MacIntyre on Morality

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As Alasdair MacIntyre sees the matter, moral discourse in the sense in which it once existed has broken down.[1] This may be illustrated by numerous issues debated in contemporary society, none of which is in the nature of the case capable of being settled.[2] Once there was a generally-accepted theistic world-view in which human beings had in general terms a definite direction or aim in life; against that background there were clear criteria for settling moral disputes. Since the Enlightenment this has no longer been so. It is true that 'in everyday discourse the habit of speaking of moral judgments as true or false persists; but the question of what it is in virtue of which a particular moral judgment is true or false has come to lack any clear answer'. This is because 'moral judgments are linguistic survivals from the practices of classical theism which have lost the context provided by these practices'.[3] Many efforts have been made, by Utilitarians, Kantians and others, to plug the gap; but they have all failed.

Jeremy Bentham thought that traditional morality was hobbled by superstition; 'it was not until we understood that the only motives for human action are attraction to pleasure and aversion to pain that we can state the principles of an enlightened morality'.[4] Bentham also thought that 'the enlightened, educated mind ... will recognize that the pursuit of my happiness as dictated by my pleasure-seeking, pain-avoiding psychology and the pursuit of the greatest happiness of the greatest number do in point of fact coincide'. The role of the social reformer is 'to reconstruct the social order so that even the unenlightened pursuit of happiness will produce the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number; from this aim spring Bentham's numerous proposed legal and penal reforms'.

It is to be noted that, according to his own theories, Bentham could find a motive for being a social reformer only if an enlightened regard for his own happiness, even within his social and economic circumstances, coincided with pursuit of the greatest general happiness. Does it thus coincide, in Bentham's case or that of other enlightened persons? J. S. Mill thought that it did not, on Bentham's conception of happiness, and attempted to rectify this conception; 'but what he actually succeeded in putting in question was the derivation of the morality from the psychology. Yet this derivation provided the whole of the rational grounding for Bentham's project of a new naturalistic teleology'. Mill is concerned to refine, diversify and enlarge Bentham's conception of happiness; for

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example by distinguishing between 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures, and by identifying the extension of our creative powers as a means to happiness. 'But the effect of these emendations is to suggest—what is correct, but what no Benthamite no matter how far reformed would concede—that the notion of human happiness is *not* a unitary, simple notion and cannot provide us with a criterion for making our key choices'.[5]

If we are told, by a disciple of Bentham or Mill, that we ought to use our own future pleasure or happiness as the guide for our action, we have to ask by which kind of pleasure or happiness we are to be guided.[6] The fact is that there are many kinds of pleasurable activity, and many ways in which happiness can be found. 'The pleasure-of-drinking-Guinness is not the pleasure-of-swimming-at-Crane's-Beach, and the swimming and the drinking are not two different means for providing the same end-state'. Again, the happiness to be got out of being a soldier is not the same sort of thing as the happiness to be gained from being a monk. 'Different pleasures and different happinesses are to a large degree incommensurable: there are no scales of quality or quantity on which to weigh them'. It follows that appeal to my pleasure will not tell me whether I should take the drink or the swim, or appeal to my happiness whether I should take up the military or the monastic life. 'To have understood the polymorphous character of pleasure and happiness is *of course*[7] to have rendered those concepts useless for utilitarian purposes. It follows that the notion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number is a notion without any clear content at all. It is indeed a pseudo-concept available for a variety of ideological uses, but no more than that'. This is not to deny that utilitarian ideas have been put to genuinely beneficial uses, as they certainly have—for example, in public health, or the extension of the suffrage, or mitigation of the subjection of women. 'But the use of a conceptual fiction in a good cause does not make it any less of a fiction'.[8]

The great nineteenth-century utilitarians had the merit of constantly scrutinizing their own position; the culmination of this process was the moral philosophy of Henry Sidgwick. It is in his work that 'the failure to restore a teleological framework for ethics finally comes to be accepted. He recognized both that the moral injunctions of utilitarianism could not be derived from any psychological foundations and that the precepts which enjoin us to pursue the general happiness are logically independent of and cannot be derived from any precepts enjoining the pursuit of our own happiness'. As to our basic moral beliefs, Sidgwick concluded that 'they do not form any kind of unity, they are irreducibly heterogeneous, and their acceptance is and must be unargued'. He labels 'intuitions' those statements which we are constrained to accept, but for which we can give no further reason. Evidently Sidgwick himself was disappointed with the outcome of his enquiry; he complained that 'where he had looked for Cosmos, he had in

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fact found only Chaos'. The nineteenth century was the heyday of utilitarianism in Britain; afterwards intuitionism held sway, followed by emotivism. 'The history of utilitarianism thus links historically the eighteenth-century project of justifying morality and the twentieth century's decline into emotivism'.[9]

To illustrate the plight of contemporary moral discourse as he conceives it to be, MacIntyre points out the interminable nature of arguments on such topics as abortion and war. Experts can be found on both sides of each issue, one set claiming that they are permissible in some circumstances, the other that they are never so. The trouble is that the criteria to which the opposed parties appeal are, to use a term made current by philosophers and historians of science, 'incommensurable'. In the case of abortion, one party will draw attention to our obligation not to take innocent human life; the other to a woman's right to the disposal of her own body. When it comes to war, pacifists will insist on the unprecedented destructiveness of modern war, and urge that no evil is great enough to justify it; while their opponents will maintain that, human nature and human affairs being what they are, if peace in general is to be promoted, it is necessary to be prepared for war and even in certain circumstances to resort to it.[10]

Someone might say that the anomalies which MacIntyre has pointed out are not just a contingent feature of our particular culture, but endemic to evaluative discourse as such. This leads conveniently to a discussion of emotivism. According to C. L. Stevenson, the most important representative of this school, 'this is good' means roughly 'I approve of this; do so as well'. In general, emotivists have distinguished sharply between factual disagreements and what Stevenson dubbed 'disagreements in attitude'. We should ask whether emotivism 'may not have been a response to, and in the very first instance, an account of *not*, as its protagonists indeed supposed, moral language as such, but moral language in England in the years after 1903[11] as and when that language was interpreted in accordance with that body of theory to the refutation of which emotivism was primarily dedicated'.

There seems to have been something about the general moral climate of England in the late nineteenth century which made it something from which one longed to escape; and the theme of that escape dominates the lives and writings of the Woolfs, Lytton Strachey, and Roger Fry. In J. M. Keynes' discussion of the ideas of this group, he 'emphasized the rejection not only of the Benthamite version of utilitarianism and of Christianity, but of all claims on behalf of social action conceived as a worthwhile end. What was left? The answer is, a highly impoverished view of how "good" may be used'. In the sixth chapter of G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, we read that '"personal affections and aesthetic enjoyments include all the greatest, and by far the greatest goods we can imagine"'. Keynes also describes 'the

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effectiveness of Moore's gasps of incredulity and head-shaking, of Strachey's grim silences and of Lowes Dickinson's shrugs'. MacIntyre finds it no accident that the acutest thinkers among the founders of emotivism were pupils of Moore; it is hence 'not implausible to suppose that they did in fact confuse moral utterance at Cambridge (and in other places with a similar inheritance) after 1903 with moral utterance as such, and that they therefore presented what was in essentials a correct account of the former as though it were an account of the latter'.[12]

In spite of MacIntyre's arguments, I believe that happiness and fairness, which always were among the criteria of what is good, can still provide a basis for giving an account of what is good and why. (Motivation for pursuing the good in this sense is more tricky, as we shall see.) I do not believe that a revised Benthamism need fail; certainly, as I shall try to show, MacIntyre does not demonstrate that it must do so. Someone might ask, how the status of happiness and fairness as fundamental criteria for the good are to be justified. The answer is surely that, if someone denied that contribution to the general happiness tended to make an action good, we would be inclined to say that he hardly knew the meaning of 'good'. And I would have thought that it was the essence of a pointless action, that it promotes no-one's pleasure and lessens no-one's pain, that no-one's unhappiness is diminished or happiness increased by it. Even in the society devoted to filling saucers with mud, those who fill the most saucers with the most mud doubtless derive some satisfaction from doing so, if only from the *kudos* that they gain at the expense of other members of the society. It is important to note that this does not imply that, by way of exception, an action might be bad even though it tended to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number for example, if it was very unfair. The well-worn example of the innocent person 'punished' to appease a raging mob may be cited.[13]

I grant that happiness is not altogether a 'unitary' or 'simple notion'; but I deny that this prevents it from being a main criterion for at least a large proportion of our key choices. And this is surely shown by the manner in which it seems natural to justify or condemn most of our actions. Why is ethnic cleansing bad? Because defying or refuting the prejudice of those who want it, while it causes unhappiness, causes much less unhappiness and unfairness than its implementation. Why was the Nazi treatment of the Jews a bad thing, and why was it bad to force the Kosovar Albanians out of their homes in a town where they had lived for generations? Because these actions led to a great deal of unhappiness, without an adequate amount of happiness being caused in compensation; and was very unfair respectively on the Jews and the Kosovar Albanians. Why is universal suffrage a good thing? Because it is unfair to deprive women (and some other groups) of the right to vote, when they are just as well qualified to vote as other people.

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Why in general is it a good thing for an alcoholic to be persuaded to join Alcoholics Anonymous? Because alcoholism is a source of intense unhappiness to both the alcoholic and those who are close to him, and the programme sponsored by Alcoholics Anonymous is a well-tried means of substantially lessening this unhappiness in a large number of cases.

A degree of heterogeneity in types of happiness must be acknowledged; and there is a certain absurdity in the view that the quantity of happiness in any situation can be precisely measured. But I deny the soundness of MacIntyre's inference from these facts, that the general happiness cannot be an effective criterion for the goodness or badness of action in at least a large proportion of cases. It is perhaps a peculiarity of evaluation, that while attempts at small comparative measurements may be futile, large-scale ones are by no means so. If how much the sum of happiness is to be increased, how much that of unhappiness diminished (when fairness is not neglected), is the crucial criterion of what is good, it is very natural to infer, as Bentham did, that happiness and unhappiness are susceptible to precise measurement. But while it is often ridiculous to cudgel one's brains as to whether one got more pleasure from a visit to the Zoo or a walk in the country, raging toothache is unquestionably more unpleasant than a few uncomfortable prods by the dentist, or even a couple of injections in the roof of one's mouth. In these matters meticulous calculation seems impossible, yet gross discriminations are obviously right. The medicine may be rather unpleasant, but the disease is nearly always clearly much more so. Vaccination involved mild pain and inconvenience, but there was no question that it was more pleasant and convenient than smallpox. Some sorts of academic study may be less immediately conducive to happiness than many ways of amusing oneself, but they may lead to a far greater ultimate enhancement of one's life which can hardly be achieved otherwise. For a teenager to take up smoking in order to feel comfortable here and now among her peers, is almost certainly not worth her increased risk of lung-cancer in the future.

No doubt Bentham's criteria are in need of revision, as subsequent utilitarians from Mill to Sidgwick have seen. One might say that an account of human happiness and misery which was adequate for the purposes of morality would play soufflé to Bentham's blancmange. Yet one can see Bentham's point in making happiness a simple sum of pleasures together with absence of pains. He wanted his criteria to be as clear as possible, and was exasperated by the learned obscurantism round these issues, 'nonsense on stilts' as he called it. Certainly there are many subtle pretexts, 'the easy speeches that comfort cruel men' of which Chesterton wrote, that some people put up to excuse the misery and injustice suffered by others.

MacIntyre's discussion of the monastic as compared with the military life seems to me very misleading. He is quite right to say that, in general

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terms, it is pointless to try to determine whether the one is more conducive to happiness than the other. But where almost any individual is concerned, this is by no means so. Some people, owing to dispositions which have been inherited or imposed by environment or both, are such that they would be both wretched and ineffective as soldiers. For others, just the same would apply to the monastic life. A wise counsellor might have excellent reason to discourage a potential monk or soldier, on the grounds that, whatever he felt about the matter temporarily, his character and temperament were such that his intended profession would not suit him in the long run.[14] For all I know, there may be some remarkable persons who would be suited about equally by a monastic and a military career; but I am sure there are not many of them.[15] It is good that each person should be put in touch, so far as possible, with the means of happiness to which she is suited; provided it tends to enhance, or at least not to impugn, the happiness of others. I myself once very much wanted to be a professional musician; but I am now certain that I have been happier and more useful as an academic specializing in rather different subjects.

Similar points are to be made about MacIntyre's comparison between drinking a glass of Guinness and going for a swim. In general terms, the question of which sort of activity is the more pleasurable is indeed fatuous. But some persons are so constituted that the one pleasure is for them far greater than the other. And someone who took too much time in recreational swimming, so that it seriously interfered with her work or her relations with her family, might well be properly advised, that to go swimming at a particular place on some particular occasion was not conducive to her own long term happiness or the general happiness. And suppose the person contemplating the pleasure of drinking Guinness on the one hand, or going for a swim on the other, were an alcoholic, who vainly thought that a single glass of Guinness would do him no harm after a year's abstinence; not realizing that, in all probability, he would remember nothing for the next five days, until he came to retching and lying in a pool of vomit on the floor of a police cell.

These examples seem to me to show that, in a very large number of cases at least, the general happiness, and one's own long-term as opposed to short-term happiness, constitute a very effective criterion for what is good or bad, for all that exact comparative measurement, of the kind apparently aspired to by Bentham, is impossible. What is one to make of the cases where debate on moral issues seems interminable, as in the matters of abortion and war as cited by MacIntyre? I admit that to a large extent he is right, in saying that the criteria appealed to be the opposed sides are 'incommensurable'. But it is worth pointing out that each opposed party, at least in a cool hour, would presumably agree that the criteria appealed to by

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the other are in themselves appropriate. No 'pro-lifer' would be likely to deny that each individual has in general a right to the disposal of his or her own body. It would not be a satisfactory state of affairs, for example, if an anatomy student were entitled surreptitiously to anaesthetize me, and then amputate one of my fingers, just because it would be of use to him in his studies. Nor would most advocates of 'choice' want to deny that, in general, one ought not to take innocent life. The difficulty is, that it seems impossible to establish what weight is to be given to the different criteria when they come into conflict.

In the course of his exposition of contemporary moral disputes that are insoluble, MacIntyre mentions the view that 'exploitative domination stands between mankind *(sic)* and happiness'.[16] Here is a claim which is surely subject to rational investigation. It can hardly be denied that being dominated in an exploitative manner *sometimes* stops people from being as happy as they could otherwise be. But one might wonder whether Marx was right in thinking that the conditions which make such domination possible will tend to disappear spontaneously in the long run, as a result of socioeconomic developments; or whether there is something about the old Adam which tends to make them recur. A person who became convinced by the relevant evidence, whether rightly or wrongly, that human predispositions to behaviour are quite largely inherited,[17] might change her views accordingly on how effective war was as a means of ending exploitive domination. Thus at least one of the disputes that MacIntyre claims to be insoluble with moral discourse in its present state is perhaps in principle soluble after all.

Many moral issues are rather like people who lived in the 'marches' between countries before it became normal to establish precise borders; there was no saying whether they lived in (say) England or Scotland. But it would have been silly to maintain that this made the whole distinction between England and Scotland pointless at that time: or that York was not clearly in England, Edinburgh in Scotland. Similarly, it may well be that some moral issues are irresolvably ambiguous; but that does not mean that there is anything amiss with moral discourse and argument in themselves. Sometimes the ambiguity can be resolved; sometimes what some people are certain is unequivocally good or bad is better left as ambiguous, and is the more likely to be so the more relevant considerations are taken into account. It is an evil in these disputes that the parties tend not to acknowledge the force of the case made on the other side; human beings have a dislike of moral ambiguity, and responsible intellectuals should resist this tendency.[18] (I think MacIntyre is right that the shrillness he notes as characteristic of these sorts of arguments is at least partly due to repressed appreciation of the strength of the arguments on the other side.[19]) They should pile up the

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agony on both sides rather than only on one—the results of going to war occasionally, and of never going to war; of sometimes aborting and never aborting. One should remember pregnant victims of rape in their early teens; but also wealthy and comfortable people killing viable fetuses. The horrors of any war should not be forgotten; but neither should the genocide and ethnic cleansing that are the crimes to redress which some wars may be deemed to be the lesser evil. What is above all to be avoided is that people should be encouraged to keep their eyes wide shut on either side of these agonizingly difficult issues.

As MacIntyre says, Bentham believed that, for the enlightened person, pursuit of the general happiness and that of her own happiness coincided; this provided for him the grounding of morality in psychology. I strongly agree with MacIntyre that this belief was false: but I believe that he makes some unsound inferences from the fact. It is one thing to determine at least roughly what the greatest happiness of the greatest number is, and how it may best be pursued; another to motivate the individual to pursue it. It appears to me that Bentham and Mill were right on the first issue, wrong on the second. There are plenty of instances—harbouring Jews under the Nazis, campaigning for human rights in the Soviet Union, 'whistle-blowing' when one's employers are not acting in the public interest—where promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number is strongly opposed to promoting one's own happiness, short term or long-term (unless certain assumptions are made which I shall mention in due course).

MacIntyre concedes, as I suppose any sane person must, that many of the social reforms that were brought about under the inspiration of the utilitarians were good. But he says this is no *proof* that their ideals were on the right lines. Yet surely it is some *indication* that they were so. A system of dynamics on the basis of which one was able to mount a successful moon shot would not be proved to be correct; but its correctness would surely be to a large extent corroborated. And is it not a generally satisfactory kind of justification of social reforms, that they increase the amount of human happiness, or at least lighten the load of human misery?

According to Bentham, the effect of good legislation is to bring into line with the general happiness what seems to make for the happiness of the ordinary unenlightened person. Something like this is right, I believe: as can be illustrated by laws against speeding in traffic. Many people find it fun to speed, and others find it convenient on occasion to do so; and there can be no doubt that fun and convenience are important contributors to happiness. On the other side of the scale is the fact that speeding is apt to lead to the injury or death of human beings, and expensive and wasteful damage to vehicles. While it may be pointless to try to work out whether speeding in her car is more pleasurable for the individual than watching birds or making

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fun of her colleagues, it is plain enough that it is not worth the serious risk of the maiming or dismemberment of herself or others. Laws against speeding, and the penalties for their infringement, do indeed tend to make what promotes the happiness of the individual driver the same as what promotes the general happiness. Two important qualifications are to be made, however, to Bentham's idea. The first is, that there is no sufficient reason to think that, for the enlightened any more than the unenlightened, actions promoting the general happiness will always be the same as those which promote individual happiness. The second is that it is difficult to see how even the most elaborate legislation, diligently enforced, could close the gap: and if it did, the game would certainly not be worth the candle. An over-legislated society is the unhappier for it, just as is an under-legislated one. Yet if we asked, of any good piece of legislation. why it was good, the answer would surely be, in the last analysis, that it tended to increase the sum of happiness, without fairness being impugned; and to decrease the load of human misery.

I conclude that, at least where a large number of issues are concerned, contribution to the general happiness, provided fairness is kept in mind, provides an effective criterion of the good. The question of what tends to make human beings happy is a psychological question; so I infer that, to a considerable extent, ethics ought to be founded on psychology in the manner envisaged by the utilitarians. How the individual can be persuaded to behave well, when she knows that actions tending to promote her own happiness are incompatible with those promoting the general happiness, is a rather different issue. It is one thing to work out what it is morally good for human beings to do; another to determine how they can be motivated to do it. So far as I can see, it was the lack of identity between what promotes the general happiness, and what can be sincerely recommended to the individual in pursuit of his own, that particularly distressed Sidgwick.[20]

How then, and in what circumstances, might this problem be resolved? Good legislation, as I have already suggested. tends to narrow the gap, but can by no means close it. It would be closed, however, if certain eschatological doctrines of religion were true. This, I believe, is of fundamental importance if one is to get a just notion of the relation between religion and morality. But whatever Immanuel Kant may have thought (and I find his comments on this question rather ambiguous[21]), this does not begin to establish that any religion is true; only that religion has an important and perhaps indispensable social function, to appear to remove the discrepancy between what promotes the general happiness and what is in the individual's interest, when this life alone is taken into account.[22] It may be protested that this is to take an excessively ignoble view of human nature and motivation. I agree that *some* people are so virtuous that they will

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pursue the general happiness when it goes against their own long-term happiness: but, where most people are concerned, I am sure this is not the case, and it is imprudent to confuse people as they are with how one would like them to be. There is a story that William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was once asked if he would pay for his railway ticket if there were no chance of his being caught if he did not. He replied that he liked to think he would pay for it in any case; but the burly uniformed official at the barrier clinched the matter.

I am inclined to agree with MacIntyre, that the moral disputes that he mentions, with the 'incommensurable' criteria appealed to by the disputants, may be insoluble. But there are plenty of such disputes that are not. And there is danger here that we may be stampeded into dogmatism because we cannot endure moral ambiguity on these matters. We may feel compelled to decide whether we are Catholics, or Marxists, or Evangelicals, or secular humanists, just so that we can have unequivocal answers as part of the package. There may be good reasons both for believing that there is a God, and for holding a teleological view of human nature in the manner of Aristotle; but I do not think that the resolution of moral ambiguities is among them.

I hate to say nice things about either emotivism or the Bloomsbury Group; but MacIntyre provokes me into putting in a good word for both. His insistence on seeing emotivism against its original historical background (which certainly deserves a glance) may deprive it of its force, and obscure the real lessons that are to be learned from it. Emotivism seems to me to hit off very well one aspect or function of moral language as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Moral language has always been partly an expression of emotion, and an attempt to affect other people's attitudes; and it is very useful to isolate these aspects of it. Were not the prophet Amos's denunciations quite largely an expression of anger? Was not Hector's hectoring of Paris, among other things, an expression of contempt, and (in the manner emphasized by 'prescriptivists') an attempt to make the latter behave in a manner more befitting a warrior of high social class?

The stress by MacIntyre on the historical background of emotivism is a corollary of an important aspect of his thought; he attacks other writers for neglecting the significance of the fact that Kant was a Prussian, or Hume a Scot.[23] I maintain, to the contrary, that to understand the theories of these thinkers, and the significance that they may have for the present, has little more to do with knowledge of their historical backgrounds than it does in the case of Euclid or Newton. MacIntyre seems to me strangely oblivious of the fact that, short of extreme subjective idealism, rational procedures developed within

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historical traditions enable one to get to know about things and states of affairs that exist and obtain prior to and independently of those traditions. The reproductive habits of termites, and the chemical processes within red giant stars, do not depend on human traditions: but some human traditions have developed in such a way that people who belong to them can find out the truth about such things. And if this applies where matters of fact are concerned, there seems to me no good reason why it should not apply to matters of value as well. Thus we can truly judge that Ashoka was a better ruler, did more for the happiness of the average person in his dominions, than Chaka the Zulu. A full account of MacIntyre's later philosophy would have to devote considerable space to the topic discussed in this paragraph; but this is not the place to go into it further.[24]

The Bloomsbury group were wont to emphasize, I grant excessively, those aspects of quality of life that are not reducible to standard of living (to use expressions which came into currency after their time). And Moore, in the passage quoted by MacIntyre, surely pointed to what are among the most important of these. What Bloomsbury was inclined to underestimate were moral virtues in the traditional sense, and those goods which are aspects of the standard of living. (One could say that, being well-off, they were too inclined to take these for granted.) I take it that the latter type of good was the main focus of Benthamism; certainly, it is the main type of good that can be a useful subject of legislation. You cannot legislate for friendship and appreciation of the arts; though, at least in the latter case, you can legislate for its wider availability. As to the element of revolt in Bloomsbury on which MacIntyre comments—the joyless do-gooding idealised by some Victorians certainly needed a corrective, which Bloomsbury supplied in its own way. The bad intellectual behaviour referred to by Keynes should be acknowledged and deplored; unfortunately, it is not quite unknown in later intellectual establishments. One may compare the complaint of one student of my acquaintance about the 'deconstruction' affected by her teachers: anyone who questioned the appropriateness of the basic attitude, let alone tried to mount arguments against it, was made to feel stupid.[25]

What then, in my view, is to be retained from Benthamism? (a) That contribution to happiness and relief of unhappiness is the main criterion of what is good; (b) That, to the extent that what makes people happy is a proper study of the psychologist, morality should be founded on psychology. I have tried to show that MacIntyre's arguments against these claims are unsound. What in Benthamism is to be rejected? (a) That happiness is a mere sum of pleasures and absence of pains; (b)

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That a precise measurement of quantities of happiness and pleasure, or unhappiness and pain, is possible; (c) That actions tending to one's own long-term happiness and the general happiness are the same, when only the present life is taken into account. Reflection on this last point sheds some light on the role of religion in society.

1 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 2.
2 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 6-7.
3 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 60.
4 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 62.
5 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 63.
6 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 63-4.
7 My italics.
8 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 64.
9 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 64-5.
10 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 6-8.
11 That was the year in which G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* was first published.
12 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 11-12, 14-17.
13 Neglect of the fact that 'good' might be *largely a matter of* other qualities and effects, without being *precisely definable in terms of* them, seems to be what is wrong with Moore's famous argument in *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956). Moore inferred that it was a simple intuitable property; the emotivists, that it was not a property at all, and that to call something good was fundamentally a matter of evincing a positive emotion towards it. MacIntyre rightly exclaims at the badness of Moore's arguments on this subject; I think the fact that they were so influential for so long is something of a scandal in twentieth-century moral philosophy.
14 A very useful scheme of character-traits, along with suggestions about their bearings on a person's profession, has been developed, on the basis of Jungian psychology, by Isabel Myers and Katheryn Briggs. See David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me. Character and Temperament Types* (Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis, 1984). A former student of mine had felt discontented and alienated in his family business for some years, took the Myers' Briggs test, and came to understand exactly why. Such tests, put to such uses as this (always assuming, of course, that they are based on sound research), are evidently conducive to human happiness.
15 In *Johnny Town-Mouse*, Beatrix Potter makes the sensible point that some people are better suited by life in a town, others by life in the country. What is relevant from the point of view of an enlightened utilitarianism is not to try to weigh up which way of life is absolutely better, but to ensure that so far as possible persons of each kind are enabled to live in an environment which suits them.
16 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 6.
17 As might well happen, for instance, to somone who read Robert Wright's *The Moral Animal. The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology* (New York: Random House, 1994).
18 Dr. Janet Ajzenstadt has remarked, in conversation, that there is no abortion *debate*. That is to say, it is not characteristic of persons on either side to take note of, let alone seriously respond to, the points made on the other side.

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19 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 8.
20 Cf. the conclusion of the posthumously published manuscript notes by Sidgwick, included by F. F. Constance Jones in her 'Preface' to the sixth edition of Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), xxii. 'There was indeed a fundamental opposition between the individual's interest and either morality (i.e., intuitionism and utilitarianism), which I could not solve by any method I had yet found trustworthy, *without the assumption of the moral government of the world*' (my italics).
21 Sometimes he seems to imply that we ought to believe in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul because these doctrines are morally desirable; sometimes rather that we should bear them in mind as ideal possibilities.
22 See Matthew 5: 5-10; 25: 31-46.
23 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, 11.
24 It is the principal matter at issue in MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. 1988).
25 'Intuitionism' in ethics is certainly very liable to this sort of abuse; one is made to feel stupid if one does not share the 'intuitions' about what is good or bad of the members of one's society or group who have the greatest prestige. But I think aspects of intuitionism can be rescued. If a person were to doubt, for example, whether in general good action tended to increase happiness, bad action to impugn it, it could reasonably be said that to that extent the person was ignorant of the meanings of 'good' and 'bad'.

Reviews

PARTICIPATING IN GOD: A PASTORAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY by Paul S. Fiddes *Darton, Longman & Todd*, London, 2000. Pp. 312, £14.95 pbk.

Paul Fiddes interweaves within this book a doctrinal and pastoral understanding of the Trinity. In so doing he wishes to demonstrate that the Trinity, as the pivotal Christian doctrine around which all else attains meaning, is at the heart of Christian life and good pastoral practice. 'The aim of a pastoral doctrine of God should therefore be to ask (a) conceptually, what difference it makes to view pastoral issues from the perspective of engagement in God; and (b) experimentally, how our experience might be shaped by this engagement' (p. 33). The Trinity, as the mystery of God himself, ought to be relevant then to the prayer and sacramental life of Christians, to the realities and vicissitudes of daily experience, and the basis of all preaching and pastoral counselling.

On the practical level this book amply testifies to Fiddes's pastoral experience and wisdom. On numerous occasions he offers sound pastoral guidance on a variety of real life situations, on emotional and spiritual growth and health, sickness and bereavement, preaching and liturgical practice, and the role of the Christian, whether as an official minister or simply as loving friend, as 'the sacrament' of God's consoling and loving presence. In so

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