urged him on.

Yu has too much energy; therefore I held him back." (Analects 11:21)

Insofar as Confucian morality is particularistic, there is little or no attempt to generalise moral norms or standards such that what applies to a *chun tzu*, say, might apply to a common person as well.<sup>49</sup> In this respect the amount of self-governance an individual is expected to have or is accorded varies with a few factors: the individual concerned (especially his moral status); and the relational and circumstantial contexts. This view would appear particularly detrimental to individuals who are, for some reason, not allowed, or not expected to exhibit, a reasonable extent of self-governance. The picture provided in the Analects of autonomy *qua* self-governance is not a consistent one; at many points, self reflection and self regulation are encouraged, at others they are held to be inappropriate.

The question that needs to be asked at this point is whether there are any mechanisms or structures in Confucian moral thinking which could act as safeguards against tendencies to subjectivism or arbitrariness in morality. As argued previously, it cannot be simply assumed that those in caring positions are adequately developed in their self reflectiveness such as to not exploit those cared for. In other words, particularly in the cases of the father and of the *chun tzu*, whilst the Analects provides examples of good moral and political guidance which could be effective in exemplifying morally and otherwise praiseworthy acts, it cannot be inferred that such paradigms are both necessary and sufficient in articulating a moral system. The view that paradigms of caring, as opposed to universally-applicable rules, are *necessary* in articulating a particularistic ethics based on relational attachment, is reasonable in that relational interaction, especially if it is understood to derive largely from emotional attachment, finds expression in a range of ways that cannot be encoded in precise formulae. The view that paradigms of care are *sufficient* in constituting a plausible moral system is, however, questionable in that there is little attempt to justify why and how certain such expressions, even within the context of particular relationships, are appropriate and others inappropriate or even impermissible. Even if it is held that the material and concrete content of ways of relating to particular others are sociologically and culturally sensitive, there needs to be a process for evaluating these forms which paradigms (as articulated in the Analects) cannot themselves provide.

It does seem that some appeal to universalisability is required in order to sustain the concept of *cheng ming*. Confucius' use of *cheng ming* in the Analects suggests that there are requirements specific to one's role in a relationship and that these requirements are universally binding. The concept

*cheng ming* in the Analects occupies a more fundamental status than the specific moral deliberations of the *chun tzu*. Indeed, it is the rectification of the moral characters and behaviours of the *chun tzu* that Confucius sought primarily to address. If titles such as *chun tzu*, elder brother and father have a regulative function, then the evaluative content of these titles should, at least to a certain extent, be understood to be universalisable. For instance, if there are certain actions, behaviours or emotional dispositions which are seen as typically elder-brotherly, it follows that if a person does not demonstrate any of those toward a younger sibling that he is not acting, behaving or feeling toward the latter as an elder brother should. In view of the preceding discussion, the criteria for relating well should not be determined by what a *chun tzu* happens to decide but, rather, through somewhat less subjective means. However, the Analects does not venture to explain the sources of value for his theory of *cheng ming*. He takes it as given that the naturalistic-organic conception of hierarchical social organisation, as embodied in the early *Chou* period, could solve the socio-political disorder of his time.

Within Confucian thought, the combination of power structures within particular relationships, on the one hand, and highly-regulated norms of behaviour, on the other, could be deeply problematic in that the norms could reinforce existing power hierarchies. Thus, the person-caring could acquire control over the relationship concerned, as well as the person cared-for. In this regard, it is important that proponents of care moralities realise and recognise that caring relationships can involve power hierarchies. Accordingly, there needs to be mechanisms which properly deal with such structures in order that people in caring relationships are not exploited or forced to compromise themselves.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Caring Affection***

As with the case of appropriate actions and behaviours specific to particular relationships, Confucius seems to take for granted that the appropriate emotions in particular relationships are somehow obvious: he does not discuss their origin, nor does he attempt to justify them.

Having appropriate emotional disposition does play a significant role in the Confucian approach to morality. Confucius does not view affection as being purely subjective and feral and thus as distinct and separate from morality and/or moral deliberation. Central to the notion of filial piety is that the appropriate feelings of caring affection, on the part of the parents, generates correlative appropriate feelings of reverence by children toward their parents. It is clear<sup>51</sup> that Confucian thought places much stress on the significance of cultivating appropriate emotions in the moral and social development of moral agents. A sympathetic account of the place of emotional cultivation in moral development in the Analects is offered by Tu Wei-ming:

A father, for example, has the duty to care for his children by providing resources for the satisfaction of their needs and education; and the son has the duty to care for his father when the latter is sick or disabled because of old age. Moreover, these reciprocal obligations are to be performed with an attitude of reverence or respect styled with an expression of affectionate concern. It is this caring attitude that lies at the heart of extensive moral concern. Other human beings, not in the status of being one's parent or brother, can also be cared for as one's parent or brother. This is possible because of the analogizing of one's affection and thought ... We can thus speak of extensive moral

concern as essentially a form of analogical projection of familiar relationship.<sup>52</sup>

Tu's rendition of the projected effects of moral concern does appear overly positive. It is, however, not entirely out of place because it portrays a sense of naive optimism palpably present in the Analects. One of the commendable aspects of Confucian moral thinking, in this respect, is that it rightly focuses on the family context as the primary locus of moral development for the child, in the cultivation of appropriate emotions, behaviours and actions.

In conclusion, the discussion in this chapter, focusing on Confucian notions of relational interaction, forms of caring and emotions of caring affection, has revealed that while there are notable problems with Confucius' construction of the ideal community, some of the Confucian themes serve to illustrate that moral philosophy should not depreciate the value of relational interaction to the life of the moral agent. The Confucian emphasis on cultivating appropriate behaviours, responses and emotions to particular others within specific relationships has important implications for conceptualising moral agency as well as, more fundamentally, personal identity in at least two ways. First, the moral agent as a related self is at least a less fragmented individual than one who is required to be detached and impartial. The notion of the related self draws attention to and challenges certain biases in notions of personhood which construe autonomy not only as integral but also as inviolable. The challenge of relational moralities to rule-based or rights-based moralities is effective in demonstrating the need for moral theory to satisfactorily account for different psychologies associated with different personality types. It also addresses the necessity for moral philosophy to more accurately reflect empirical aspects of human nature.

Secondly, from the third-person point of view, what is central to a person's identity is the distinctiveness of the individual that renders her non-intersubstitutable. Thus, notions of moral agency should not compromise on personal identity *qua* the distinctiveness of particular persons. While moral theory might seek, understandably so, an element of objectivity—and, in doing so, highlight common features of human personhood such as capacities for rationality, morality and self-reflection—it should not do so at the expense of individual distinctiveness. The view that the domain of 'others' with whom we interact is an homogeneous, undifferentiable mass is antithetical to how moral agents actually relate. While there might be some to whom our interaction is (best) guided by notions of rules, justice or rights, moral theory needs to recognise that there are particular others with whom one relates in a more personal and intimate way that cannot be captured in terms of rigid and generalised rules.

The next chapter examines Pauline notions of morality from a relational point of view. It establishes that Paul was keen to articulate a relational ethic based on *αγάπη* (love) and analyses the important concepts and structures within the framework of such an ethic.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. Analects 16:2, Legge's translation.
- <sup>2</sup>. See James Legge, The Four Books, *op.cit.*, comments on Analects 6:23 (p. 197).
- <sup>3</sup>. For Confucius, this was the age of the (mythical?) sage kings, *Yao* and *Shun* (both 3000 B.C.), to whom Confucius frequently referred to in the Analects as paradigms of good rulers. The period of the early Chou dynasty (the Chou dynasty lasted from 1111

B.C. to 249 B.C.) was ruled by a feudal system of government; the earlier part of this period (from 1111 B.C. to 722 B.C.) was, for Confucius, a golden age in the administration of government. Beginning from 722 B.C. (the Spring and Autumn period (722 B.C.- 481 B.C.) and the period of the warring states (480 B.C. - 221 B.C.)), the Chou dynasty began its decline. Confucius (551B.C. - 479 B.C.) was lived during that stage of decline and sought to reinstate (what he thought were) some of the attractive features of the early Chou.

- <sup>4</sup>. The *chun tzu's* role and his moral influence are discussed in section 5.2.3.
- <sup>5</sup>. Hall and Ames prefer to translate the term *cheng-ming* as 'ordering of names' because the term 'rectification', they feel, might connote some sense of making things accord with some transcendent reality; in Thinking Through Confucius, *op.cit.* pp. 268-75.
- <sup>6</sup>. Chad Hansen, Language and Logic in Ancient China, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1983, p. 77.
- <sup>7</sup>. See, for example, F. H. Bradley, Ethical Studies, 2nd ed, Oxford, 1927; A.I. Melden, Rights and Right Conduct, Blackwell, Oxford, 1959; John MacMurray, The Form of the Personal, Gifford Lectures, Vol. 2, London, 1961; and Dorothy Emmet, Rules, Roles and Relations, St Martin's Press, Macmillan, 1966. While there are different views amongst these above-mentioned writers regarding the notion of role morality, all of the discussions are situated within contexts which maintain a difference between the public and the personal self and that within these two arenas, the different criteria of roles and of relational attachment apply, respectively. Furthermore, role morality in these works is offered as an alternative system to traditional systems (in Anglo-American moral philosophy) emphasising deontology, impartiality or consequences.
- <sup>8</sup>. Eugene Kamenka, Bureaucracy, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, pp. 77-84. Tonnie's distinction, first published in 1887, was used with reference to the changing scene of Europe from authority based on "... custom and traditions and personal relationships,

family ties and communal sentiments and obligations", to "... a new commercial individualism that elevated the impersonal, the abstract, the traditionless". Kamenka uses the dichotomy not as an exhaustive way of characterising social structure, nor to refer to two different kinds of societies. Rather, he uses the two concepts as theoretical constructs from which one might assess social structures. Thus, in evaluating existing social structures, one may find the two models combined in different proportions.

<sup>9</sup>. *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>. C'hu, T'ung Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

<sup>11</sup>. Tu Wei-ming (see, in particular, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, *op.cit.*), Hall and Ames (Thinking Through Confucius, *op.cit.*), and Antonio Cua (see, "The Concept of Paradigmatic Individuals in the Ethics of Confucius" in Inquiry 14, 1971, pp. 41-55; "Confucian Vision and Human Community, in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 11, (1984), pp. 227-238 etc), hold relatively generous and liberal interpretations of Confucian morality while Michael Martin ("Ritual Action ("Li") in Confucius and Hsun Tzu", in Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 73(1), Mar 1995, pp. 13-30.), for example, understands the structures in Confucianism to be undesirably authoritarian and hierarchical.

<sup>12</sup>. Refer to the discussion in Section 2.2 regarding Kant's assessment of ethics in classical Chinese philosophy.

<sup>12</sup>. The development of laws in China's historical and social context is interesting, in this regard. It has been argued that, even up until 1911, laws in China have not been applied universally due to Confucian influence: a range of different offences committed by a person upon another depended, amongst other factors, on: (a) the status of the person committing the act; and (b) the relationship between the person committing the act and the person s/he committed it against. Accordingly, there were

a range of different punishments for the same offence depending on both (a) and (b). It was seen fitting in some cases, for instance, to punish a parent as well for a crime his or her child had committed.

See Chu, Tung-Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*, and MacCormack, Geoffrey, The Spirit of Traditional Chinese Law, University of Georgia Press, Athens and London, 1996.

- <sup>14</sup>. Although the Confucian approach to friendship is important and interesting, it will not be discussed here because it is essentially a relationship amongst equals; the other four exemplify relationships between unequals, which are the focus of this and the following section.
- <sup>15</sup>. Ta-hsueh, 9:1, 3, 8-9; adapted from Legge's translation, The Four Books, *op.cit.*
- <sup>16</sup>. Since the May Fourth Movement, the Chinese Intelligentsia in the second decade of this century began to explore 'foreign' ideas and to question the relationship between Chinese culture and China's regrettable fate. Since then, debates about the proper course for China have vacillated between extremes set by those who renounce tradition in favour of modernity and development and others who would preserve but reform China's tradition to promote social and economic welfare. This debate, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis. See Kam Louie, Critiques of Confucius in Contemporary China, Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1980, and Louie's bibliography.
- <sup>17</sup>. See the discussion of these issues in The Confucian World Observed, Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman (eds), East-West Center, Hawaii, 1992, pp. 55-6.
- <sup>18</sup>. D.C. Lau's translation, in Confucius: The Analects, *op.cit.*

- <sup>19</sup>. Li Chenyang, in "The Confucian Concept of Jen and the Feminist Ethics of Care: A Comparative Study", in Hypatia, Vol. 9, no. 1, pp 70-89.
- <sup>20</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 83.
- <sup>21</sup>. Perhaps a more convincing interpretation of this passage is offered in James Legge's understanding of 'young women' as 'concubines'. See James Legge's commentary on the passage in The Four Books, *op.cit.* If Legge's translation is accepted, then it could be said that this passage does not reveal Confucius' misogyny but, rather, his disapproval of concubines.
- <sup>22</sup>. Analects 1:2.
- <sup>23</sup>. The debates between the Moists (see Section 2.1.5) and the Confucianists (particularly Mencius) is especially relevant here.
- <sup>24</sup>. Antonio Cua, "Confucian Vision and Human Community", *op.cit.*, p. 228.
- <sup>25</sup>. See, for example, Wm Theodore De Bary's analysis of some problems in Confucian philosophy, in The Trouble With Confucianism, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991.
- <sup>26</sup>. A.I. Melden, Rights and Right Conduct, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1959, pp. 36-50. Melden's notion of the term 'father' is, in this work, construed primarily in terms of parent-child obligations and rights, essentially ignoring biological (physical) connectedness. In a later work (Rights and Persons, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977; see Chapter Three, "Rights, Personal Relations and the Family"), he allows for the moral significance of biological connectedness.
- <sup>27</sup>. D.Z. Phillips and H.O. Mounce, Moral Practices, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1969, Appendix I, p. 114.
- <sup>28</sup>. See A.I. Melden, Rights and Persons, *op.cit.*, Chapter Three, "Rights, Personal Relations and the Family".

- <sup>29</sup>. The situation is compounded in the case that Confucius is addressing not merely children (in terms of age) but all offspring (regardless of age).
- <sup>30</sup>. Tu Wei-ming, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, *op.cit.*, p. 115.
- <sup>31</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 116.
- <sup>32</sup>. According to Melden, cases of subjugation are more difficult to deal with when subjugation within certain relationships is accepted by the community—and by the person subjugated—as normative. Melden uses the example of a husband's subjugation of his wife: "... a wife who meekly accepts the regimentation of her life by her husband and whose own interests as a human being have been largely washed out and circumscribed by her responsibilities within the kitchen and in the bed she shares with him, supports, and is supported by, the agency of a person in ways we do not approve." (in A.I. Melden, Rights and Persons, *op.cit.*, p. 76.)
- <sup>33</sup>. This problem will be discussed in Section 5.3.
- <sup>34</sup>. It needs to be noted that the family structure in the China of Confucius' time and long after was clearly delineated from the non-family structure. The family was absorbed within the larger patrilineal clan grouping which not only had unspoken rules peculiar to each clan. The clear definition between the clan and the non-clan was upheld not only by the unstated social norms (for example, Confucius mentioned in Analects 2:24 that to sacrifice to spirits not belonging to one[']s family or clan] was flattery), it was further reinforced by the law: different legislation and punishments were applied to offences committed to people within and outside the clan context. See Chu Tung Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-87.
- <sup>35</sup>. Analects 13:6; the original term translated 'fitting' here has a meaning which is remarkably difficult to capture in English; other translations include 'correct' and 'right'.
- <sup>36</sup>. James Legge (in The Confucian Classics, *Shu King*,) comments, in a footnote, that Confucius' construction of Chinese history in the *Shu Ching* was not meant as an

accurate historical account, but, rather, to suit the purposes of his philosophical system. Confucius' *Shu Ching* concludes the story of the Chou dynasty (which, as characterised by most historical texts, ended at 249 B.C.) at 770 B.C., the beginning of a period of weak and ineffective rulers. Legge writes: "This fact is sufficient to prove that Confucius did not compile the *Shu* as a history of his country, or even intend that it should afford materials for such a history. His design, we may rather judge, was to bring together such pieces as might show the wonderful virtue and intelligence of ancient sovereigns and statesmen, who should be models for those of future ages, but between P'ing-wang and Mu-wang there had reigned seven sovereigns of the house of Chou; and it is remarkable that not a single document of the reign of any of them was incorporated by Confucius into the *Shu-king*." (p. 613)

- <sup>37</sup>. Antonio Cua, "Confucian Vision and Human Community" *op.cit.*, p. 233.
- <sup>38</sup>. Confucius accepted disciples from all walks of life—even the poorest, who brought as an offering the lowest of offerings: strips of dried meat (Analects 7:7).
- <sup>39</sup>. Benjamin Schwartz, The World of Thought in Ancient China, Harvard University Press, U.S.A., 1985, p. 76.
- <sup>40</sup>. The Confucians even advocated killing off rulers who, in their opinion, 'outraged *jen*' (Mencius 1B:8). Refer also to C'hu, T'ung Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*, pp. 268-9.
- <sup>41</sup>. Wm Theodore de Bary, The Trouble With Confucianism, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-29; italics mine.
- <sup>42</sup>. Hall and Ames, Thinking Through Confucius, *op.cit.*, p. 184.
- <sup>43</sup>. Han Fei Tzu, 17, 2b, cited in Ch'u, T'ung Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*, p. 258.
- <sup>44</sup>. Analects 2:3, 3:19, 6:25, 12:13.
- <sup>45</sup>. *Tso Chuan Chu-su*, 53, 6b-7a, Legge, Chinese Classics V Pt. II 732.

- <sup>46</sup>. On this point, see Chung-ying Cheng, "Legalism versus Confucianism: A Philosophical Appraisal", in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, Vol 8, (1981) pp. 271-302; and Ch'u, T'ung Tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, *op.cit.*
- <sup>47</sup>. K.K. Lee, "The Legalist School and Legal Positivism", in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 3, 1975, p. 45.
- <sup>48</sup>. It is perhaps a point of interest that Chinese people do badly on Kohlberg's tests. See Alfred Bloom's findings in "A Cognitive Dimension of Social Control: The Hong Kong Chinese in Cross-Cultural Perspective", in Wilson, A., Greenblatt, S., and Wilson, R. (eds) Deviance and Social Control in Chinese Society, Praeger, New York, 1977, pp. 67-81; and Dien, Dora Shu-fang, "A Chinese Perspective on Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development", in Developmental Review, Vol. 2, 1982, pp. 331-341.
- <sup>49</sup>. Ambrose King (in "The Individual and Group in Confucianism: A Relational Perspective", in Munro, D. (ed) Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values, Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1985) writes that: "... the Chinese individual is a relational being who conceives of the 'other man' in concrete and differentiated relational terms" (p. 63).
- <sup>50</sup>. It is interesting, in this connection, to note Marilyn Friedman's criticism of those communitarian theories which focus on the moral authority of families traditions and nations. She argues that communities organised along these lines have traditionally oppressed and excluded women. See Marilyn Friedman, What are Friends For?: Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993, especially pp. 231-255.
- <sup>51</sup>. See sections 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 5.1 and 5.2.
- <sup>52</sup>. Tu, Wei-ming, Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

## CHAPTER SIX

### PAULINE COMMUNITY

The newly-formed Christian communities were in a state of chaos with regard to behavioural norms and codes. Most of the converts were confused about which moral and behavioural codes were acceptable and/or permissible, and others which were not. Paul's epistles deal with the various confusions within the communities: the believers were confused about the continuing place and function of Jewish traditions and laws; some of the converted (Gentiles) did not know if their previous modes of life and values were valid and acceptable; and it was unclear to many others how and which aspects of their lives had to be changed.

Paul's story involves a reconstruction of the existing Jewish view of history. God and salvation were now available to the non-Jew as well. Instead of assimilating the new story to the old, Paul grafts the old onto the new. He avoids inconsistency in weaving together these two stories by setting them within different time frameworks. In chronological perspective, Paul writes: "... the gospel ... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, *to the Jew first and also to the Greek*" (Romans 1:16; italics mine).<sup>1</sup>

While this time reference helped to eliminate some difficulties with the formulation of an ethic applicable to the new communities, the elements of Pauline morality—its ontology, axiology and its structures—were not well defined. There is an enormous amount of biblical scholarship on the subject of Paul's derivation of values from the variety of sources to which he was exposed. The fact that this debate is rife with different opinions reflects a certain amount of cut-and-paste technique by Paul with regard to moral

values and norms. He quotes variously from the pentateuch with regard to theological doctrine (Galatians 3, 4); provides lists of virtues and vices (Galatians 5:19-23); appeals to the Torah for the content of the newly-applicable norms (Galatians 5:14); sets up the value of love (αγαπη) as overriding all others (Romans 13:8-10); and encourages a breakdown of hierarchical social structures (Galatians 3:28).

This chapter discusses moral reasoning in Pauline thought, focusing in particular on the connection between morality and the codes for relational interaction. In this regard, it examines two prominent features of Pauline communities as described by Paul in the epistles. The first is Paul's pragmatic approach to interrelational and communal harmony and, within that framework, the rejection of legalistic structures, particularly those embodied in existing Jewish codes. One of the requirements of Jewish (moral) practice that Paul vehemently rejected was circumcision (Romans 4; Galatians 4-6).<sup>2</sup> Paul reasoned that circumcision (περιτομης) was not a necessary criterion of the believer's faith (πιστις), arguing that belief (επιστευσεν: Abraham 'approached' God), instead, was necessary; this shifted the criterion for faith from publicly-verifiable ritual to a more subjective, personal conviction. Paul's rejection of circumcision as a necessary expression and manifestation of faith is part of a larger attempt to design a set of concepts for moral action and motivation applicable to the new Christian communities. At a number of points in the epistles, he discusses the limited applicability of the (Jewish) law, belittling its demands for outward show only as well as its deontological structures. Paul emphasises the difference between the motivational structures of the person who is merely concerned to observe the dictates of the law as against the person who undergoes a 'circumcision of the heart'

(Romans 2). It is the latter that is significant as a response (Romans 5) to the work of Christ (Christ's death is portrayed as paradigmatic of love (αγαπη) in Philippians 2).

The second feature of Pauline morality examined here is his view that the believers' concern for each other, rather than a preoccupation with rules or with rightness, is the appropriate action-guiding principle. This view figures especially in Paul's attempts at resolving disputes. The solutions Paul offered to those in tangled and tense situations often involved advice to relax the bindingness of existing codes.<sup>3</sup> In one case, for example, he mediated between two groups of converts, one which insisted on adhering to certain rules (for example, of not eating food offered to idols (I Corinthians 8, 10))—which Paul termed the 'weak'—and another which, because of their new-found freedom, did not see the need for keeping to this particular rule (Paul called them the 'strong'). Paul's recommendation was in neither party's favour in that, while he considered the rule itself obsolete (Romans 8:4-6), he advocated that it should be adhered to (by the strong) if there was any possibility of any of the weak being further confused and floundering in their attempts to work out the new codes and norms (Romans 8:8-13).

In the final section of this chapter, the two features of Pauline morality are drawn together and compared with some of the characteristics of care morality discussed in Chapter four. While Paul's rejection of deontological morality is important in this context, what is particularly interesting is his emphasis on love (αγαπη) as the fundamental (I Corinthians 13) defining feature of the Christian communities. Paul argues that love for another is the basis upon which one seeks the other's well-being. The dynamics of αγαπη—what love requires of the moral agent, either as person-loving or as person-loved—is also examined.

## 6.1 ... No One Will Be Justified by the Works of the Law<sup>4</sup>

According to Paul, one of the changes to the believers' lives brought about by the Christ-event was the feature of faith (πίστις). While Paul's notion of faith is poorly defined and inconsistent in its range of uses, certain common themes can be discerned in the epistles. For instance, one of the notable aspects of πίστις in the epistles is the way Paul contrasts it with (the requirements of Jewish) law. Rejecting legalistic interpretations of Jewish law, Paul claims that behaviours and actions motivated solely by a concern to fulfil the dictates of law (works of law: ἔργον νομον) are ineffective as far as the attainment of the much-desired condition of righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) is concerned (Galatians 3-6).

Rather, what will be effective for the believers' pursuit of salvation (σωτηρία) are 'work[s] of faith' (ἔργον πίστεως)<sup>5</sup>, arising from a 'circumcision of the heart' (Romans 2)<sup>6</sup>. Relating his personal experience, Paul discounts his past achievements and regards them as 'rubbish' (Philippians 3:2-11). Any sense of 'boasting' is immediately excluded by what he terms the 'law of faith' (Romans 3:27); he rejects the idea that works (of law) earn or produce righteousness; this theme he presents in all of his epistles. Obviously, this is one of the themes he needs to stress if he also wants to maintain that the requirements of the judaic law are no longer relevant for salvation or for entry into the community.<sup>7</sup>

Paul sets up the respective domains of νόμος and πίστις within respective time frames and contexts. He argued that while νόμος was operative and effective for the period up to the Christ event, thereafter, πίστις was to replace it (II Corinthians 3:7-16).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in Galatians 3:19, Paul claims that the Jewish law was given by the angels; this greatly restricts its authority, legitimacy and scope. In this passage, the term διαταγῆς is used,

meaning 'ordained' or 'authored'. This term implies that the law was actually composed by the angels and not merely transmitted by them. This greatly diminishes its credibility and status.

Paul's general attitude towards the Jewish law was that it had a limited and temporary validity, leading up to the fuller revelation of Christ.<sup>9</sup> He limits the function of the law to the previous time period leading up to the Christ-event. In Galatians 3:24-25, he describes it as having played the role of a guide (παιδαγωγος).<sup>10</sup> However, he was still willing to concede that Jewish-Christians might, if they so wished, continue to observe the precepts of the law (Torah), though he regarded such observance as not making any contribution to salvation. In addition, he was strongly opposed to the idea that Gentile converts should adopt the Torah; this he regarded as a betrayal of the principle that the resurrection was sufficient to produce salvation. Even Jewish Christians who regarded their observance of the Torah as salvific, rather than a matter of custom were, in Paul's view, betraying the basic Christian principle.

Paul's criticism of Jewish legality prepares the way for the one inevitable conclusion: the law has served its purpose in preparing the world for Christ and, like all outworn things, must take itself off the stage—according to Paul, God has seen this from the beginning (Galatians 4:1-2).<sup>11</sup> Obsession with the law and with keeping to its dictates was a theme Paul dealt with thoroughly. He argued that adherence to law detracted from the significance of the Christ event whenever one was over-enthusiastic about keeping to it: for some it became a stumbling block (Romans 9:31-32). It seems as if Paul is exasperated when he writes that the role of the law was to condemn and thus to 'put under a curse' (Romans 5:13-20; I Corinthians 15:56; Galatians 3:1-14).<sup>12</sup> The letter to the Galatians is particularly

condemnatory of the role of the law: it comes from angels (3:20); it is associated with the undesirable conduct of the Jews in observing holy days (4:10); it is a religion of servitude (4:1f; 5:1); it is a burdensome system of rites and ceremonies, a system that belongs essentially to the domain of σαρκί (flesh) (5:3; 6:15) (see discussion in Section 3.2.2).

Paul's rejection of law can be understood within the more comprehensive framework of his rejection of Jewish attitudes toward (the dictates of) law. In this context, Paul's emphasis is not merely that certain features of Jewish law are inconsistent with ideas in Christian thought. Thus, as well as suggesting this, he is putting a more sophisticated argument in favour of the motivational structures embodied in the concept of πίστις as a response to the ἀγάπη of Christ. Without attempting to decipher Paul's actual intentions, this reading of the epistles focuses on the structures rather than on the content of behavioural norms. In his analysis of the Pauline epistles, Leander Keck argues that the former was in fact Paul's concern:

If human existence under law is bondage to a divinely sanctioned structure of obligation which must be met in order to be rightly related to God, be it law epitomized by circumcision or by *stoicheia*, then one can understand why Paul's theological analysis of law shows no interest whatever in distinguishing one law from another: for example, the ritual from the moral, the permanently valid from the transient, the fair from the unfair, for the problem is not certain laws but law. If one bases life on law, if one's relation to the divine is the result of meeting requirements, it does not really matter under which law one's life takes shape.<sup>13</sup>

The reading Keck offers is especially supported by Romans 2. In this passage, Paul rejects the whole idea of external compliance to a rigidly set standard, characterised by the Jewish law. In a sweep to include the Gentiles, he points out that although they may not know the (dictates of the Jewish) law, they do have a conscience and will be judged by their 'secret thoughts' (vv. 15-16). What emerges from Paul's argument here is an emphasis on the inner motivations which appropriately reflect a response to God. Indeed, it is the *circumcision of the heart* that counts: for a person is not a Jew who is one *outwardly* (εν τω φανερω), nor is true circumcision *something external and physical*. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one *inwardly* (εν τω κρυπτω), and real circumcision is a *matter of the heart* (vv. 28,29).

Significantly, in this passage, Paul discusses the limited applicability of the law not in terms of a time frame but in terms of its demands only for outward show and its legalistic structure. Thus, a distinction is made not between this αων and the previous one, but between what counts as *real and true* circumcision. Real circumcision is a matter of the heart; and this is one of the main distinguishing features between the works of law and the works of faith. This criterion is still vague, however, because, as Keck rightly notes, Paul is not interested in the *content* of either kind of εργον. There are, though, significant differences between the two.

First, the epistles portray motivational structures within a legalistic system as being based upon an *imperative-indicative* relation. What this means is that the desired condition of 'righteousness' is achieved through obedience to the law. In other words, the promise of the law was that if it was obeyed, the salvation of the believer could be attained.<sup>14</sup> By contrast, Paul characterises Christian behaviour, especially with respect to the works of

faith, as being underscored by an *indicative-imperative* structure. "... since we have been made righteous ['rightwised'] by faith" (Romans 5:1; italics mine), "... should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means!" (Galatians 6:1-2).<sup>15</sup> There are different motivational assumptions at work in the imperative-indicative and in the indicative-imperative structures. While the former is predicated upon externalist motivations of correct behaviour which one performs in order to achieve a specified end, the latter is based upon an internalist (cognitivist) position of deriving an ought from an is.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, Paul's imperatives are grounded in the same principle as that by which he urges the believers to manifest works of faith. The domain and scope of these works, because they are qualitatively different from the works of law and, furthermore, because they arise from different motivational factors, are crucial in marking out the new modes of life of the believer. Paul seeks a new system in which the concern for inflexible principles, coupled with a belief in the absolute status of Jewish customs, is put to the test. While a preoccupation with the law drives one to despair (Romans 7:13-28), the new system proposed by Paul focuses on love for the other and emphasises liberation from legalistic structures.<sup>17</sup> A sense of freedom and liberation is articulated explicitly by Paul when he makes the point that everything is permitted (I Corinthians 6:12; 10:23-25).<sup>18</sup> Thus a primarily rule-based system is replaced by another which emphasises relationships, the latter being characterised in part by the paradigmatic models of Paul himself and of Christ.<sup>19</sup> Within this context, universally-applicable rules lose their binding nature and significance given that zealotry in fulfilling their dictates detracts from a proper focus on God and on other human beings. The structure of Pauline morality could, in that connection, be described as a system in which there is:

... an open-ended commitment to concrete relationships rather than general regard for the ground rules which protect and govern social order. These relationships are not without form, but their precise forms are to be negotiated in concrete interactions. An active process of negotiation displaces an ongoing interest in the interpretation and application of traditional moral norms.<sup>20</sup>

An appeal to rules does not adequately deal with the dynamism in the development of human relationships. Therefore, there is a sense of liberality and openness, a sense that appropriate forms of life need to be worked out (Philippians 2:12, 13). The next section discusses Paul's concern for communal harmony, his use of ἀγάπη as a community-sustaining value and, relatedly, the concept of the self.

## **6.2 The Greatest of These is Love<sup>21</sup>**

The newly-formed Christian communities consisting of a heterogeneous mix of people from different cultures and social strata were a likely seed-bed for disputes. Paul therefore had the unenviable task of drawing together these divided peoples and uniting them a cohesive way of life. To this end, he maintained that the new believing communities were set apart from the rest of the world which they were part of but superior to.

Paul uses a range of metaphors and images to define the modes of life available in the new Christian communities. These include: dying and rising with Christ<sup>22</sup>; baptism<sup>23</sup>; adoption<sup>24</sup>; and heirdom<sup>25</sup>. These images and metaphors served as boundary markers in that they defined membership and participation in the community. Furthermore, they provided frameworks within which thinking and reasoning took place.

In this connection, *αγαπη*, nominated by Paul as the fundamental and distinctive feature of the new communities, functions most prominently as a community-building and a community-sustaining value. Discussions of *αγαπη* in the Pauline epistles were almost always concerned with its functionality in situations and with how it might be realised in the communal life of the Christian converts.<sup>26</sup> *Αγαπη* is manifest in unselfish, courteous, kind and compassionate acts. However, it is not merely a simple aggregate of some or even all of these qualities (I Corinthians). The paradigmatic exemplification of *αγαπη* is Christ's humility and sacrifice described in Philippians 2. In this regard, *αγαπη* could be seen as a motivational source for other-directed behaviour, itself being brought about by the believer's recognition of and response to the *αγαπη* of God (Romans 5:5-8).

*Αγαπη* was most often portrayed in terms of an affectionate concern for the other. In contexts in which Paul rejected a legalistic and formalistic approach to relational interaction, he often appealed to the notion of *αγαπη* as the fundamental principle of such interaction; *αγαπη* is the operative principle which governs relationships between members of the community.

In this regard, the body of Christ metaphor is especially interesting because it shows the distinctive way in which Paul conceives of community. "Now you are the body of Christ and *individually members of it* (*μελη εκ μερους*)" (I Corinthians 12:27). It is worth noting that the first point Paul makes about the body of Christ (in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12) is that each member is *different*; he thereby acknowledges the empirical fact that the communities of believers were a heterogeneous mix. Given that the Greek term 'εκ' means 'from', the 'body (of individuals deriving) *from* Christ' metaphor signifies that the structures and values of the community, as well as the lives of individual members, are to derive from that source. This

means that the identities of each of the believers is rooted essentially in that community and derives meaning from that membership. It is in this sense that the body *from* Christ concept has both precedence and priority over its individual members. What the believers have at stake and invested in the community is not a mere occasional gathering together, nor is it restricted to specific reasons and functions; what is at stake, rather, is the believer's whole being. There is a strong ethical incentive here: those who belong are enjoined to love 'because we are *members one of another*'. Paul employs the body *from* Christ image to relate believers to one another and, as a group, to Christ; if one member suffers, all suffer together (I Corinthians 12:26).

The locus for the believers to gather together to contemplate the love of Christ is the common meal (I Corinthians 17-34; 10:14-22). In re-enacting portions of the passover feast, the believers (re-)articulate their shared beliefs and (re-)emphasise the bases and assumptions of moral action and, more generally, of life together (I Corinthians 11:23-26). The difference between this meal as a shared activity by the members of the community and having a meal at home cannot be overemphasised. Indeed, Paul expresses surprise that some of the believers should confuse the two (I Corinthians 11:22, 34). What is appropriate normally and in private homes is inappropriate at the common meal because there is a different set of assumptions and norms operating within the community; there is even a different name by which Paul marks this ritual: the lord's meal (I Corinthians 11:20).<sup>27</sup>

An interesting issue that arises, in considering the themes discussed above, is the notion of the self understood within the context of Pauline notions of community. In the first letter to the Corinthians (chapters 8-10), Paul addresses a problem faced by the Corinthian Christians: some of the

new believers were consuming food bought from the market, and it was commonly known that food sold at the market would have been previously offered as sacrifice to other gods. There were, thus, arguments within the Corinthian community as to whether this was an acceptable practice.

Paul cast the opposing factions involved in the debate as the 'strong' and the 'weak'. The strong, claiming to possess knowledge of the new conditions of their lives (I Corinthians 8:1-7), felt that their consuming of food offered to idols was an expression of their insight that 'there is one God' and that eating such food was therefore inconsequential and an expression of their faith, that 'no idol in the world really exists'. Paul interpreted this practice of the 'strong' as an exercise of liberty (vv. 8-9). The weak, by contrast (because of their weak 'consciences'), have not acquired this knowledge nor, accordingly, understood the liberty of the Christian life, and are likely to join in this practice of the 'strong' but with different assumptions: in eating food offered to idols, the 'weak' might think that they are, indeed, participating in idol worship (vv. 9-11).

The weak, with their weak consciences, have to learn the liberality of the Christian life. In this respect, an interesting account of the weak conscience is offered by Gooch, who argues that Paul assumed an introspective account of conscience which was linked to one's self-perception.<sup>28</sup> On this reading, the weak who 'stumble' do so because of their inadequate self-perceptions—they do not fully understand that life in Christ does not involve the search for rules and are therefore easily misled. What they have to learn is that given that "... the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." (I Corinthians 10:26), they are free from existing structures (requiring compliance to the law (I Corinthians 9:19-23)). Thus, in the case of

consuming food offered to idols, the believer must understand that the food itself is of no moral value; what matters is what meaning the consumer gives to it (I Corinthians 8:8).

While it might be objected that Gooch's thesis reads a certain amount of motivational psychology into Paul's reasoning, it should be noted that much of Paul's reasoning involves internalist assumptions regarding moral motivation. For example, in dealing with the behaviour of the converts, he urges renewal of perspectives (*vous*; see Section 3.1.2), as if that were sufficient to effect changes in behaviour (Romans 12:2; Romans 6:11). In addition, the indicative-imperative construction assumes this internalist structure of moral motivation. Paul's discussion in I Corinthians 8-10 reveals a cognitivist account of moral motivation: the difference between the weak and the strong is cast largely in terms of the lack or the possession of knowledge. It seems that what the weak are unable to appreciate is how the Christ-event has changed their lives.<sup>29</sup>

If the problem with the weak is their lack of knowledge, it is, in a way, surprising that Paul does not address the issue of helping them to acquire that necessary knowledge. Instead, he urges that the strong, in consideration of the weak, refrain from the controversial practice for the sake of the latter: "... do not eat it ... for the sake of conscience—I mean the other's conscience, not your own." (I Corinthians 10:28b-29a). For whatever reason, by asking that the strong be considerate of the weak, Paul's solution seems to deal with the case only in a superficial, temporary way, in that it fails to deal with the inadequacies of the weak.

Paul's handling of this case reflects an overriding concern for the harmony of the community: "'All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up." (I Corinthians

10:23). In this attempt to justify his proposed solution, Paul again contrasts the structures of his moral system with those of the law. Emphasising the superiority of the former because it gives consideration to that which is beneficial and that which 'builds up' (οικοδομει), Paul condemns sin against any member of the community for the reason that it is a sin against Christ (I Corinthians 8:12). This appeal to a common ground of unity (belief in Christ) is meant to lead the believers to deliberate on issues not according to rules but by reference to other-regarding principles: if it is foreseeable that my intended action will cause another within my community to stumble or fall, then I should not do it (I Corinthians 8:13).

When Paul addresses the notion of 'building up' in some of his other epistles, he suggests that the 'spiritual gifts' (for example, speaking in tongues, prophesy) are to be used for this purpose (I Corinthians 14:5, 12, 3:10-15; I Thessalonians 5:11; Romans 15:2). More fundamentally, however, αγαπη is the underlying basis of all that builds up. Thus in I Corinthians 12-14, while Paul stresses the importance of the spiritual gifts, he sees them as having only instrumental value. He discourages both the pneumatic over-valuation of the spiritual gifts and the attempt to set up a hierarchy of gifts, making the point that αγαπη is the motivational source of all Christian beliefs and practices:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing ... faith, hope

and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13:1-3; 13).

Paul makes it clear that the importance of each member's application or practice of the gifts lies not in the *nature* of their contribution, but in the fact that they derive from the same source and that they contribute to the maintenance and building-up of the community: "the one and the same spirit energises all of these" (I Corinthians 12:11). Although the respective contributions of the different members are different, the church as the gathering of its members is the common good (το συμφερον) toward which the energies and talents of individuals ought to be directed (I Corinthians 12:7).

Given the way Paul has dealt with the problems discussed above, it could be argued that while Paul pays particular attention to the motivational source of appropriate behaviour and participation within the community, and makes some mention of the common good and of community stability, he does not pay much attention to the modes in which intention and volition are manifest and through which the stated ends are achieved. Emphasising the need of believers to understand the communitarian and egalitarian mood of the Christian communities (instead of setting up hierarchies), Paul remarks, somewhat astringently, that:

... if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ... The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (I Corinthians 12:16, 17, 21).

From the preceding discussion, it appears that Paul discusses the *nature* of individual contributions only in terms of their instrumentality, focusing essentially on *αγαπη* as the fundamental motivational source and on its effects on communal life. In this connection, the pedagogical issues related to Paul's concept of *αγαπη*, construed basically in terms of moral motivation, are especially interesting because they, too, reveal Paul's indifference to rule-based behaviour. In particular, the idea of imitation (*μιμνημοι*) of paradigmatic models as a means of cultivating various qualities is a strategy Paul uses in his epistles when he addresses members of the Christian communities regarding their behaviours and actions.<sup>30</sup>

In the variety of situations when Paul asks that the converts imitate certain paradigms, he urges that they observe carefully the *principles and characteristics* which are manifest in the behaviours of these paradigms, rather than merely aping their behaviour.<sup>31</sup> This is clearly demonstrated in his epistle to the Philippian church, where he encourages the believers to imitate Christ: not Christ's dying act but the principles of humility and sacrifice associated with that act (Philippians 2). Other characteristics to imitate include: *αγαπη* (Romans 5:5; 5:8); patience (2 Thessalonians 3:5); holiness (I Corinthians 6:11; I Thessalonians 4:3-8); maturity (Philippians 3); and, in general, the characters of some of Paul's co-workers: Apollos (I Corinthians 4:6); Silvanus and Timothy (I Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9); Timothy and Epaphroditus (Philippians 3:17).

In encouraging the believers to imitate paradigms, Paul appears to see it as necessary that the believers observe and experience first hand the paradigm at work. Thus, he calls on communities which he founded, and with which he had contact, to imitate him because they have had the opportunity to observe his behaviour. By contrast, he only asks members of the church in

Rome, which he did not found (Romans 1:10-15; 15:20-22) and which, prior to his writing of the epistle, he never visited, to imitate Christ, and not himself. It is notable, too, that Paul refers to the imitation of the Christ figure without referring back to Christ's life and works on earth.<sup>32</sup>

With regard to Paul's use of the paradigms of Christ and of himself, in the two instances when Paul writes that he himself imitates Christ (I Corinthians 4:16; 11:1), the admonition is for the believers to imitate him, Paul. At other times, Paul presents himself together with Christ as two alternative models (I Thessalonians 1:6).

Another important feature of imitation in Pauline morality is that while imitation presupposes a moral hierarchy, Paul writes that the imitator-imitated relationship is dynamic and can change such that when imitators have succeeded in attaining the required moral stature can themselves become models (τυπος) for others to imitate (I Thessalonians 1:6,7).

Whilst Paul's imitation pedagogy allows for the possibility of change in power hierarchies—the learner (imitator) can himself become a model—such shifts in power are not always permitted. At some points in the epistles, Paul casts himself as the father-founder of the communities, from which he requires strict obedience. In his first letter to the Corinthians, for example, while Paul writes that, as a father, he admonishes (νουθετεω) and appeals to (παρακαλεω) the converts (4:14; 4:16), he also reminds them that he could take on a disciplinary role: "What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" (4:21).

The way in which Paul construes his relationships with the converts in the Christian communities reveals a picture of paternal caring. Casting himself as

the father figure determines somewhat the nature of the care Paul has for the converts. This has been critically described as 'love-patriarchalism'.<sup>33</sup> The concluding section of this chapter compares some of the ideals of the care ethic with Pauline notions of caring.

### **6.3 Caring in Pauline Morality**

The aim of this section is to discuss certain features of relational attachment and how they compare with some of the ideals of the care ethic. Some concepts that provide the framework for discussion include ideas of autonomy, universalisability and caring affection.<sup>34</sup>

#### ***Autonomy***<sup>35</sup>

As noted in the preceding section, Paul, in connection with some of his exhortations, presents himself as the father figure, with the converts as his children. It is clear, in most cases, that this is an attempt to justify his moral authority such that his advice and directives are complied with.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, it should be noted that Paul does at times present himself as the loving father, urging (παρακαλεω), encouraging (παραμυθεομαι) and pleading (μαρτυρομαι) (I Thessalonians 2:11-12). As a parent, Paul expects to make sacrifices for his children, and not them for him: "... children ought not to lay up (θησαυριζω) for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend (δαπαναω) and be spent for you." (II Corinthians 12:14, 15).

It could be said that Paul views a father's role as basically providing moral guidance; this view is not incompatible with Paul himself being a model for the converts. In addition, the fatherly role has several dimensions: Paul, as a father, pleads, encourages, expects to make sacrifices, chides, reminds, and expects to enforce discipline. How Paul chooses between these modes

is not explained; there seems to be no distinguishable set of criteria, in the epistles, according to which Paul chooses. From the fact that he addresses the members of the church communities and his fellow-workers as his beloved<sup>37</sup> (αγαπητος), it can be inferred that Paul's exhortations and commands are motivated by his love and concern for them. On this account, what emerges is a picture of Paul as a loving carer whose primary concern is not the rightness or wrongness of actions and/or behaviour but the well-being of the believers; in presenting himself as the father-figure of the communities, as well as one of the paradigms of life in Christ, Paul takes on responsibility in caring for the believers.

The way in which Paul construes his relationships with the converts has immediate and important implications for concepts of identity and agency, both for Paul and the converts. In particular, the issue of the autonomy of the converts—more specifically, the extent to which the converts are considered, by Paul, as self-governors—is extremely pertinent. Within the context of the Pauline epistles, there are at least two ways in which the individual believer's autonomy could be curtailed. The first is connected with their relationship with Paul as the father-figure; the second concerns relational norms and modes of life within the communities themselves. Each of these aspects is dealt with in turn.

With regard to the dynamics of the relationship between Paul—as father and model—and the believers, it was previously argued that Paul at different times adopted different approaches, though with the basic premise that all of Paul's responses were motivated by αγάπη. Thus, while Paul threatens to adopt a disciplinary approach, he expresses a clear preference for a loving and persuasive approach (I Corinthians 4:21; Philemon 8,9). On the other hand, it needs to be noted that while Paul upholds love as the core

value in human interaction, his notion of *αγαπη* does at times involve elements of coercion. One could say, for example, that in I Corinthians 4:21, while Paul upholds a loving approach, the question he asks the believers is a rhetorical one ("Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?") which ultimately points to obedience.

In the letter to Philemon, the discourse of coercion is apparent as well.<sup>38</sup> While Paul writes that he prefers for Philemon to act in *αγαπη* (vv. 8-9; 13-14), and while he appeals (*παρακαλω*: vv. 9, 10) and does not wish to act without Philemon's consent (v. 14), he nonetheless commands (*επιτασσειν*: v. 8) and calls for Philemon's obedience (*υπακοη*: v. 21). In this letter to Philemon, Paul's choice of words, as well as the general tone of the epistle, clearly reveals that Paul expects his directives to be obeyed.<sup>39</sup>

What emerges from this discussion of Paul's treatment of the believers is a matter for concern: if Paul, *qua* carer, requires the believers, *qua* cared-for, to comply with his wishes, it seems that the independence of the latter, with regard to their moral behaviour and beliefs, is not acknowledged. Examining this predicament from the point of view of care morality, it would be insidious, indeed if, under the guise of care (in Paul's case, *αγαπη*), the autonomy of the cared-for is compromised. Because the relationship between carer and cared-for is, most usually, a hierarchical one, proposals for a viable care morality need to address the possibility of the carers' domination of the cared-for.

The issue of domination also arises at other points in the Pauline epistles, in particular, in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians in which he addresses the eating of food offered to idols. As noted in a previous section, when Paul discusses this problem, a curious feature of his advice is that

rather than suggesting that the condition of the weak be rectified (by their being brought to understand aspects of the Christian life) Paul suggests that the strong should be considerate of the weak. On one possible reading, it seems as if Paul is asking the strong to adopt a patronising stance toward the weak by curbing their behaviours for the sake of the weak. While such a reductionist interpretation of Paul's prescriptions could be rejected on the account that the prescriptions need to be understood within the context of Paul's concern for community-maintenance, this explanation does not mitigate the fact that these prescriptions have implications for both the weak and the strong, but particularly for the weak. Furthermore, there seems to be little or no attempt to cater for the moral development of the weak. Specifically with regard to the autonomy of the weak, it could be a point of concern that whilst the weak are seen as morally immature because they merely imitate behaviours of the strong without having the moral maturity that the latter possess, there is no suggestion that their situation should be rectified. Paul's solution rests not in having the weak instructed, and thus in altering their conditions and dealing with their immaturities directly but, in a more superficial manner, through circumscribing the behaviours and practices of the strong though their practices are not in themselves inappropriate.<sup>40</sup>

It is important, in this context, to note the analysis of Gerd Theissen, who characterises Paul's way of dealing with the communities as 'love-patriarchalism'.<sup>41</sup> Limiting his study to the Corinthian community, Theissen argues that the primary ethos of Pauline teaching—in other words, Paul's major contribution to a communal ethic—is conflict-resolution through mitigation of the difference(s) between the strong and the weak by

emphasising *αγαπή*. In effect, according to Theissen, Paul plumbs for the maintenance of the existing social order; a social order in which the strong show consideration for the weak, while the weak are asked to display subordination, allegiance and reverence towards the strong:

This love-patriarchalism allows social inequities to continue but transfuses them with a spirit of concern, or respect, and of personal solicitude.<sup>42</sup>

Whilst Theissen's general thesis that Paul was concerned with conflict-resolution is fairly uncontroversial, his more specific assertion that a sense of equality (of members of the community) is compromised *in order to* resolve conflict, if accurate, is a matter for concern.<sup>43</sup> If Theissen's analysis is correct and if conflict resolution is, indeed, for Paul, a primary and overriding one such that individual autonomy is compromised, what needs to be addressed is the desirability of such a compromise. Relating Paul's treatment of this issue to the structures of care morality, if the carer in the relationship is understood as the strong, and the cared-for as the weak, the result is a worrying account of care morality. What emerges is an account of concern (of the strong) for the well-being of the weak which, because it does not seek to address the weaknesses of the latter, does not attempt to rectify the vulnerability of the weak (the cared-for). Additionally, because the issue regarding the moral development of the weak is evaded, the question of their autonomy as responsible and responsive moral agents is likewise cast aside. The moral agent as an individual self, capable of self regulation or self governance is, it seems, what a weak member is exactly not. Paul's failure to address this issue demonstrates either a lack of concern regarding the autonomy of these weaker members of the communities or, at least, that the

autonomy of these weaker members is a factor overridden by other considerations.<sup>44</sup>

The lack of autonomy of some of the members of the Pauline communities—or Paul's failure to address the moral development of these individuals—is compounded by a noticeable lack of predictability and regularity in Paul's moral reasoning. In other words, given that the weak in the Corinthian community are deemed not to have (and are not accorded) self-governing capacities, the problematic condition of the weak is intensified if there are no predictable and classifiable norms or values one might appeal to in moral reasoning. Paul used a variety of modes of moral reasoning that were, separately or in combination, most appropriate for dealing with the situation in particular instances. The range of Paul's modes of reasoning included: appeals to his (Paul's) authority, calls to imitate Paul, Christ and Paul's fellow-workers, appeals for reasonableness and responsibility on the part of the believers, appeal to the importance of both his and Christ's tasks, and so on. Apart from the strategies Paul used in his reasoning, the *content* is, as well, varied and difficult to classify. There is, however, little or no suggestion in any of the epistles that Paul sought a universally-applicable system of morality, either in its mode or in its content.

Engberg-Pedersen, commenting on Paul's moral reasoning, rejects Theissen's thesis of love-patriarchalism.<sup>45</sup> According to Engberg-Pedersen, Paul's techniques of persuasion themselves demonstrate that he (Paul) respected the converts: he admonishes (νοωθετω), exhorts (παρακαλω) and reminds (αναμνησει) them about αγαπη. Engberg-Pedersen argues that these methods are not patriarchal because they do not encroach upon the independence of the believers. He writes:

... the proper 'method' for making other people adopt love as the ultimate norm of their life is one that is itself an expression of love, one which speaks to them in the form of reminding or exemplifying, but which does not in any way bring force to bear on them.<sup>46</sup>

In arguing against Theissen's thesis, Engberg-Pedersen presents a more dynamic conception of Paul's moral reasoning. While Theissen's account restricts Paul's aims to that of conflict-resolution, Engberg-Pedersen's thesis allows that Paul might have had more than one aim. Engberg-Pedersen argues that although Paul's thought does not exemplify a single formula, Paul's mode of reasoning—in his discussion of particular problems, his use of universal statements of belief and in his autobiographical references—is unified and homogeneous. What unifies Paul's approach, according to Engberg-Pedersen, is *αγάπη*:

The gospel is one of love, of giving up oneself for others and of willing that and willing it alone.<sup>47</sup>

It seems that although Engberg-Pedersen's analysis picks out some features of Paul's methods of moral reasoning, it focuses only on a limited range of these and thus allows him to read into the Pauline epistles a leniency and lack of coercion which is not always manifest. In his attempt to render Paul's moral reasoning as a consistent and unified system, Engberg-Pedersen fails to adequately take into account the full range of Paul's uses of *αγάπη*. It ignores, for example, the more demanding and authoritative modes of Paul's reasoning, presenting a somewhat biased and unrealistic view of Pauline morality.

Indeed, both Theissen's and Engberg-Pedersen's analyses of Paul's reasoning ignore the range of strategies Paul uses in moral persuasion; as well, both oversimplify Paul's tasks. A more substantial and satisfactory

analysis of ἀγάπη should include a study of Paul's use of ἀγάπη in, as far as possible, the full range of the situations Paul had to address.

Wayne Meeks, who discusses Paul's uses of ἀγάπη in its contemporary social and cultural contexts, attempts a more inclusive analysis.<sup>48</sup> Meeks approaches the discussion from the perspective of socio-cultural tensions existent in urban Christianity in the first century. In his attempts to describe the ordinary life of Christian communities in that era, Meeks paints a picture of ἀγάπη that has a range of different functions: religious, moral, didactic and theological. Meeks' conclusions about ἀγάπη are at once more accurate and more tentative than either of Theissen's or Engberg-Pedersen's.

### ***Universalisability and Particularity***

The variability of both the *content* and the *modes of reasoning* in Pauline morality can only be properly understood if we have reference to distinctive features of Pauline moral reasoning. First, one needs to note the eschatological time frame which provided an important perspective from which all aspects of life were constructed and evaluated. Secondly, some weight needs to be given to the empirical fact that these Christian communities were then newly-formed.<sup>49</sup> Within this framework, it is less surprising than it might otherwise be that there were not more objective or universalisable codes of behaviour for the believers. This lack of universality was, in part, connected to Paul's emphasis on freedom, at times expressed rather extremely in statements such as "against such there is no law" (Romans 5:23); "I am all things to everyone". Thirdly, Paul's rejection of Jewish legacies, as discussed previously (in Section 6.2), necessitated a

negotiation between the converts and the Jewish Christians regarding new forms and modes of life.

There have been numerous attempts to analyse and characterise the features and structures of Pauline moral thinking. One of the important debates is whether Pauline morality can be characterised as situational ethics. Much of the literature on Pauline morality resists that stance, arguing instead that Pauline moral reasoning needs to be understood within the framework either of the socio-cultural and demographic situation,<sup>50</sup> or of the eschatological time frame<sup>51</sup>, or both. An interesting position adopted by some in this debate is that Paul's ethics defies classification because it is motivationally grounded in *αγαπη*. Relatedly, because *αγαπη* is a relational ethic primarily rooted in concern for the other, Paul's seemingly arbitrary pronouncements are in fact specific cases of manifestations of *αγαπη*.<sup>52</sup> Wolfgang Schrage, for example, acknowledges that while there might be some justification for classifying Pauline ethics as situational, that acknowledgement has to be distinguished from the position that for Paul all of Christian life is totally dictated by the situation. Indeed, because of the indefinability of *αγαπη* and the possible danger of associating it with any specific moral injunctions:

[t]he difference between Paul's approach and casuistry lies not in a lack of concreteness but in the absence of any elaborate system embodying every possible injunction and reducing them all to a lowest common denominator of triviality.<sup>53</sup>

The move from legalistic structures to a focus on maintaining and enriching relationships within an agapeistic community would account, at least in part, for variation in the content and modes of Paul's moral reasoning. *Αγαπη* is not associated with rule-following nor with the successful completion of

certain acts (I Corinthians 13); it is a mode of existence motivated by concern for the others' well being. Emphasis on obligation (to obey laws) is shifted to emphasis on response. Paul's themes of building up, of sacrifice, and other similar expressions, "ultimately make the same point, both negatively in polemic against pneumatic individualism and subjectivism, and positively as an expression of love."<sup>54</sup>

### ***Caring Affection***

The concept of *αγάπη* is best understood in connection with its functional role in community-building and maintenance. To understand *αγάπη* as the fundamental operative principle in human relationships in Pauline thought, it helps to explain and clarify some apparent inconsistencies in his epistles. For example, while Paul seeks to eliminate the moral significance of social status (master-slave), of culture (Jew-Greek) and of gender (male-female)<sup>55</sup>, such apparently egalitarian moves seem somewhat inconsistent with Paul's inaction regarding the moral condition of the weak as described in I Corinthians 8-10. It could be argued, however, that Paul's advice in these two instances derives from his concern about community maintenance: elimination of divisive differences (in the case of cultural norms, for example) is important and so is the removal of the basis of disagreement (Paul's asking the strong to stop eating meat offered to idols while he did not himself see that as wrong).

An obvious and important question that needs to be dealt with in this context is whether *αγάπη* had, in Paul's scheme, merely an instrumental role in community-maintenance. Paul's most extensive treatment of *αγάπη* in I Corinthians 13 seems to suggest that *αγάπη* is not merely instrumental in maintaining the community but that it is integral to the lives of the believers

and, indeed, that it is definitive of the Christian life. Care and concern for the well-being of the other is the essential and fundamental component of *αγάπη*. Thus, it is stated clearly in I Corinthians 13 that the performance of other-regarding acts—even of self-sacrificial ones—is devoid of meaningful content if that performance lacks *αγάπη*, the required motivational ground for such acts:

If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing ... Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end ... For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13:3, 8, 12, 13)

As described in I Corinthians 13, *αγάπη* seems to be a constituent of human excellence, for both the individual believer and the community of believers. There is a strong suggestion that the connection between the good life for the individual believer and the good life within the community is a symbiotic one (I Corinthians 12). Within this framework, consideration for the other as a member of one's community is seen as most important: 'do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another' (Galatians 5:13); 'all things are lawful, but not all things build up' (I Corinthians 10:23; 6:12).

The life of the believer modelled on the humble sacrifice of Christ is the substantive content of *αγάπη*. Legalistic structures are totally inadequate in this regard not only because overemphasis on their legalistic nature actually distracts one from acting from genuine concern but also because

they fail to provide reasons for pursuing excellences, both of oneself and of others. *Αγαπή* demands a responsible response to the other. It is within such a community that "the concrete negotiation of relationships marked by freedom and love holds sway."<sup>56</sup>

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>. Paul's missionary strategy reflects this belief: in Luke-Acts, records of Paul's visits to certain cities involve his engaging with priests at synagogues, discussing doctrines. At times, after being thrown out of some of these synagogues, he would approach the non-Jews. As recorded in Acts, Paul's preaching was opposed by the Jews during his first visit to Corinth. In reacting to that, he dissociated himself from them: "Your blood be on your own heads! ... From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).
- <sup>2</sup>. See Paul's sarcasm in Galatians 5:12: "I wish those who unsettle you [regarding the necessity of circumcision] would castrate themselves!"
- <sup>3</sup>. This does not mean that Paul was never firm on conformity to or obedience of rules and principles. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 5 and 6.
- <sup>4</sup>. Galatians 2:16b.
- <sup>5</sup>. See, for example, 2 Thessalonians, which was sent as a warning against idleness. The epistle contains a section (1:5-12) on judgment and concludes with Paul's expression of a wish that the Thessalonian believers be "worthy of [God's] call and will fulfil by [his] power every good resolve and *work of faith*" (εργον πιστεως). Here, what Paul terms *πιστις* is combined variously with obedience, work, and righteousness, implying that what is expected of the believer as a response is not merely an intellectual or mental change. Rather, that primary response of change in belief *necessarily* ensues in action, in *effecting* works of faith. At several points, Paul contrasts the works of faith with the works of law (εργον νομου) (especially in 1 and 2 Thessalonians). It is

exasperating, however, that he does not spell out the substantive content of either of these kinds of work. Perhaps some of it might come to light through examining the respective roles of law as contrasted to faith.

- <sup>6</sup>. See the discussion of καρδία in Section 3.1.1.
- <sup>7</sup>. While Paul deemphasised the effectiveness of works in achieving salvation, at some other points he maintains that the believers are judged by their works. An interesting analysis of this difficulty is offered by Nigel Watson (in "Justified by Faith; Judged by Works—an Antinomy?" in New Testament Studies, Vol. 29, pp. 209-221. Watson's thesis is that judgment by works is a theme Paul uses in his arguments against believers who assume they need not manifest their faith. He suggests that Paul is not interested in the doctrinal content of the idea of judgment but, rather, makes use of the idea for argumentative force. To this effect, Watson notes, warnings of judgment are more prominent in I Corinthians, a community with many problems, than with any of Paul's other churches.
- <sup>8</sup>. Paul draws a similar contrastive relation between the ministries of Moses and Christ.
- <sup>9</sup>. Curiously, though, in two Romans passages, he writes that the law is to be upheld—even in the present (3:31). Indeed, he carries on in this letter to assert that the law is holy (7:12). There is some inconsistency between these two passages and his other passages on law; the two Romans passages do not merely assert the usefulness and role of law within a limited time frame, but claim its relevance for the life in Christ. It is, however, not the concern here to justify or explain the two passages but just to note the overwhelming evidence that Paul limits the role of law to a definite time frame.
- <sup>10</sup>. The meaning of the term παιδαγωγος as used by Paul is discussed, with reference to its other uses within its socio-historical context, by T. David Gordon, in "A Note on παιδαγωγος in Galatians 3:24-25", in New Testament Studies, Vol. 35, 1989, pp. 150-154.

- <sup>11</sup>. In Galatians 4:21-27, Paul discusses the images of the matriarchs of the Jewish tradition as figures in the larger scheme of world history. Hagar and Sarah represented two covenants, one of Mount Sinai, the other of Christ, respectively. In Paul's scheme, Hagar was made alien to the Jews and a connection drawn between them and Sarah. Thus, Sarah becomes a proto-Christian, just as Abraham does. Hyam Maccoby notes this point, and makes the further suggestion that the allegorical method used by Paul preserves the validity of the Hebrew Bible while rejecting or declaiming some of its literal meaning as no longer relevant (in Paul and Hellenism, SCM Press, London, 1991).
- <sup>12</sup>. Many attempts have been made to explain this idea of the connection between law and curse; Christopher Stanley in "'Under a Curse': A Fresh Reading of Galatians 3:10-14" (in New Testament Studies, Vol. 36, 1990, pp. 481-511) provides a comprehensive summary of the different views. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine this connection.
- <sup>13</sup>. Leander Keck, Paul and His Letters, *op.cit.*, p. 84.
- <sup>14</sup>. Although Paul notes that given the assumption that no person is without sin, then the final outcome is that the works of the law are ineffective in bringing about salvation (Romans 7:10).
- <sup>15</sup>. Regarding the terms 'δικαιουν' and 'πιστευειν', E.P. Sanders (Paul, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 44-64.) presents an interesting thesis that English translations of Greek are inadequate in articulating their subtle meanings:

<u>noun</u>	δικαιοσυνη (righteousness)	πιστις (faith)
<u>adjective</u>	δικαιος (righteous)	πιστος (faithful)
<u>verb</u>	δικαιουν (?)	πιστευειν (?)

According to Sanders, the English language has no verbs corresponding to the nouns 'righteousness' and 'faith'. In Romans 5:18, Galatians 2, 3, and Romans 3, 4, the passive form of the verb 'δικαιουν' is used. This is the term 'δικαιωθεντες" (translated 'rightwised' by Sanders). It is in aorist passive form, signifying not only that believers have been made righteous not of their own doing, but through that of Christ's.

- <sup>16</sup>. See discussion of the indicative-imperative in Section 3.1.3.
- <sup>17</sup>. It needs to be noted, though, that the epistles do not present a unified and consistent rejection of legal structures. As Ogletree notes, sometimes Paul does revert to lawlike admonitions to individuals and churches; The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics, Basil Blackwell, UK, 1983, pp. 141ff.
- <sup>18</sup>. Paul proposed system does at times sound anarchic, at other times relativist: see I Corinthians 9: 19-23.
- <sup>19</sup>. The use of Paul himself as a paradigm is discussed in Section 6.3.
- <sup>20</sup>. Thomas Ogletree, The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics, *op.cit*, p. 199.
- <sup>21</sup>. I Corinthians 13.
- <sup>22</sup>. 'Dying and rising with Christ' is an important way in which Paul defines the community (Romans 6). Apart from its theological significance (see, for example, Eduard Schweizer, "Dying and Rising with Christ", in New Testament Studies, Vol. 14, pp. 1-14.), this symbolism has important ethico-social meaning. Paul uses this image to persuade the believers that they should no longer be subject to the values and ideals of existing structures. Dying is used allegorically to mark out the antithesis and the inconsistencies between the modes of life before and after conversion. On conversion, one has first to die to sin, and it is the 'old self' which dies. Contrary to the common understanding of death as a negative experience, death to sin, for Paul, is a redemptive and liberating one. It marks the believer's liberation from the binding forces of the old  $\alpha\omega\nu$ . This identification with the death and resurrection of Christ

serves as one of the bases for Paul's ethical admonitions that the believers should no longer sin.

- <sup>23</sup>. Through baptism, the resurrection of Christ, together with its range of meanings, is re-enacted. Baptism defines entry into the community. It is significant that Paul does not deal with the *process* of baptism or its methodology but with the ethical implications of baptism as a symbolic process from whence begins a new mode of existence.
- <sup>24</sup>. Another metaphor which Paul used is to refer to the believers as 'sons of God'. The metaphor of adoption as sons implies, in the then contemporary context, a freedom from the demands of slavery. There is the idea of 'buying over' a slave suggested (I Corinthians 6:20; 7:23); believers were 'bought with a price'. See Francis Lyall, Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles, Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, 1984.
- <sup>25</sup>. Heirdom is an important implication of the adoption: one is adopted as a son and, only as a son does one become an heir (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:29-4:7). In turn, heirdom is a mark of membership of a community of which God is the father-figure.
- <sup>27</sup>. The domain of  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  as depicted within the Pauline epistles was never clearly marked, partly because the Christian communities were then newly-formed. According to Gager, formations of new sects generally go through a 'no rules' stage whereby freedom is emphasised. See John G. Gager, Kingdom and Community, Prentice Hall, UK, 1975, citing the work of Keneim Burrige (New Heaven, New Earth, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1969, p. 166), pp. 32ff.
- <sup>27</sup>. Stephen Barton provides an interesting discussion of this issue in "Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth", in New Testament Studies, Vol. 32, 1986, pp. 225-246.
- <sup>28</sup>. Gooch, "Conscience in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10", in New Testament Studies, vol. 33, 1987, pp. 244-254.

- <sup>29</sup>. Allen Verhey, in The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament *op.cit.*, 1984, pp. 103ff; describes this change of perspective as a 'new discernment' through which a total change in life is effected.
- <sup>30</sup>. The concept of imitating leaders, exemplars, teachers, fathers and rulers was a widespread theme in Paul's world. See Ernest Best, Paul and His Converts, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988, pp. 61ff; and Edwin Judge, "The Teacher as Moral Exemplar in Paul and in the Inscriptions of Ephesus", in In the Fullness of Time, David Petersen and John Pryor (eds) Lancer, Australia, 1992, pp. 185-201.
- <sup>31</sup>. John Schutz (Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, Cambridge University Press, 1975) makes an interesting observation that Paul's notion of imitation is passive and is expressed in passive language. For example, in becoming imitators (εγενηθητε μιμηται) (I Thessalonians 2:14), what is active is the *acceptance* (δεχεσθαι) of the word of God. It is interesting that is that the passive term is used not to refer to the imitating process but in *becoming an imitator*. From this, it can be inferred that becoming an imitator is a necessary consequence of acceptance of the word of God. There is an internalist connection here between the choice of a lifestyle and its necessary consequence with regard to moral development. Incidentally, this is one of Paul's earliest usages of 'imitation'.
- <sup>32</sup>. This idea of imitation of Christ's humility and self-sacrifice is often associated with the idea of suffering (πασχεν) (Romans 8:17,18). Paul's converts were waiting on the arrival of the new αων. Suffering was experienced because the converts' values were different from, and at times antithetical to, those in the present αων. Such conflict was characterised dramatically by Paul: the whole creation groans in anticipation of that arrival (Romans 8:19-23).
- <sup>33</sup>. See, for example, Gerd Theissen's The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth, edited and translated by John Schutz, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982.

- <sup>34</sup>. These concepts are discussed in detail in Section 4.2. In Section 5.3, these three concepts provide the framework for analysing Confucian notions of connectedness.
- <sup>35</sup>. The term 'autonomy' is derived from Greek, but is not a Greek or Jewish notion; in any case, the idea of being a lawgiver to oneself is quite odd. On the other hand, someone like Paul, who was very conscious of his status as a Roman citizen, was very aware of the complex of ideas around agency, responsibility, individuality, being in control of one's life, engaging in mature, adult behaviour (cf. "when I was a child ... but when I became a man...") The case is open and shut. But of course Paul's understanding of these things needs to be set in the context of Christian belief and the whole community context and his own temperament. To get a fuller picture of Paul one needs to read the *Acts of the Apostles*, a book which is largely concerned with his doings, as well as his own letters.
- <sup>36</sup>. See Paul W. Gooch, "Authority and Justification in Theological Ethics: A Study in 1 Corinthians 7", Journal of Religious Ethics, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1983; and Jay Shanor, "Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians", New Testament Studies, Vol. 34, 1988.
- <sup>37</sup>. I Corinthians 10:14; 15:58; Philippians 2:12; 4:1; Romans 12:19; Philemon 1:1; Titus 1:4; II Corinthians 7:1; 12:19.
- <sup>38</sup>. John M.G. Barclay, in "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership", New Testament Studies, Vol., 3, 1991, p. 171, writes: "The opening thanksgiving, for instance, in praising Philemon's refreshment of 'the hearts of the saints' (v. 7), clearly prepares the way for Paul's request that Philemon now refresh his heart in Christ (v. 20) especially since Onesimus has earlier been described as Paul's own heart (v. 12, *σπλαγχνα* in each case). Indeed, Paul goes out of his way to stress how precious Onesimus has become to him (vv. 10-13) so as to be able to

portray Philemon's reception of his slave as a sign of his relationship to Paul (as is explicit in v. 17)."

<sup>39</sup>. While Paul deems Onesimus his son (v. 10) and addresses Philemon as brother (v. 20), he writes that his directives should be obeyed because Philemon is in debt to him: "I say nothing about your owing me even your own self." (v. 19b).

<sup>40</sup>. "Food will not bring us close to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do ... Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." " (I Corinthians 8:8, 10:25, 26).

<sup>41</sup>. Gerd Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, *op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup>. *ibid.* p. 139.

<sup>43</sup>. An important qualification that needs to be made with regard to Theissen's thesis is that it is limited to the context of the Corinthian church community. Given that this community was a particularly troublesome one—as noted at many points in I Corinthians—it is perhaps understandable that Paul might have had to use more emphatic techniques, amongst them a love-patriarchalist approach. Theissen's analysis of Paul's enterprise is consistent with the view discussed above, that the maintenance of the community, and of the relationships within the community was more important to Paul than the moral development of individual members of the community might be morally immature.

<sup>44</sup>. It is probable that given Paul's eschatology (that the *παρουσία* was imminent), he was prepared to wait rather than suggest radical changes. Thus, he makes the remark that although the rationale for a new and different lifestyle was in operation, the believers should remain in their existing conditions. See the discussion in Section 3.2.2.

<sup>45</sup>. T. Engberg-Pedersen, "The Gospel and Social Practice According to 1 Corinthians", New Testament Studies, Vol. 33, 1987, pp. 557-584.

- <sup>46</sup>. *ibid.*, p. 575. The notion of love presented here is also too idealistic; there is an assumption that love does not command nor is authoritative.
- <sup>47</sup>. *ibid.* p. 582.
- <sup>48</sup>. Wayne Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1983.
- <sup>49</sup>. See note 52 of Chapter Three.
- <sup>50</sup>. See, for example, the works of: C.H. Dodd, Gospel and Law, Cambridge University Press, 1951; Engberg-Pedersen, "The Gospel and Social Practice According to I Corinthians", *op.cit.*; John Gager, Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity, *op.cit.*; Abraham Malherbe, Social Aspects of Early Christianity, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London, 1977; Wayne Meeks, The Moral World of the First Christians, *op.cit.*; Stephen Mott, Biblical Ethics and Social Change, Oxford University Press, 1982; Allen Verhey, The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament, *op.cit.*; Gerd Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, *op.cit.*
- <sup>51</sup>. See the works of: Thomas Ogletree, The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics, *op.cit.*; Jack Sanders, Ethics in the New Testament, SCM Press, London, 1975; Wolfgang Schrage, The Ethics of the New Testament, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1988.
- <sup>52</sup>. See, for example, Stephen Mott's, Biblical Ethics and Social Change, *op.cit.* Mott argues that the new testament of the Christian bible does not, in general, provide a comprehensive program because there were specific concerns which limited the nature and scope of morality. These concerns include continuity with the old testament; the social status of the converts; and issues associated with the existing political atmosphere.
- See also Victor Furnish, in The Moral Teaching of Paul, Abingdon Press, USA, 1979; Albert Schweitzer The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, Adam and Charles Black, London, 2nd ed, 1953; and Jack Sanders, Ethics in the New Testament, *op.cit.*

<sup>53</sup>. Schrage, The Ethics of the New Testament, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>54</sup>. *ibid*, p. 213. Schrage remarks, in p. 216, that the reduction of love to Augustine's "love and do what you will" is a grossly inaccurate rendering of Pauline ἀγάπη because the latter does not leave judgment to subjective individual whimsy.

<sup>55</sup>. See discussion in Section 3.2.

<sup>56</sup>. Thomas Ogletree, The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics, *op.cit.*, p. 200.

## CONCLUSION

Relational moralities such as the feminist care ethic pose a considerable challenge to moral theories which construe moral agents fundamentally as detached selves. It is obvious that theories which uphold impartiality, impersonality and universality as unconditional and perhaps as overriding criteria are doubly defective. First, they do not properly reflect the lived experience of moral agents and, in particular, the fact that much of a moral agent's interaction is with others to whom that person is related. Secondly, they do not acknowledge that our relationships with others are marked by different kinds of loyalties, commitments, concern and affection; and that these differences are part of what an adequate moral theory must account for. The issue, in other words, is how the notions of moral agency and motivation upheld by moral theory should be so starkly different from the way human beings perceive and experience life. For should moral agents consistently and constantly deny their differential attachments? The question answers itself: the demands that moral practice involves treating all others alike without preference or special consideration is not only unrealistic, it will often lead to outcomes which are unacceptable.

The feminist care ethic, which emphasises the connectedness of human persons, is concerned to articulate a moral system grounded in notions such as trust, responsibility, commitment, empathy and care. Feminist moral thinking argues that values like responsibility and care are significant especially for women and their experience of morality: such values are intimately intertwined with women's perceptions of themselves, their identities and their understandings of how they should live their lives. These

observations are important in that they are instrumental in the emancipation of women from structures and modes of thought grounded essentially in masculine perceptions and conceptions of human life.

On the other hand, however, the implications of the care ethic in feminist philosophy extend beyond the realm of women's experience. Thus, while concepts of connectedness and responsibility are typically operational in women's morality, it is not clear that they are functional and desirable *only* within the context of women's relationships with others. The point that is being made here is that moral philosophy should come to acknowledge and recognise that moral values which maintain the connectedness of persons are important for all human persons: men as well as women.

Values which encourage and foster connectedness allow for a more realistic and robust conceptualisation of moral agency and responsibility: the moral agent is held accountable not merely in the sense that she has been impartial or impersonal, or has acted on universalisable principles. The idea of differential loyalties, attachments and responsibilities to a range of significant others throws up a model of moral deliberation and reasoning that is both more realistic and riddled with complexity.

An important question that needs to be raised at this stage is, "How might contemporary moral philosophy accommodate or assimilate ideals of human connectedness?"

A morality that considers human connectedness as having moral significance cannot at the same time uphold rule-application as an ideal in moral deliberation. In other words, a morality focusing on relationships is different from rule- or duty-based moralities not only in its content, but also in the modes of moral reasoning it holds as ideal.

Given that relationships are unique, there is some weight to the caution that a morality which is focussed solely or exclusively on connectedness could culminate in a theory of favouritism and undesirable partialism. On such an account, the moral agent need only act morally towards those to whom she is specially attached with the result that treatment of individual strangers, as well as more global moral concerns, are left unaccounted for.

It is clear that there is an inevitable arbitrariness that comes with attention to detail and particular aspects of moral situations. But perhaps it simply needs to be noted that the moral reasoning of human persons in actual lived human contexts is just like this and, accordingly, that moral philosophy needs properly to deal with and account for these aspects of life.

We do, in our moral practice, accord priority to the needs of friends and family over those of strangers'. Indeed, some special consideration to particular others is tied up with the issue of one's having obligations specific to these others. For example, a parent's obligation to provide basic necessities for his child would come before his consideration of the possibility of providing the same basic necessities for other children in need.

Furthermore, affectionate concern and other feelings that operate within relationships should be properly dealt with by moral theories. Indeed, many moral actions motivated primarily by affectionate concern—for instance, one's spending three or four days a week to look after a friend who is terminally ill—are often simplistically considered supererogatory; few moral theories properly deal with supererogation.

These dynamics of moral deliberation, amongst others, should (as some have convincingly argued) occupy a more central and fundamental role in moral theories.

The investigation of the classical Confucian and Pauline Christian traditions has allowed for interesting insights into morality as a lived human reality; it has facilitated a more effective examination of the dynamics of moral reasoning within a framework of human connectedness. It has been demonstrated that, within both traditions, there are tendencies to overemphasise the particularity of special attachments and, relatedly, to understate the significance of clearly specified and universalisable norms and principles applicable to such interactions. It has been argued, in this connection, that at least certain norms should be specified and universalised so as to avoid instances of subordination and exploitation that might impinge on moral agents as self-governing persons.

In conclusion, the general direction of this thesis is to suggest a synthesis of the range of concepts discussed: particularity, responsibility, affection and connectedness, on the one hand, and universalisability, impartiality, impersonality and detachment, on the other. With regard to the construction of a moral theory that balances the above-mentioned concepts, what is important (apart from scrutinizing the concepts) is the careful assessment of existing structures and frameworks. In other words, rather than assume that the values upheld by relational moralities (or, more specifically, within the context of care morality) are simply supplementary or complementary to existing moralities, existing simplistic dichotomies—such as that between personality and impersonality—should be scrupulously examined.

Additionally, the construction of the substantive content of such a morality, because it has to account for norms and codes pertaining to relationships, will have to consider culturally-, historically- and socially-

relative details pertaining to moral agents and their communities, which are relevant to moral reasoning in a detailed way.

The redress of the content and structures of morality begun in this thesis paves the way for a construction of a moral system which, if it is to properly balance ideals pertaining to attachment and autonomy, can only be properly effected within the lived-in, intersubjective contexts of specific communities.

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