1. MORAL BOOK-KEEPING

Mostly the discourse of moral philosophy is rather boring and bloodless, having little contact to problems of practical daily life. The discussion stays on a high moral level and is loaded with well-meaning normativity. The debate of moral philosophy thus lives in the nice and quiet world of moral self-evidence, and the moral philosopher easily becomes a kind of bookkeeper of goodness, whose reasoning and advices few listen to and almost nobody follows. On the contrary, those few that really try consistently to follow the roads advised by moral philosophy, are usually seen as somewhat odd and possibly emotionally disturbed - fanatics, fundamentalist, and so on.

It is in no way natural that the ethical discourse should be so boring, on the contrary it might even seem surprising. Moral feelings belong to the strongest passions of man - besides love and hate. Moreover, they have much more dramatic social effects. Love and hate may mostly influence but a handful of persons; they are socially fragmented phenomena. Even if they are omnipresent, they usually reflect only on our nearest and dearest.

Moral feelings are different. The grandiose evil - suppression, killing, torture and genocide - mostly combines with strong moral feelings. This is so, not only in our indignation regarding the crimes, but even more as the activating and governing force behind them. Every army fights for the good case. Every totalitarian ideology and regime, willing to sacrifice its people, does this in order to save it to the good life and to the just society.

There is, accordingly, no lack of "goodness". On the contrary everybody seems to be striving for it. Rather, it seems, the problem may lie in the overwhelming self-evidence of goodness, of being right. Everybody knows that he is right, and if other people are of an other opinion they are either stupid or evil.

The main ethical problem, thus, is not that people do not know what is right and good. The problem is that everybody knows, but in different ways.

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1 First published a a working paper in Memo-Stencil. Preliminäära forskningsrapporter från Företagsekonomiska Institutionen vid Åbo Akademi, nr.177, Åbo 1994
2. THE PRUDENT MAN HÖSS

In a moral perspective autobiographies often make interesting reading. The author tells us about his actions and motives in various phases of his life, he tells us about moral feelings that may not be perceived in daily life. He also moralises - giving morally tinged critique and praise - about events, actors and social processes forming the threads of his story.

There is one more aspect making autobiographies worth reading. They are all - excluding, maybe, that of Samuel Pepys - written in order to be read by somebody. We therefore expect them to be edited in a way that puts the author in a better light. This may of course be disturbing, but at the same time the author reveals his own perception of what he thinks is the general moral standard. By editing and polishing his story, he at the same time shows a mirror image of contemporary moral legitimacy - as it is perceived by him.

Rudolf Höss, commander of the extermination camp in Auschwitz, wrote his autobiography while in prison in Nürnberg. It is chilling reading. This evil man, however, also had his own conceptions of goodness - everybody has. I think accepting these as real may be of relevance to the moral discourse.

Höss tells us about how he, as a young political dissident, ended up in jail, and about the brutal and degrading treatment. This experience gives him for life a compassion for the prisoner's situation and a repugnance against the inhuman treatment logically related to the idea of prisons.

At an early stage Höss joins the National-socialist idea and he really believes and feels that the "Jews" are a threat against humanity, against all that is good. Even when imprisoned in Nürnberg, where other opinions might be seen as opportune, he holds on to these convictions.

Within these existential frames of self-evidence we find the adult Rudolf Höss, the systematic and rationally responsible civil servant and officer, who, as other capable citizens, tries to make a career in society. He joins the Nazi movement, and starts climbing the ladder. Then comes what is going to be the professional summit of his life; he gets the assignment to build and manage the concentration camp in Auschwitz. An assignment to a fighting unit would of course have been better, more honourable, but an order is an order, and this work, too, has to be done.

What we then can follow, is the story about a skilful, responsible and considerate administrator, a professional manager. With a background in theories of business administration, I get a strange and chilling feeling of recognition. Our libraries are filled by books and articles telling stories about more or less successful managers. As a matter of fact, a dominating part of management journals consists of stories about "how I did it." These stories are not to be seen as empty bragging only; they constitute one of the most effective means of communicating managerial knowledge.

Höss is a showcase of skilful management. The task is enormous. He has to build this prison and killing machine out of scratch, and on a scale never seen before. It is a difficult task, too. Because of the war there is a scarcity of materials and the main part of the potential work force is out at war. He is worried and complains about the fact that it is difficult to get anything but inferior workers - those, who because of physical, emotional or psychological deficiencies are not fit for army service - human trash. On the other hand he finds a potential in the prisoners. Höss is creative,

2 Höss, Rudolf, Kommendant i Auschwitz, PAN/Norstedts, Stockholm 1967, (Swedish translation.)
innovative and full of systematic energy. He possesses a natural capacity for that, which in modern managerial terms is called "Human Resource Management" and tries to inspire the prisoners to take part in the work with the great project. His compassion - coming partly from his own experiences as a prisoner - makes him react against the unnecessary cruelty and sadism displayed by the guards. Of course this unpleasant work has to be done, but it should be done in a nice and human way. But, on the other hand, what can you expect with this human trash as workers.

Höss also has problems with bureaucracy and with lack of understanding. It is hard to get needed building materials and there are many technical problems in developing the murder technology on this large scale. Here we can clearly see how Höss tries to explain and exonerate himself for the fact that he did not succeed in fulfilling his mission completely. But, the reasons for the failure came from the outside; they were not his fault.

Tired after a full day of work this good man goes home to the family - a good wife, nice kids and dogs and horses - where he gets all the warmth and happiness a hard working man can ask for. In this aspect, too, he acts and lives as any good manager.

Höss' autobiography can, as noted earlier, be seen as an attempt to exonerate himself for the cruelties in Auschwitz - at least such an attempt could be expected. However, the autobiography gives a rather credible impression. If we just accept that he in fact was convinced and deeply felt that the Jewish race was a threat to humanity and to everything good, then the rest becomes a practical triviality. Within these frames of existential self-evidence, Höss acts as any good manager or administrator.

This good man, going home to the family after a full day of hard work, does not, however, get our forgiveness. On the contrary, this planning, systematic, and morally sensitive mass murderer, who even tries to solidarise the victim with the bestialities, stands as a case of the most perverted kind of humanity - much more so, than any individual morbid madman would do. Crimes caused by madness or by violent aggression and wrath are easily forgiven, if compared to those linked to conscious reason and moral conviction.

Real evil, grandiose evil, is never caused by men trying to do bad things, trying to do what is wrong. It is done by people convinced that what they do is right. The reason for that is that moral badness is so utterly personal - greed, dishonesty and the likes - that it almost never leads to large scale action. Moral conviction is the only force that gives the strength and willingness to action with broad social consequences. Most large scale evil is perverted goodness - as we know, the devil is a fallen angel.

3. MORAL RELATIVISM

Here, I think, lies the answer to the question why moral philosophy is often so boring. It contains a "blind spot." In our search for the ultimate answer regarding the question of goodness, we are easily misled by our own subjective feelings that somewhere, behind all intellectual and emotional confusion, there is a genuine and unquestionable "good." The reason why you should act in a certain way - help people in distress, for example - is accordingly explained by the fact that such an activity is good by itself, or that it leads to good results, possibly in the form of greatest possible benefit or in maximised utility for everyone. "Bad" is explained in the same way, as the opposite of "good." Why we should always strive for the "good," why good is good, is, however, not clear. "It just happens to be so."

Of course people usually do not reason in such simple terms. Nevertheless
the unproblematised "good" follows us on a deeper cognitive level. It does so in the implicit but seldom articulated assumption of the possibility of an ultimate conclusive answer. Most clearly, perhaps, this implicit assumption is built into the conceptions of hierarchies of moral norms, ending in a "sovereign norm" defining all lower level norms - like Kant's "Categorical imperative." The idea that moral reasoning can produce the true answer regarding good and bad, ultimately depends on the subconscious feeling that there exists such a sovereign norm, from which all other norms can be derived, a principle for the genuine good. The ultimate good, thus, is good by itself.

Could it be otherwise? Yes, of course. You can become a moral relativist - a concept containing many varieties, from apocalyptic nihilism - "anything goes" - to "might is right", to various kinds of semi-relativism. However, if, as the example of Höss is meant to imply, all humans - except, perhaps, genuine "idiots" - are characterized by moral feelings and considerations, moral nihilism becomes rather irrelevant, a hypothetical play with words.

We can, on the other hand, choose to look at morality from the perspective of cultural relativism. Morality, then, is a human characteristic, but it is an artefact, a trait formed by the evolution of human culture. It is mainly a social trait, based on interaction and communication. It is a way of reasoning which has developed as a mirror or a result of "moral talk" - out of discussion, storytelling, chatting, gossip, quarrel, accusations, jokes, philosophical deductions, academic dissertations, etc. Maybe the term "moral gossip" or "moral chatting" would convey the right nuance.

Man has behind him thousands, even millions of years of cultural development, from the time of Australopithecus. Seen in this perspective man is not mainly a biological organism, an animal, but a creature shaped by culture, by layer upon layer of culture - "all the way down". Under these layers almost nothing is to be found. Or, as Clifford Geertz puts it:

"Whatever else modern anthropology asserts - . . . - it is firm in the conviction that men unmodified by the customs of particular places do not in fact exist, have never existed, and most important, could not in the very nature of the case exist."

And further:

"More bluntly, [anthropology] suggests that there is no such a thing as a human nature independent of culture. Men without culture would not be the clever savages of Golding's Lord of the Flies thrown back upon the cruel wisdom of their animal instincts; nor would they be the nature's noblemen of Enlightenment primitivism or even, as classical anthropological theory would imply, intrinsically talented apes who had somehow failed to find themselves. They would be unworkable monstrosities with very few useful instincts, fewer recognizable sentiments, and no intellect: mental basket cases."

If we want to make ourselves a picture of how these layers of culture are formed, we might imagine a structuralistic recursive process of assimilation, imitation and adaptation, where inter-individual communication slowly takes ever more advanced and sophisticated abstract forms. In this communication, moral feelings have had a part for a very long time. As far back

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4 Geertz, Clifford, 1973, p. 49.
in history as traces of written language are to be found, we also find indications of moral talk - of person-, action- and situation-related evaluations. The structure of language and talk, moreover, gives us reason to believe that the track goes much further back into the darkness of pre-history.

This moral gossip consists of stories, reasoning, and discussions about daily life, about other people, about the possibility of a good life, about the problems of staying alive in a hard world. Out of this talk are formed patterns, pictures of what it is to live a "good life", pictures of what it means to be a good or excellent man (the opinions of women used to be of minor interest to those dominating the discussion). These pictures become assimilated into that language/thought system, within which the stream of talk is flowing. Man, thus, lives and exists within a constant all-encompassing buzz of moral talk, of moralising. Every day and almost all the time, people evaluate other people and their actions, groups, organizations, companies, governments, states, and so on. Today, moreover, this buzz has reached new and higher levels, as a result of the potent moralizing machine constituted by mass media, especially so TV.

It is this never stopping moralising chatting that Alasdair MacIntyre 5 thinks of, when he tries to understand the formation of the ideas about human virtues (or, more specifically, male virtues). The virtues are, simply stated, the essence enriched from daily talk, within a given culture with its specific living conditions, about what it means to live a good life and, connected to this, what it means to be a good man or an excellent one - one, who by that attains the possibility of living a good or excellent life.

The central characteristics of a "good man" are forming what we call human virtues. Virtues, in turn, define what is good and what is bad. To do what is good, in this way, is to do what a good man would do. A good man is honest, brave, truthful, trustworthy, and so on. Acts and ends that are in accordance with this, are good.

Cultural anthropology shows clearly how "good" is different in different cultures. Even activities that in our culture are seen as utter evil - torture and sadism - can in another culture belong to the most important rituals, by that being "good". Cultural anthropology thus easily leads to cultural relativism, and by that to moral relativism. We can, of course, choose to see these rites as evil, but as Peter Winch 7 shows, it is not easy to prove that, in some absolute and objective way, one culture's way of reasoning is right and another's is wrong.

4. Efficiency as a Moral Virtue

The structuralistic morality-producing process of moral small talk makes it possible to explain some of the obvious moral characteristics of modern society - and especially then managers. In the same way we can understand a specific moral trait in murder-manager Rudolf Höss. I am thinking of the kind of moral reasoning and moral feeling that we may call the ethics of efficiency 8 and of effective

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6 I am referring to the initiation rites among some New Guinean tribes, discussed by Barrington Moore, Jr., so advanced that even Höss' gorillas would have been impressed. (See Moore, Barrington Jr., Prievacy. Studies in social and cultural history, M.E.Sharpe, Armonk ... 1984, p.39)


action, combined with the protestant work ethic. The latter is well known through Max Weber, so I shall concentrate on the first, the moral imperative of effective action.

Almost any empirical contact with managers around ethical questions quickly reveals that their moral discourse is almost entirely carried on against a background formed by a strong moral conviction according to which not only hard work, but - and especially so - effective work is a moral duty. The main virtues of the modern "good man", of the modern manifestation of the hero myth, are rationality, efficiency and diligence. Managers, taken as a whole, seem to be strongly dominated by this unproblematised feeling of the moral imperative of efficiency. This striving for efficiency is seldom a question of simple greed only. Of course managers - like workers, doctors and philosophers - are interested in generating personal economic wellbeing. The moralism of efficiency, however, seems to be rather loosely connected to economic gain. This is clearly shown by decades of management studies. Managers usually react with the same moral indignation - the litmus test of empirical ethics - when facing any kind of inefficiency, even if it is found in the competitor's shop. The moral imperative of efficiency is mostly so strong and so self-evident, which means that they are not able to question it. If you ask "why are you trying to be so effective all the time", nobody will understand the question.

Somebody might argue that effective action cannot form a moral value, because it is a pragmatic existential triviality: "Why would anybody want to be inefficient - it is obvious that everybody will always prefer efficiency before inefficiency?" Of this we cannot, however, be so sure. We can try using the words "efficiency" or "efficiency" in contexts of family, play and love. The ideas of "the efficient father", "the effective lover", or "efficient friendship" have a strange ring in the ear. They lack meaning. Even harder is it to understand what "efficient play" might mean - "Let us play quickly, so we get it done." "Efficient pastimes" form a contradiction in terms.

The word efficiency gets its meaning in cost/benefit situations, where, in order to acquire something of value - money, health, pleasure, love, power - you have to sustain a certain pain or sacrifice something valuable - money, health, time, pleasure, power. In situations of cost/benefit, efficiency is existentially trivial. Work and instrumental organisations constitute, at least to some degree, such a situation. In other situations, including most of "the good life", the idea of being efficient all the time does not fit so well.

What seems to have happened, however, is that the moral talk generated around the existential realities of modern man, has produced new virtues, new moral values, which have replaced the classical virtues. The classical hero - the "romantic" hero-myth found in ancient Greece and up to modern times - is built around virtues like courage, trustworthiness, friendship in the face of death, and so on. Life at those times was dangerous and insecure. Accordingly the daily talk about the problems of life, of staying alive and of the possibility to live a good life, produced intellectual and emotional "sediments" in the form of conceptions about ideal men, heroes, suitable for that kind of reality.

MacIntyre shows how these virtues slowly became replaced by other ones, how the classical warrior virtues changed into those of the tradesman, the farmer, and the artisan, living in a world where, for the first time in history, not only the knights, the lords and the princes, but also small people had a chance to a decent life. MacIntyre sees these new virtues take form in Benjamin Franklin's famous table of 13
vices. These virtues are not heroic anymore, but practical and reasonable, a kind of everyman's wisdom about how to succeed in living a decent life. Franklin's virtues are reasonable, stressing not heroism, but balance - and thrift, diligence, foresight and the idea of economizing life in a reasonable way. "Work hard an effectively and try not to spend your money or energy in vain, and you will be a happy man", could be the story that Franklin tells us.

In many ways Benjamin Franklin can be seen as one of the central forefathers of managerial reasoning. He lived in the beginning of the modern world, in the post-feudal world of America, where lords and princes did not have the right and possibility constantly to threaten the life and well-being of merchants, farmers, and other small people. Their existential reality, thus, was new and different, and their moral talk produced new variants of virtue.

Managers, too, are human. They talk and gossip around the problems and possibilities of their specific life situation - and very much, of course, about their work. They also read management journals and economic texts. The corporation is the central place for cost/benefit situations in the modern culture. It is not surprising, therefore, that the sedimentation of their moral talk stresses the importance of effective action, thereby forming it into a central virtue and a moral duty.

The romantic hero, characterised by the classical "romantic" virtues, is not totally dead, however. He goes on living in the play of boys and in the subconscious of most adult men. Sometimes it pops up from the fogs of history, as he did in the eighties. Financial speculation, hostile takeovers and other kind of heroically dramatic moves came into fashion, and the managerial self-conceptions changed into forms that Machiavelli would have understood. The romantic ideal, however, did not work so well, and now, it seems, the virtues of Franklin are making a quick come-back.

The self evidence of the moral imperative of efficiency is however slowly stretching itself out over our reality - even to areas of life that, as my examples showed, have not been so open to its application. In the world of neo-liberalism, all social processes begin to be analysed in a perspective of efficiency and profitability. Academic bureaucrats and planners make efforts to apply terms of profitability to scientific work and even to philosophy - "of course we must expect some kind of efficiency!" It becomes ever more difficult, even intellectually, to question the ethics of efficiency.

In fact I have in my hands a planning scheme from a day care centre in Stockholm. Being well indoctrinated in managerial reasoning, the "planners" of that centre present a program for the month, built on the means-end logic of goal planning. The plan by itself may not be too sophisticated, but the idea is clear:

- "Objective for the day: To play."
- "Means for the attainment of the objective: To play."

So it goes on, day after day, with small variations.

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9 Franklin, Benjamin, Självbiografi, Forum, Uddevalla 1968 (Autobiography, Swedish translation)

10 An interesting empirical example is to be found in the published diary of the former CEO of one of the biggest Finnish banks, SKOP. His annotations are full of words like "fight", "conquest", and "victory". This bank is now in practical bankruptcy, taken over by the Bank of Finland. Classical heroism does not work well in the modern world.

11 Given to me by Bengt Jacobsson at Stockholm School of Economics.
5. THE OBJECTIVE "GOOD"

Accepting that efficiency and effective action have evolved in the modern culture into a virtue, activating strong moral feelings, makes it easier to understand the prudent murderer Rudolf Höss. His existential frame of meaning included not only the belief that the Jews represented something evil, a threat to all what is good and really human. He was also strongly dominated by the idea that planned and well organised effective action is good per se, and that you have a moral duty to sacrifice yourself - and others - on the altar of efficiency. His belief is so strong that he even imagines that the victims might be willing to take part in this important work, diligently and enthusiastically working for their own destruction. In this way, almost trivially practical goodness can turn into grand evil.

In the perspective of cultural and moral relativism, thus, the genuine "good" exists, and it is good per se. It is good just because we feel it as being good. The problem is, however, that there are many alternative, competing, and contradicting "goods", in the same way as there are many cultures, having more or less clearly differing conceptions of reality. They have evolved in different contexts and circumstances, they have different forms, and there is no reason for us to assume that they are logically connected on some deeper level. As long as we stay within the same frame of reference - the same situational, logical and cultural context - moral question can be handled fairly well with logical argumentation, with the arguments of ethical reasoning. In this way moral logic, i.e. ethics, may be locally valid. This contextual logic, however, has little power, if extrapolated to other situations, cultures, or ways of reasoning. Or, expressing this more precisely: it is possible that the arguments hold even then, but we have no way of really knowing if that is the case.

Here, at least partly, we can find the reason for the failure of moral philosophy and an answer as to why it often gives this impression of being boring, bloodless and detached from reality. Ethics, being an effort rationally to reason about good and bad, gets these limitations partly from the structure of language. Language as such is, of course, not culture free. It also functions within the mental and intellectual frames formed by culture - or "culture" as such consists mainly of exactly these frames. "Modern" language is inherently rationalistic. In the idea of logically "sorting out" the problems of moral action, lies implicit the assumption that an answer is possible. In the dualistic binary structure of Cartesian reasoning there can be only one uniquely true answer, and accordingly the structure of language always and unavoidably forces on us an unarticulated expectation of an ultimate sovereign norm, from which all other norms may be deduced. And the strong belief that "truth", the product of logical deduction, has a quality of being true in a kind of extra-human way, outside the influence of people, ideas, ideologies and situational context, makes it hard for us to notice that now and then we go astray. Because of the dominating tendency to rational argumentation, the self evidence of logical truth, we easily become blind to the situations where our conclusions suddenly become irrelevant, meaningless or outright mad.

There is no lack of attempts at formulating ultimate sovereign norms. One, often in use within the social sciences, is to be found in John Rawls' noble, but basically egoistic, savages, who in a kind of zero state civilisation understand that, in the face of a probabilistically indeterminate future, everybody can optimise their life

expectations if they all agree on certain basic principles for humanity and equality. "Because I can easily fall out as a loser in the great lottery of life, it is most reasonable - rational - for me to agree on a principle that losers, too, will be well taken care of."

This thought, of course, has nothing to do with humans - with homo sapiens. With the words of Clifford Geertz we can conclude that such noble savages "do not in fact exist, have never existed, and most important, could not in the very nature of the case exist." It also suffers a blind spot. It assumes that the winners of that paleolitic lottery later, when they have attained power and riches, will feel forced to keep to that old agreement. Why would they do that, you may ask. It may seem self-evident that people keep promises and agreements - especially so, maybe, in a culture dominated by contractual logic. Those who have the power may also have the capacity to force the others to keep to the rule that *promises must be kept* - but then, of course, it is not a question of moral force anymore.

The assumption that the victor, driven by the imperative force of moral logic, would feel bound by earlier promises and agreements, implies an assumption according to which the initial egoist, after the conclusion of the first phase of the game, would retain an illogical feeling that *pacta sunt servanda*. He may do so, but then it is not a case of logical cost/benefit reasoning, but of sheer altruism, of "goodness".

The problem can be elucidated in another way. Kant's categorical imperative - in its structure analogous to Rawls' argument - is probably the most commonly known philosophical attempt to a sovereign norm. In short it tells that it is most reasonable - and thereby good - to act against other people as you would like then to act against you. Personally I feel both Kant's and Rawls' arguments strongly convincing. Their importance in leading and educating people in practical moral action should not be underestimated - they form a great civilising feat.

It is, however, not self-evident that the reciprocal logic of that thought can persuade everybody. We might make the thought-experiment that we try to persuade a cruel dictator, telling him that he ought always to let his actions be governed by the principles of the categorical imperative. What shall we expect his answer to be? Is he going to see the self-evident logic? I think not. Rather, his answer will be another: "What do you mean by those weird ideas? You see me living here, enjoying all the riches and luxuries that anybody could ask for. I really live a happy life. To be able to do this, I must suppress and exploit all these stupids - and, as you can see, I am completely able to do it. As for now, nobody can threaten my life and happiness. Of course you must understand that suppressing, torturing and killing anybody who opposes me, is very clearly in my interest - it is a question of simple self-evident logic. By doing this, I effectively keep them from doing the same to me."

If the dictator would be philosophically inclined, he might add a sovereign norm: "You shall always act against others in a way such that the principles for your action could not constitute a universal law. Doing so, you are bound to be able to live on in luxury and happiness." When the ruler gets kind and forgiving, he will be overthrown.

This blind spot can, of course, be cured by an assumption of a basic inherent human feeling of fairness or justice, as Rawls does, but then we move out of the realms of logical argumentation, and into that of feelings and emotions.

The problem with a moral philosophy striving for logically true arguments, is

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that this truth ought to be "logical" for anybody - not only for those who already believe that it is true. It must have the power of convincing even the non-believers, those who are of a different opinion.

Of course we all feel deep in our hearts that there is, somewhere and somehow, an ultimate and indisputable "good". This feeling may derive from religious traditions and thought structures as well as from general altruistic feelings about human solidarity. Feelings of "good" and "bad" can also be based on common teleological elements found in science - even the natural sciences - and history. In this way evolution is sometimes seen as "mother nature's" striving towards development and refinement, towards "higher goals", which thus are thought to form the ultimate "good". Historical and ideological explanations within the social sciences also commonly carry this implicit teleological assumption - evolution, refinement, sophistication, technological development and so on is the basic ration for human existence, and thereby good per se.

Finally, ideas about the ultimate good may be connected to the simple feeling that life must have a meaning.

Why a natural law - "natural teleology" or historical determinism - would form a moral "ought", stays, however, unanswered. Few assume that other natural laws would form moral duties - a duty for being heavy, a duty to grow older and to die, etc. Neither is it self-evident that being happy or having a meaningful life is morally good, even if it is nice.

In a way, however, it is not very meaningful to discuss whether these conceptions and feelings are true in some absolute way. They form the reality within which exist, and we are formed as its mirror images.

Thus it seems reasonable to accept that the genuine "good" exists. It exists by the fact that we all, somewhere and in some way, have it built into the bases of our existential conceptions. The morality and ethics that we happen to have, are basically of a universalizing kind, they have a generalizing structure, they consist of generalising conceptions of "good" and "bad". They are therefore structurally doomed to lead to ideas about sovereign ultimate norms. As soon as you start talking and constructing arguments, you are caught by that structure.

On the other hand it does not seem very fruitful to assume that, in an objectivist sense, there exists a unique ultimate sovereign idea of goodness, common to all - a sovereign norm from which all other norms and all good acts could be derived.

A moral philosophy that cannot free itself from this metaphysical assumption, is doomed to fail. The ultimate test of an argument of moral logic must always be that it has the power to convince also those who do not believe in it, those whose logic works in a different way. We could, for example, take Kant's and Rawls' arguments and tell them to the dictator mentioned above. What would we expect him to answer? "Oh, I never heard about that. Why has nobody told me this before? I shall immediately change my habits. Sorry for all this mess!"

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