THE ETHICAL GENERALIZATION ARGUMENT

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

This thesis examines the ethical generalization argument from a methodological point of view. The generalization is not considered in a historical (Kantian) sense of deductive implication, but rather in a more empirical fashion of behavoristic investigation. The argument, its limitations, and other attendant problems are analyzed. The final recommendations combine several approaches within and without standard philosophical procedure.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines a specific ethical argument, usually termed "ethical generalization", and the supporting concept of justification. My concern is chiefly methodological. I do not offer solutions to all the problems I identify. My intentions are to locate the difficulites in the analysis of this argument, identify their present boundaries, and suggest the methodological directions for the solution of these difficulties. I begin with an examination of the concept of ethical justification to determine general applications to ethical formulations. I present ethical generalization and examine it with respect to first-order (normative) ethics in order to isolate its elementary constituents and identify the major problems of application. In the conclusion, recommendations are suggested for the development of a more meaningful analysis of ethical generalizations.

I. ETHICAL JUSTIFICATION

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the general relationships between justification and second-order or theoretical ethical generalizations (as distinguished from first-order or normative ethical concerns). I will limit my examination to two types of rational theoretical justifications: (1) those abstracted from actual, practical ethical generalizations and (2) those imaginative examples created without actual situations for a hypothetical analysis. Relevant general considerations of justification will also be examined. I do not intend to comment on possible justifications which may go beyond the rational presentations and their empirical bases which I examine; adequate considerations of such items is not within the limits of this thesis.

My concern with the justification of ethical formulations arose from the recognition of the subjective, relative nature of ethical statements, judgments, and conclusions when justification was absent. It is imperative to establish acceptable criteria of justification to examine and judge ethical formulations which could otherwise be rejected because of their sophistic nature. Towards this end of acceptable criteria I formulated the following definition: ethical justification is the result or the process of providing assurance of either the logical validity of a decision with moral con-

sequences or of the pragmatic correctness of an action with moral consequences. This "assurance" would probably include some expression of probability for the "pragmatic correctness" because of the less-than-certain nature of present moral judgments in this area. Further, this probability would exist whether the judgment was descriptive (e.g. "That action is considered immoral by most of our members") or prescriptive (e.g. "You ought not to do x, under duress of punishment by the membership"). It is obvious that "correctness" or "rightness" may have different meanings in different ethical systems, but within any particular system certain clear criteria should be available.[1] This thesis is an attempt to minimize the relativism of ethical systems and to locate through methodological concerns the easiest path to mutual understanding leading towards a common ethic for all moralists.

Two Referents

The term "ethical justification" may refer to the critical examination of logical claims (e.g. "Is this decision valid?") or actions and their consequents (e.g. "Would this action be proper?"). Adjudication by the first type of referent is, more strictly speaking, termed "logical justification" or "validation". Adjudication by the second type of referent

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[1] By "ethical systems" I mean traditional organized views of morals, e.g. hedonism or utilitarianism, as well as the contemporary "non-systems" of "situational" or "contextual" ethics.

is more strictly termed "pragmatic justification" or "vindication".[2]

With either validation or vindication one may speak of "justifying" the referent of any particular example. For validation, the ultimate criteria are the rules of deductive and inductive inference. For vindication, the ultimate criteria of justification are usually intentions or purposes and empirical or practical knowledge (inductively confirmed or confirmable) about ends-means relationships.[3] I qualify the preceding criteria of vindication with "usually" because I concur with Feigl's comment that some situations of pragmatic justification may be so blatently simple and obvious ("degenerate", he says[4]) that mere logical truths will adequately serve as the ultimate criteria, e.g. "John's bad actions are bad."

Depending on a moralists logical preferences the ultimate criteria of validation will be accepted or rejected as sufficient to justify logical claims within the moral realm. I believe most moralists would accept these criteria although some, e.g. the "emotivists", might deny any meaningful relation between ethical prescription and objective criteria. For this thesis I shall assume with Feigl that: "the justifying

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[2]After Herbert Feigl, "Validation and Vindication", eds. Sellars and Hospers, Readings in Ethical Theory (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), p. 674.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 676.

principles (justificantia) for the establishment of knowledge-claims have been retraced to their ultimate foundations in the rules of inference and substitution in deductive logics. We cannot without vicious circularity disclose any more ultimate grounds of validation here."[5]

In order to be more specific about the inductively confirmable practical knowledge I shall follow Feigl further: "In any practical issue of moral choice, inductive inference is indispensible for the determination of the most likely consequences of actions." and "The rules of maximal probability in inductive inference form the ultimate validating basis of all empirical reasoning."[6] In short, without the rules of deductive and inductive inference there would be no ultimate basis for validation or vindication of an ethical claim--whether decision or action. Without these rules everyone might have their own basis for "justifying" ethical judgments. Although the basis might (by chance) be logical rules, it might also be a tingle in the left ear lobe or a "groovy" feeling, or even some inexpressible awareness.

The ultimate criteria of pragmatic justification are more difficult to formulate objectively or universally because they are often (incorrectly) presumed to be useless because of their so-called relative nature. In the analysis of the logical justifications relativism is not necessary and

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[5] Ibid., p. 675. [6] Ibid.

can probably be excluded in all examples. But where all actions must be justified (pragmatically) with respect to their agreement (or lack thereof) with the ultimate norms of a particular ethical system some relativism seems unavoidable.[7] As Feigl expresses himself: "The purposes which may be adduced in vindicating arguments for a whole system of moral norms are embodied in the individual interests and social ideals which we have come to form in response to life experience."[8] Thus, while admitting some relativism between systems of ethics, ultimate criteria for vindication should be available within any particular system which will eliminate the relative nature of all but a few ethical formulations.

So far two semantic referents have been identified for ethical justification but the concept has yet to be described. As mentioned above the referent must include considerations of at least the area of logic or the vague realm of "actions and their consequents". This latter area, relating to the criteria for pragmatic justification, is appropriate because moral conclusions and judgments are often vague or ambiguous. Probably the most popular contemporary moral problem resulting from this vagueness is the dispute regarding the unbridgeable (?) gap between moral decisions or actions and their meaningful

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[7] Ibid., p. 677.

[8] Ibid., p. 678; Feigl concludes from this that "the perennial dispute between deontological and teleological theories may perhaps be settled by the recognition that the former are concerned with validation, the latter with vindication."

description or prescription. To some extent the difficulty of clearly formulating valuational statements is traditional, but to a degree contemporary communicative media seem to disseminate valuational formulations as if they were supposed to be unclear.

Required Assumptions

I understand two assumptions to be necessary for any use of ethical justification. The first is that people can be rational about ethical formulations. This is not meant to preclude a possible emotional component of some degree as relevant to ethical formulations. It is meant to require that some degree of rational reflection be involved in formulating ethical statements, decisions, and judgments if they are to be susceptible to objective justification. The 'total emotion' views of Stevenson's "emotivist" analysis or the extreme case of Spinoza's "human bondage" are meant to be excluded. Neither of these would be susceptible to rational ethical justification. Neither mere agreement with another's ethical point of view nor mere identification of the emotional basis for an agent's action constitutes justification; although either may function as a strong motivation for ethical formulation or action. A critical examination of either of the two referents of ethical justification requires rational discussion or argument, both of which are beyond mere agreement with someone's emotional preference. This assumption does not claim that

people are always rational when making ethical statements, but does claim that (at least in a cool, reflective moment) some rational criteria can be identified which are directly relevant to the process of formulation (however understood). In short, reason must have been some part of the process of ethical formulation if rational ethical justification is to be applicable to it. I do not, however, intend to limit the moral realm to proof or justification by cognitive methods only, but I do intend to limit this thesis to a discussion of cognitive areas of analysis.

The second necessary assumption is that any use of ethical justification entails obligation. If this is denied there can be no meaningful application of justification to moral formulations. This is not to preclude the possibility of a few people who feel no onus attached to their decisions or actions. Nor is this to preclude the phenomenon of "ultimate disagreement", a situation in which someone abjures discussion and simply states that his position or group is superior to yours. Such a situation is not amenable to justification. In fact, a lack of justification here will not show the other's position incorrect, although other means might.[9] Nor is the assumption meant to preclude the meaninglessness or triviality of judgment where the justificatory criteria are rejected by the agent.

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[9]For a discussion of this point see: Abraham Edel, Ethical Judgment, (First Free Press Edition, 1964; London: Collier-MacMillan Ltd., 1955), Chapter Three: "The Spectre of the Stubborn Man".

On the positive side it should be noted that this assumption does not (as might be presumed) imply freedom of action or decision, or knowledge of the consequent. Someone may be obliged to obey certain laws without having had a voice in their determination or without knowledge of the penalty for non-compliance. Everyone is subject to local custom to some degree. Ignorance of the law is seldom a guarantee of immunity from retribution. Similarly, someone may be aware of an obligation to act in a certain manner, for example to defend a friend, but be unable or unwilling to do so for reasons of a physical (e.g. too weak) or psychological (e.g. a relevant phobia) or physiological (e.g. too shocked) nature. Yet none of these factors would necessarily excuse one from obligations.

Two other assumptions might be admitted on the suggestion that there is a connection between logical form and ethics.[10] Without judging the appropriateness of this suggestion I will discuss the two assumptions because they raise issues of general concern to this thesis. Gellner's primary contention (in my view) is that: "when people act they are also prepared to give reasons for their actions"; and if this contention is accepted, his supporting assumption is also required: "All actions are based on a rule or maxim."[11] Exclud-

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[10] The assumptions and the suggestion appear in: E. A. Gellner, "Ethics and Logic", Contemporary Ethical Theory, ed. J. Margolis (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 227-248.

[11] Ibid., p. 228.

ing the question of the correctness of Gellner's formulations (his concern is not with issues directly relevant here) I shall examine them as possible assumptions of ethical formulations. My examination will find both lacking as either necessary or sufficient assumptions for ethical justification, but both will serve to raise issues directly relevant to the basis of ethical justification.

First the supporting assumption: "All actions are based on a rule or maxim", that is, every action is based on some rule or maxim. If this assumption is necessary for justification then the vindication of actions would require identification of the rule or maxim on which each action was based. But it is not possible to trace every action to its origin in an expressible rule or maxim, even presuming the relations between actions and their motivational rules to be universal, necessary, and susceptible to objective description. The net result would probably fall short of the objective expression required for the adequate description of such certain relationships because of non-ethical difficulties, e.g. inadequacies of language, psychological theory, and so on. To vindicate actions based on a rule or maxim would require, at the minimum, the rule or maxim to be confirmed or confirmable, e.g. "It is pragmatically correct that 'one should never cheat'." But these objective rules or maxims are not yet justifiable. Such a rule might be felt psychologically but not be expressible in an objective fashion, e.g. "I'm more

comfortable in a moral situation of type x". Or perhaps such a rule might be objective but not confirmable, e.g. "I always treat others as I wish to be treated". But again, such a rule might be objective but not justifiable because there is no methodological basis for decisions, e.g. where one's criteria for ethical judgment are not sufficient, by themselves, to allow a choice between alternatives. An illustration of this would be where physiological criteria are also relevant, e.g. an agent's predicted body condition if he were to do x or y. All of the above illustrations result in situations where the rules or maxims would be inexpressible or limited or unacceptable, at least in a meaningful, objective fashion. But I think the majority of men would accept the role of such rules or maxims in a sense less than necessity if they were recognized (named) by the agent of the actions.

This brief examination indicates that Gellner's assumption would be useful to, but not necessary for, ethical justification in general. If this question of necessity is limited to the logical sense of justification then more weight would be accorded Gellner's assumption. But even dealing with validation the necessity of the assumption would be confirmable only where the rules or maxims were expressible and this requirement would severely limit the confirmation of the assumption. If the question of the necessity of Gellner's assumption is limited to the pragmatic sense of justification, then even less weight would be accorded the assumption, be-

cause of the uncertain nature of our "actions and their consequents".

Granting for the sake of discussion that the presence of a rule or maxim is a possible (although not a necessary) premise for ethical justification, then it must be asked: Is a rule or maxim a sufficient criterion for the justification of ethical formulations? If justification of ethical formulations can be accomplished without recognized rules or maxims, or if additional factors are required, the assumption is not sufficient. Such "rule-less" justification might occur if there were some other basis for justifying actions. Two possible substitutes for rules or maxims might be: (1) emotion, of a usual or unusual nature and (2) intuition; the suggestions of the so-called Emotivist and Existentialist. But Gellner himself reports that neither of these possible substitutes is sufficient:

> . . . neither [the Emotivist nor the Existentialist] really wants to say that moral actions, judgments, policies or attitudes necessarily have anything to do with a process or activity called emotion or decision respectively. What both have noticed is that those ideas which are classifiable as true or false and for the truth or falsity of which accepted criteria exist cannot by themselves constitute sufficient explanations; and they rightly wish to classify the necessary additional factors in terms of the method of validating their truth or appropriateness. But the point about these ideas is that, although any particular one (preference, choice, feeling) is always selected from a number, often a large number, of possible and incompatible alternatives . . . yet there is no method of singling out or justifying the choice of that one from the others.[12]

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[12] E. A. Gellner, "Maxims", Mind., LX (1951), 390.

Most "normal" emotions (e.g. loneliness) are reducible to psychological aspects of behavior.[13] More complex emotion (e.g. compassion) is thought to be eventually analyzable in a similar fashion. If psychology is granted the requisite advance in theory and expression then the possible substitution of emotion as a "rule-less" criterion is certainly questionable. Admittedly psychology and the closely allied field of physiology have not yet attained objective expression for such motivational bases, but it does seem likely these fields will advance to at least this degree.[14] A very simple, common illustration of this sort of analysis would be any particular instance of the violent emotion called "hate". Possibly the phenomenon was precipitated by the choice of words in a conversation, or a repeated refusal to converse or explain, or some similar activity discoverable by psychological analysis. Thus emotion does not appear to be a certain, lasting, rule-less substitute for Gellner's rules or maxims.[15] This is not to claim that an objective reduction of emotion will remove or lessen the role of emotion in vindicating actions; whatever that role may be. This is to indicate that the role of

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[13]See for example: Clark E. Moustakas, Loneliness, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1961), Chapter Three: "Concepts of Loneliness", pp. 24-53.

[14]For example, studies now being conducted at Northwestern University's Bio-Medical Engineering Center.

[15]B. F. Skinner's behavorist researches lend credence to this view of eventually objectifying behavior, as does his utopian Waldon Two; assuming both correct to this extent.

emotion in vindicating actions will eventually be analogous to, or the same as, the role now claimed by Gellner's rules and maxims. He has certainly indicated the direction, but not the position, of ethical analysis.[16]

Intuition suffers the same rejection as a possible "rule-less" base for justification for the same reason. It seems unlikely that intuition (however defined) is related to either psychological (memory and imagination) or psysiological (proprioceptic) processes in such a manner that it may be expressed as other than a rule or maxim. Just as emotion is predicted to be eventually reducible to rules and maxims of behavior, so intuition may eventually be susceptible to the same reduction.

An over-simplified, non-moral example will illustrate the sort of reduction I predict to be eventually applicable to the more complex moral situations. The last chapter will give more information. In fancy springboard diving the performer must "intuit" or "feel" his position through the instant analysis of proprioceptic information, e.g. skin tension, kinesthetic position and pressure, and the like. There is no other proper description of the analysis. However, this is not because of the complex nature of the situation (as would presumably be the case with "moral intuition"), but rather

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[16]This point will be dealt with further in the last chapter.

because of the instantaneous nature of the analysis. I believe the same type of analysis will eventually be possible for "moral intuition", for example where someone would claim to "intuit" the presence of evil. This would seem to be merely a clever expression for saying that from cognitive data (of a usual or unusual sort) one concludes that the atmosphere is "evil". Thus, granted the requisite advance in technique and correlation, physiology may well dissipate the mysterious aura of "intuition".

Although the above rejection of emotion and intuition as "rule-less" seems somewhat ineffectual at this time, hopefully this weak tone is modified by a passing familiarity with the histories of psychology and physiology, especially the tremendous advances made since the computerization of their researches and the rise of cybernetics. There is now such an information lag between completion of research and its publication, dispersion, and interpretation that those not immediately concerned with these fields are usually several years behind present information. Witness the (1965) establishment of The Philosophic Institute for Artificial Intellegence by The University of Notre Dame "to study, constructively and without polemic, the interaction between computer technology and various philosophic conceptions of the nature of man."[17] Or witness the editor's comments in The

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[17] Philosophy and Cybernetics, eds. J. Crosson and K. M. Sayre (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p. vii.

Social Impact of Cybernetics that:

> Cybernetics has required that we examine ever more carefully the criteria of relevance that govern perception and the values that govern action. As these essays make abundantly clear, the ability to organize rationally large-scale technical and social processes has already radically changed man's milieu and produced a grave challenge to many existing institutions.[18]

The preceding discussion of Gellner's assumption ("all actions are based on a rule or maxim") indicates it is not a sufficient premise for the justification of ethical formulations because other factors seem directly relevant, chiefly knowledge of the agent's psychological and physiological condition. Nor does the assumption seem to be necessary for justification at this time. However, such rules and maxims do seem to have an increasingly important role in vindicating actions and constitute part of the final recommendations of this thesis. Physio-psychological research does indicate that such rules or maxims will have a more objective role here as they become more clearly defined, but at present their role in vindication is not explicit.[19]

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[18] The Social Impact of Cybernetics, ed. C.R.Dechert (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. vi.

[19] For example: F.J.Crosson, "Information Theory and Phenomenology", eds. Crosson and Sayre, op. cit., pp. 99-136; referring to a 1954 demonstration that "Gestalt qualities constitute redundancy in visual stimulation and so may be expressed quantitatively" (p.108); and referring to physiological psychologists establishing empirical correlations between light waves and the experience of colors (p. 120).

Next is Gellner's primary contention: "When people act they are also prepared to give reasons for their actions." If this is a necessary assumption then ethical justification could not occur without this preparation. This is not to imply that all decisions are moral, nor that all decisions having moral consequences are recognized as such at the time of the decision. Nor is this to challenge that a normally reasonable man will never act unreasonably. Most honest men recognize that they have sometime acted unreasonably, i.e. against (not without) reason. This may be the case even where other men, perhaps the majority, might condemn their (unreasonable) action. Dropping atom bombs on Japanese cities was morally wrong, as was the Bataan "death march", but the decisions were supported by reasons in each case. In addition, some sanction is supplied by common sense as far as any decision requires the use of reason. This is the case even for the ethically trivial example of basing a decision on the flip of a coin. Yet such an amoral process may have moral consequences, e.g. if the decision to destroy a city is decided in this fashion.

If it is understood that this preparation to give reasons shall include "unconscious preparation"[20] and if the

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[20] By "unconscious preparation" I mean preparation either without present conscious thought about the formulation and its probable consequents or conscious preparation <u>towards</u> expression of reasons without conscious results.

preceding examination of the eventual infeasibility of "rule-less" justification was correct, then it would seem that actions connot be justified without the preparation to give reasons for the action. Perhaps a similar ethical formulation was judged correct in a previous similar situation and the agent has unconsciously generalized to the present situation. Or perhaps the agent has experienced a similar situation but not yet been able to express his reactions or motivations in terms of reasons.

Ethical Justification

I have now prepared the way for my working definition of ethical justification: (the result of) a method used either to validate an ethical claim of knowledge or logic or to vindicate actions and their consequents. For validation, the method will ultimately refer for adjudication to the rules of inductive and deductive logic. For vindication, the method will be determined by practical criteria, chiefly through the use of inductive inference. Although the general language and the two required assumptions will be constant for the methods, the particulars and emphases of a given method may vary depending on variables like the purpose of the method and its orientation in the particular ethical system, i.e. to describe, judge, or prescribe; and orientated teleologically, deontologically, and so on.

Ultimately the more universal aspects of the various methods will hopefully be emphasized to diminish the relativism of justification when different ethical systems judge the same issue and to allow a progression toward a common ethic. The last chapter deals more specifically with these issues, and offers a possible program for such a progression.

Limitations

There are two major limitations of ethical justification. The primary limitation is that the referent must be directly concerned with "a matter of principle".[21] This limitation arises because justification requires obligation. If there is no onus upon those rejecting accepted social principles or if no moral principle is involved in a decision, judgment, or action (viz. if it is amoral) then justification is inapplicable or trivial or meaningless. What one does (or decides) in such a case is not related to ethical norms, although it may be related to social norms, e.g. non-ethical convention. As Toulmin put it, if no matter of principle is involved then "morally speaking, there's nothing to choose between [two courses of action] so there's no 'ought' about it."[22]

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[21] S.E.Toulmin, "The Logic of Moral Reasoning", The Moral Judgment, ed. Paul W. Taylor (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 273.

[22] Ibid.

Perhaps other grounds for choice are available, e.g. "feelings" or "attitudes", but these are not morally describable.

Another limitation of ethical justification occurs in the inadequacies of expression. This limitation was illustrated previously when mention was made of the vagueness of the realm of actions and their consequents. The unclear procedures of ethical investigation as well as the limitations of the semantically and syntactically allowable expressions are often a hindrance to the examination of the moral realm. Expressive limitation occurs at all levels of investigation. First-order ethical statements are continually questioned because of their inherent vagueness (usually blamed on some form of relativism) e.g. "What do you mean by 'good'?" or because of the failure of expression, e.g. "I know x is wrong, but I can't tell you why". Both these common examples of ethical vagueness originate in expressive limitation. The dogged persistence of this limitation seems due to a simple phenomenon: a combination of linguistic apathy and carelessness; in Bacon's terms "idols of the Market Place". I am speaking of the carelessness of those educated and uneducated in philosophy. For example, most people fail to express a need for more than one term refering to "good" or "no". I characterize this as linguistic apathy . because situations where we commonly employ these words are not adequately described by single concepts and it would seem that greater attention to this fact would produce some change.

Spoken English is replete with simple opposites: "good" and "bad", "love" and "hate", "yes" and "no", and "right" and "wrong" for example. This, in itself, is not unfortunate but in most situations these either-or terms are not adequately expressive of the real nature of the occasion and are usually misconstrued as exhausting description.

At once I fear Wittgenstein's (difficult) sort of activity may indicate the type of compromise solution available; but at the same time I have before me Einstein's acceptance of a very complex geometry to obtain a very simple, universal physical formulation. This encourages me to dare suggest a radical change (of yet uncertain nature) needed to clarify the English language. Einstein's sort of solution, accepting a complex method to attain simple results, would seem to be favored for the following reasons: (1) It would offer a solution fairly easily understood by the greater number of educated people; (2) It would probably be based on the now familiar psychological and temporal orientations of today's educated people; and (3) It would be more objective than present methods and hence less susceptible to the effects of criticism from claims of relativism.

II. THE ETHICAL GENERALIZATION ARGUMENT

This chapter will be first a discussion of the referent of "ethical generalization", with emphasis upon its three primary factors; second, an examination of the premises of ethical generalization; and third, an investigation of the limitations of ethical generalization. I hope to achieve two goals: to delimit the concept of ethical generalization as precisely as possible and to indicate present areas of difficulty in the analysis of ethical generalization.

The Referent

The referent of "ethical generalization" is a collection of concepts and procedures as divergent as they are intriguing. To assent to the importance of ethical generalization one must grant that most ethical statements are based on ethical judgments. Further, one must grant that ethical generalization is not a new, mysterious type of generalization and not different from "inferential generalization", the process whereby a statement is obtained by reasoning from less general statements. Both processes usually, although not necessarily, have logical validity. That is, either generalization could be the conclusion of a logical argument or might involve a "hunch" or "guess" or "intuition" somewhere in the process of generalization. Ethical generalization is

the usual sort of inference whereby one infers a general concept or principle from particulars or whereby one extends the application of a concept or procedure and gains a general concept or principle from particulars. Ethical generalization is merely inferential generalization with ethical subject matter. This generalization, qua process or result, need not be logically valid or pragmatically correct.

The simplest form of ethical generalization is illustrated by the child-like questions: "If they can, why can't we?" or "If they don't have to, why do we?". Almost every parent or politician realizes that a satisfactory explanation of such a query may require at the very least a lengthly explanation and more likely a temporal postponment, both usually due to lack of either sufficient vocabulary or understanding. More obvious ethical generalizations would be: "If it is wrong to discriminate against this group then it is wrong to discriminate against that group"; or "If violence was immoral in 1955 then it's immoral now"; or "If the death penalty is wrong for one country then it's wrong for all countries"; or "If one culture is to be granted ethical autonomy then all cultures should be allowed this same consideration". In these examples the three primary factors of ethical generalization are more explicit than in the simple child-like examples. First, it is apparent the speaker is generalizing; second, the statements are more obviously concerned with value judg-

ments; third, a complete explication of the statements will require consideration of obligation. These three factors are *conditiones sine qua non* of ethical generalization.

To allow an easier examination of these primary factors a more formal expression of the argument should be considered: If everyone were to do x the consequences would be undesirable, therefore no one ought to do x;[1] or it might also be stated in the converse form: The consequences of no one doing x would be undesirable, therefore everyone ought to do x.[2] In these formal expressions the primary factors of ethical generalization are most explicit.

Primary Factors: Generalization

Although generalization is obviously a necessary constituent of ethical generalization it is not always easy to determine the presence or absence of this factor in a particular example. This general problem of expression is amplified here because ethical generalization is also characterized by a phenomenon I shall call inverse obviousness: the

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[1]By "undesirable" I refer generally to any consequent which would be unwelcome to the majority of the agent's peers, whether they be of a cultural group, a religious sect, an economic class, a leisurely club, a fraternal organization, and so on. Any specific, limiting, qualities assigned to "undesirable" would disallow this general use.

[2]These paraphrase M. G. Singer, *Generalization in Ethics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 4. The apparent fallaciousness of these transitions will be discussed in the third problem of generalization, p. 27.

simpler the example, the less explicit the generalization. It is unlikely, for example, that many people would observe the presence of generalization in the above child-like questions. The query "If they can, why can't we?" seems to be only a direct question asking for an explanation of apparent difference in permission to engage in some activity. The issue is literally between "they" and "we", not "they" and 'others like them'. But the latter formulation is the ultimate basis for the question: whatever "they" are allowed should (via generalization) be allowed to 'others like them', viz. "we". The particular reasons which might be given to support this conclusion would differ with the situation, but the reasons would probably reduce to some expression of 'equals should be treated as equals', showing along the way that there were no significant differences between "they" and "we" as concerns this permissible action. Here the presence of generalization was masked by the simplicity of the expression. Only the full semantical explication of the expression clearly shows generalization to be entailed.

Although most people would probably fail to note the generalization in the child-like example (If they can . ...), very few people would fail to recognize the generalization in the formal example (If everyone were to do x . . .). Whether or not a reader accepted the transition from "if everyone did" to "no one ought to do", he would at least be aware that the formal expression required this transition; the simpler for-

mulations would mask this transition. Inverse obviousness becomes a problem of greater magnitude when an ethical generalization is more simply formulated. Unfortunately many common applications of ethical generalization are expressed simply, e.g. "Should I help that accident victim?" masks "if no one were to help accident victims the result would be undesirable, therefore everyone ought to help accident victims". The identification of this implicit generalization is not meant to exhaust the decision-making process of the individual. It is meant to show that ethical generalization is very often obscured by simple expression.

A second problem of generalization is the semantic explication of "ethical generalization". Just what does it mean to generalize in ethics? Does this refer to an attempt to identify explicit criteria for ethical generalization, and if so, will these criteria differ markedly from other criteria for other sorts of generalization or other ethical arguments (e.g. non-ethical generalization or an argument for the purported "naturalistic" basis for ethics)? Or does "ethical generalization" refer to a certain simple type of adjudication by ordinary understanding[3], after all relevant factors have been

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[3]By "ordinary understanding" I mean the criteria for understanding are semantical rather than "formal understanding" where the criteria are syntactical. Ordinary understanding is obtained from the meaning of the words rather than by the formal characteristics and arrangements of the symbols of expression in abstraction from their meaning.

ascertained, for example using a criterion of utility? A working definition of ethical generalization would be: the process of arriving at a reasoned ethical formulation which was based on formulations of a less-general scope of application. Not all of the "basic" formulations need to be ethical; but the final decision, action, statement, or judgment must have ethical consequences. For example, the correlation of data about the activities of the members of a political organization might precede a reasoned judgment that the activities of this group should be condoned or condemned. The final formulation might be: "If c is a member of q, then he shall not be allowed to do f." This general judgment would be based on less-general statements about individual members.

A third problem of generalization is that a meaningful application of either the formal or the child-like example requires acceptance of the implicit "generalization principle" if the formulations are not to appear fallacious: 'What is right (or wrong) for one person must be right (or wrong) for any similar person in similar circumstances.'[4] The generalization principle functions for ethics analogously to the way 'the principle of the uniformity of nature' functions for arguments about nature. There we assume natural processes will continue to function as they have in the past unless a natural reason should occur for their disruption. Here we

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[4]Paraphrase of Singer, op. cit., Chapter Two.

assume an analogous situation the moral realm, viz. that "What is right (or wrong) for one person must be right (or wrong) for any similar person in relevantly similar circumstances."[5] Unless a natural or moral reason is given to explain an exception, one expects natural and moral judgments to occur according to "usual", natural and moral processes, i.e. within the limits of "usual" variation.[6]

The use of this principle mediates the formulations of the generalization argument. This allows the formulations to be justified regardless of their apparent fallaciousness. That is, the transition from "some" to "all", from "if everyone were to do x" to "no one ought to do x", and from "no one doing x" to "everyone ought to do x" surely seem fallacious.

> But there is actualy no fallacy involved in the generalization argument, though there may be in particular applications of it. For it is not always a fallacy to argue from "some" to "all", and the belief that it is always fallacious is merely a prejudice arising out of a preoccupation with certain types of statements. It is a fact of logic that if any one argument of a certain form is invalid then all arguments of that form are invalid, and this is the principle underlying the use of counter-examples. Yet it involves an inference from "some" to "all".[7]

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[5] Ibid., p. 19.

[6] The term "usual" is not defined as this would require a particular situation and its generality would then be lost.

[7] Ibid., p. 5.

Singer continues to say that the inferences in the generalization argument are mediated, and therefore qualified, by the generalization principle.

Perhaps it is too simple for us to expect 'similar conditions to result in similar events' in both the natural and the ethical realms; perhaps we are, as Hume suggests, more creatures of habit than we recognize. We expect natural processes to continue as before, we expect our sun to be brilliant and warm rather than dark and cold, and we expect the human body to have certain characteristics. Similarly, we expect (emotionally as well as epistemologically) moral processes to continue as before, however described or understood.

One chief difference between the constancy of natural versus moral processes is that one does not feel as knowledgeable about moral processes, and so is less likely to recognize any change in the moral processes. For example, Peirce's "pathetic fallacy": if we observe someone crying in a normal (non-theatrical) situation we assume the person is suffering some distress, granting that it may be positive (e.g. joy) or negative (e.g. sorrow). If we observe someone in a rage we assume there is a cause for his unreasonable condition, regardless of the normal or abnormal origin of the cause. So-called "normal" people are expected to have so-called "normal" reasons for their activities, moral or otherwise.

Perhaps the motivations for past religious wars would not now be sanctioned, but presumably there were rational motivations for the participants. If the generalization principle is valid we also assume that if these motivations were judged wrong and unreasonable then any relevantly similar person in a relevantly similar situation repeating the same decision would also be judged wrong and unreasonable.

Once the positive form of the generalization principle is accepted, the negative form will also be acceptable: 'What is wrong for one person must be wrong for everyone if there is no reason to the contrary'.[8] The relevant factor is the judgment involved. Whether the expression of this is morally positive or negative does not affect the principle.

A further obscurity is included in the generalization principle as stated above. Namely "right" and "wrong" should be understood to be applied differently if someone is an agent or a patient. When the term "right for" is used in the generalization principle it is to be understood in the following two senses: (1) "It is right for A to act in a certain way if and only if it is right for anyone similar to A to act in that way in similar circumstances" and (2) "It is right for A to be treated in a certain way if and only if it would be right for anyone similar to A to be treated in that way in

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[8] Ibid., p. 31.

similar circumstances."[9] If both senses are understood to be implied by the generalization principle there should be no ambiguity with respect to the referent of "right for".

An additional clarification of a simple, but important, nature should also be understood here. When attempting to give grounds for a moral decision or action one must distinguish between a reason properly called and a "reason" in the sense of an explanation. As Singer paraphrases Sidgwick: "A reason in one case is a reason in all cases--or else it is not a reason at all."[10] A proper reason will be a universal explanation serving as a justification, not an explanation reporting a personal basis for an action; e.g. the difference between "because he was morally irresponsible" and "because he wore a full beard". Someone may offer a "reason" for an eccentricity, say shooting all white males over sixty who wear boots; but this would be an explanation, not a justification properly called. There is neither validation nor vindication in such a case. Or one may believe man has original sin because his telephone never rings. This is not merely a bad reason for belief, it is no reason; although it may be a motive of great strength.

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[9] Ibid., p. 15.

[10] Ibid., p. 28.

What might possibly be a fourth problem of generalization is intentionally avoided. Assuming that specific criteria may be determined for generalization, the possible problem would involve questioning "the criteria of the criteria". That is, one could question whether the criteria for generalization should be based on pleasure, knowledge, verifiability, efficiency, utility, or some other consideration. This concern could initiate the proliferation of higher order considerations, namely "meta-ethics". Meta-ethics is here understood to refer to attempts to answer questions "about" ethics. For example, if ethics is concerned with "What is Justice?" then meta-ethics would be concerned with the meaning of (or criteria for) justice. Possibly still higher order considerations would then be concerned with the meaning of (or criteria for) the meaning of (or criteria for) justice, and so on. Instead of this possible proliferation of higher order questions this thesis will merely distinguish between "meta-ethics" (also called "ethical theory" or "second-order" ethics) understood to be concerned with logical, epistemological, ontological, and semantical statements of a higher order and "ethics" (or "normative ethics") a first-order investigation of ethical judgment proper, i.e. actual, practical judgments of value or obligation.

Primary Factors: Valuation and Obligation

The second primary factor of ethical generalization (that valuation is necessarily involved) will not always be obvious. Explicitly stated: all ethical generalizations are ultimately based on valuational judgments of either a prescriptive or descriptive nature, viz. judgments of obligation or value. The primary reason for this is the nature of the content of normative ethics. This field is generally understood to be concerned either with judgments of obligation or judgments of value; that is, concerned with the moral assessment of persons, motives, and states of affairs (value) or the assessment of actions (obligation). No first-order ethical decision or action can be prescribed or described in a non-valuational manner, i.e. without judgment. Only non-ethical actions are susceptible of completely non-valuational description, e.g. brushing one's teeth. Since all particular prescriptions or descriptions are ultimately based on either valuation or obligation every proposition generalized from them will retain this characteristic.

That this is the case may be shown by an analysis of any ethical generalization. An exposition of the meaning (as distinguished from the mere statement) of an ethical generalization will require assessment in terms of validation or vindication. This in turn will require the component of value or obligation (as shown in the first chapter). This is an unavoid-

able feature of normative ethics. "Thou shalt not kill" is an imperative statement of obvious obligatory generalization which will be assessed in terms of vindication when its meaning is fully explained. Even though these statements themselves may not be valuational or obligatory, an exposition of their meaning will eventually require assessment in terms of value or obligation. This is dictated by the meaning of normative terms used in first-order ethical expression.

Another reason supporting the contention that all ethical generalizations are based on judgments of value or obligation is provided by generalization. To generalize is to extend either the direction or scope of a proposition, i.e. to include a greater number of the same type of things within a class or to widen the class boundaries to include types previously excluded. To generalize an ethical proposition is to extend an ethical proposition in the same manner, i.e. to judge additional formulations and actions "good" or "bad" by the same criteria or to change the criteria to included formulations and actions previously excluded as morally irrelevant.

In any case, since the process of generalization merely extends (without otherwise changing) the type of statement, these extentions of propositions will also be based on ethical judgment. In some instances this requirement will be obvious, e.g. the formal statement of ethical generalization. Other

examples might require some rephrasing to make this factor explicit. For example, "x should not be done because there is no precedent for such action" probably means "x has not (yet) been judged correct or beneficial or warrented, therefore it should not be done'. And this implies that 'if everyone engaged in unprecedented (i.e. unjudged) action the result would be undesirable. And this implies that no new (different) behavior is desirable.

Required Assumptions

Three assumptions are required if ethical generalization is to be practical. Wherever these are problematic ethical generalization will also be problematic. They are first, that the consequences of everyone's acting in a certain fashion would be undesirable; second, that similarity of person and situation may be ascertained; and third, that an understanding of ethical generalization and the generalization principle requires a sympathetic view of what has been called 'the contextual basis of ethics'.[11]

The first assumption concerns the generalization argument, the second concerns the generalization principle, and the third concerns both. Judging the correctness of these assumptions requires the use of second-order ethics (viz. justification) and other relevant principles of psychology,

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[11]The first two assumptions are dealt with by Singer, op. cit., Chapter Two, pp. 13-33.

sociology, anthropology, and the like. Some problems associated with these assumptions will be considered in the following chapters.

The third assumption is more general. In brief it is the belief that the proper adjudication of an act as right or wrong, or a decision as correct or incorrect requires a context. That is, knowledge is required of all relevant external and internal circumstances contributing to a moral decision or judgment. As indicated above, this is a necessary factor of first-order ethics. If there were no context then one would be dealing with ethical theory. A "general solution" is no solution in normative ethics; although this does not deny the beneficial role played by theoretical ethical formulations. Nor is this to claim that a specific hypothetical situation is not amenable to a specific hypothetical solution. Such procedure is entirely feasible and in practice is invoked whenever someone questions a moral solution with "I wonder if I should . . .".

Also at this point should be mentioned a related contention of this thesis, that first-order ethical formulations are not necessary formulations and necessary formulations are not first-order ethical formulations. My chief reason for this contention is the nature of first-order formulations. Actual (as opposed to theoretical) judgments of value or obligation cannot be necessary, because they are not universal.

Stated in terms of the previous distinction between formal and ordinary understanding: if a statement is necessary its truth is decided by its symbols alone, i.e. its truth is determined solely by its syntax; if a statement is contingent its truth is dependent on the meanings of its terms. Ethical truth is contingent and semantical, e.g. the usual "What do you mean by x?" where "x" is a valuational term such as "bad" or "right". This preclusion of necessity will not be the case for higher order (theoretical) ethical formulations. There may be necessity in some particular higher order criteria used to adjudicate first-order decisions or actions.

Failure to recognize this lack of necessity in first-order ethical propositions has been a source of confusion in the analysis, as well as in the application, of ethical generalization. This simple distinction seems to be ignored or unheeded in many discussions of ethical propositions. Recognition of this distinction might easily encourage the examination of related methodological premises, e.g. can <u>any</u> method provide necessary or sufficient criteria for ethical judgment?

Limitations

Are there limits to ethical generalization? If so, are the limitations due to ethical factors or due to the process of generalization? And how may they be identified in either

case? Assuming ethical generalization is limited might it be due to the inability of a language to adequately express (semantically or syntactically) concepts or relations; or might it be due to a deficiency, in quality or quantity, of usable information; or might it be due to lack of adequate procedures of justification? If the first, then one is speaking of "expressive limitation"; rather than the second, "factual limitation"; or the third, "justificatory limitation". All three types of limitation will be examined because any of them may limit ethical generalization.

Before examining these limitations it should first be mentioned that once again the possibility of higher order difficulties of applicability arise, namely, how does one determine the criteria for limitation? This possible consideration is beyond the immediate concern of this thesis so the possible difficulties are excluded. In addition to this reason for excluding such a lengthy regression to continually higher order criteria I might also add the practical consideration that eventually the analysis must proceed. Second order investigation of criteria is at least interesting and often exciting, but this is not the entire realm of ethics. There is more to ethics than the (necessary) study of the logic and language of moral criticism.

Expressive limitation is common in English communication. The semantical terms and syntactical rules are often

unclear, severely limiting our unambiguous transmission of knowledge. We often have information which cannot be properly or efficiently conveyed in a language. This type of limitation is especially severe for the process of generalization, chiefly where terms of value are involved. For example, the semantical ambiguity of "good" has always been notorious. Other occurances are "best", "right", "beautiful", or when one attempts to be specific about concepts or relations of value, e.g. "Does 'can' imply 'ought'?" or "What is the meaning of 'justice'?" In addition there has recently been some dispute concerning whether there is an unbridgeable logical hiatus between statements of fact and statements of value.

Expressive limitation is not exclusive to traditional philosophical subjects as anyone can attest who has made an effort to express his thoughts on "love" or "hate" or the relation between the two; not to mention mystical or theological concepts. Hopefully sufficient improvement in methods of ethical investigation, including vocabulary, will parallel the predicted improvement in methods of expression. At the present English is not a satisfactory medium for unambigious expression of valuation. In short, Bacon's Idol of the Market Place is especially applicable to English valuational words and, in turn, ethical generalizations. Although the degree of ambiguity will vary for specific concepts and

relations, at the present all valuational terms seem affected to some extent. This would therefore be one area where further attention is required, especially for the more subjective or emotional concepts and relations.

Factual limitation affects different kinds of generalization differently. Usually this limitation is observed in the inadequate accumulation of empirical data. These are data which might provide an empirical basis for generalization if they could be accumulated in significant and pertinent amounts. Generalization of scientific formulations, in most instances, will be less affected by this limitation because significant scientific data can be more easily accumulated. This is probably due to the different attitudes toward the types of investigation. Accumulation of scientific data proceeds at an exponential pace while empirical investigation of ethics is just beginning with the newly recognized analogies (via cybernetics) between machine systems control and human systems control. Yet repeated failure to collect empirical data for scientific investigation is not viewed with the same discouraged attitude that failure incurs in the attempted collection of empirical data for ethical investigation. For example, the recent quest for certain predicted high energy nuclear particles was continued through many months of failure without diminished optimism, while various attempts at programmed human learning bring dis-

paraging comments like "how inhuman" or "ridiculous" or "what a waste". The crippling difference is not so much the results but rather the attitude. Bona fide empirical research is praised while less certain, less explicit realms of investigation, viz. ethics, are cautiously examined with a critical eye.

For both the scientific and the ethical fields this limitation occurs where one may have some usable information but not a sufficient quantity, or where one may have a great quantity of information which is of an unusable quality, or where one may be unable to obtain any meaningful information. In any of these situations the resultant ethical formulations could not be empirically supported nor could a conclusive generalization be made because there would not be assurance of a certain (or even probable) basis for decision. For example, one may suspect a certain psychological disposition to be the chief motivation for membership in a certain group (say as measured on the F (facist) scale), but enough usable data cannot be obtained to make a significant generalization. Or perhaps there is a sufficient quantity of information but it is unusable; that is, it is suspect, is not consistent, nor of regular variation.

At the present, factual limitation is adversely affecting ethical investigation. As I understand the situation this is chiefly due to the legacy of the logical positivists and

their early attempts to clarify the ultimate empirical basis of ethics. To date the effect of this activity has been chiefly negative, but it has catalyzed a more thorough examination of language. But there is a danger in becoming too thorough. Language is perhaps our most useful communicative tool, but emphasis on linguistic research must be balanced by other aspects of ethical formulation. My view here is identical with that expressed by Edel: "Important as the study of language and the analysis of linguistic uses undoubtedly is, in the last analysis language is servant not master, and men's conceptions of fact and men's actual valuations call the tune."[12]

Justificatory limitation may occur in either of two ways. First, there may not be sufficient, or any, supporting reasons (logical or practical) for generalization. Second, there may be reasons which are neither sufficient nor necessary in a relevant fashion. In either of these instances generalization is limited for lack of adequate justification. For example, one may wish to justify the actions of a specific group of individuals engaged in some activity not condoned by the majority of their society but which, it is claimed, has an ultimate ethical benefit; perhaps a needed change in societal attitude. Very likely the group would justify their

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[12]Edel, op. cit., p. 84.

actions by some reasons. But just as likely, if they are in a minority, these proferred reasons will either not be accepted as logical (the projected end is rejected on logical grounds) or they will not be judged practical (the projected end is rejected as impractical). Further, the reasons given by the group to justify their actions may not be accepted as sufficient (e.g. the group has some, but not enough, rationale for their activities) or necessary (e.g. the present social order may be changed through more usual, less radical, means).

Justificatory limitation prevents confident generalization by indicating a lack of sufficient and necessary procedures for validation and vindication. It is chiefly in this area of limitation that the recommendations of the final chapter will hopefully have their greatest effect.

III. ETHICAL JUSTIFICATION AND THE ETHICAL GENERALIZATION ARGUMENT

This chapter examines the application of justification to particular ethical generalizations considered as both second-order hypotheses and abstractions and as first-order decisions. This will expose the full nature of ethical generalization as well as the strengths and weaknesses of attempting to justify this form of ethical argument. I do not intend to solve all the difficulties which this analysis might expose. I do expect to locate the major theoretical and practical difficulties of justifying ethical generalization. The final chapter will suggest methodological boundaries and directions for the analytical pursuit of ethical generalization.

My reasons for separating the examinations of the theoretical and the practical formulations of ethical generalization are as follows. First, I understand the distinctions between first-order and second-order considerations of any ethical formulation to be requisite for greater clarity of analytical thought. Second, I believe this distinction will allow greater precision of expression and hence more competent criticism of ethical formulations and a more meaningful synthesis. Third, I am convinced this

distinction is, in most cases, real and normal--not a sophism.

One simple question will unite the first two chapters: Can ethical generalizations be justified? To answer this, more explicit questions become immediately relevant: May hypothetical formulations, or abstracted formulations, or practical formulations of ethical generalization be justified; and if so, under what conditions? What kind and quantity of information is required to justify (or demonstrate lack of justification for) an ethical generalization? Can an objective distinction be made between those ethical generalizations which are justifiable and those which are not?

To answer these questions I shall first examine the two theoretical and then the practical, formulations of ethical generalization. This procedure will identify the relevant criteria for the justification of theoretical ethical generalizations before proceeding to the more complex question of identifying the criteria for justifying practical ethical generalizations. The following examination will first determine if theoretical ethical generalizations can be 'proven' in the sense of "being in accord with the rules of deductive and inductive inference." Then the examination will determine if practical ethical generalizations can be 'shown correct' in the pragmatic sense.

The formal expressions of the generalization argument were as follows: (positive) "If everyone were to do x the consequences would be undesirable, therefore no one ought to do x"; and (negative) "The consequences of no one doing x would be undesirable, therefore everyone ought to do x." The task is now to determine if these may be validated if interpreted as theoretical formulations. This will require four examinations because I have distinguished a positive and a negative sense of both hypothetical ethical formulations (created without reference to actual, practical generalizations). I will try to isolate and examine any differences in the justificatory procedure for the four expressions. These will be expressed as differences among these four expressions in their "agreement with the rules of deductive and inductive inference" (the meaning of "validation" given earlier).

Justification of Theoretical Ethical Generalizations

Assuming the possibility of differences in the justificatory procedure for the four expressions I will now examine the primary question of the chapter: Can theoretical ethical generalization be justified? Phrased more explicitly, are the theoretical formulations of ethical generalization in accord with the rules of deductive and inductive inference? And further, will this accord or lack of accord be the same if the theoretical formulation

is considered hypothetical or practical? These questions are answered by examining each of the four possible theoretical formulations.

I will start with the positive sense of the theoretical ethical generalization presumed to have been abstracted from practical ethical generalizations. The statement is: "If everyone were to do x the consequences would be undesirable, therefore no one ought to do x." The inferences in this formulation are two: (1) "undesirable consequences" are inferable from "everyone doing x" and (2) "no one ought" is inferable from the "undesirable consequences".

These positive theoretical abstractions may be validated by the rules of inference. But ethical generalizations interpreted in this manner are like conclusions which can be shown to be valid or invalid, but which cannot be shown to be true or false. Because these generalizations are abstracted from other ethical formulations of a less-general nature the validity of the transition may be judged with the proper logical rules and "justified" (shown valid) or not. But it is not the content of the generalization which is then justified, but only the transition. If the symbols are translated correctly from the less- to the more-general statement then the statement is "justified". For example, if particular generalizations

claimed various types of undesirable consequences to be entailed by some collective action then one could correctly infer from these a more general statement about the undesirable consequent of the action. But although no logical error is incurred there would be no assurance of the actual (pragmatic) correctness of the inference because the conclusion would be only as "correct" as the particular statements.

The second inference ("no one ought" from "undesirable consequences") cannot be validated in the positive theoretical abstraction although it is subject to the logical rules. Even when the inference is considered an abstraction from other particular generalizations it cannot be validated because of the hypothetical nature of the premise. The particular statements which form the basis of the abstracted expression report only "If everyone does x the consequences are undesirable." It is not valid to infer from this abstraction the theoretical prescription that "no one ought". Perhaps additional information would allow such a prescription to be validated, e.g. where "everyone doing x" was known to be factual. But very likely factors additional to "everyone doing x" would be relevant to the production of the undesirable consequences, e.g. where the undesirable consequences would only occur in a specific environment. Assurance that all known relevant factors had

been expressed would have to precede validation,(e.g. the environmental condition) and although this procedure would seem feasible there is no method available which will provide this assurance for this transition. A prescriptive obligation (e.g. "no one ought") may indeed be correlated with judgments of value (e.g. "undesirable consequences") but there is no method available to justify such a correlation. The recommendations of the last chapter of this thesis recommend a type of analysis to deal, in part, with this difficulty. It would thus be an over-simplification to infer "no one ought" from just a prior judgement of "undesirable consequences" without factual correlations.

I now turn to the positive hypothetical sense of theoretical ethical justification. This expression has the same external form as the previous example, but is considered to be 'mere theory'; not an abstraction from practical generalizations, but the imaginative type of formulation produced to answer a hypothetical problem. Here neither inference from the statement can be either validated or invalidated. Both inferences would be merely hypothetical. It would be <u>assumed</u> that the undesirable consequences were inferable from "everyone doing x" and it would be <u>assumed</u> "no one ought" was inferable from the "undesirable consequences". Logic would not be relevant as a basis for justifying this type of generalization, although it would surely be employed in formulating the generalizations.

With the purely (or merely) hypothetical generalizations justification (and hence logic) is not an issue. The purpose of this type of generalization is, strictly speaking, to suggest or recommend or examine moral behavior which is admittedly only probable or predicted. The purpose of the hypothetical ethical generalizations is not to provide an "educated moral guess" nor to indicate a 'moral preferance in my view'. More direct ways are available to the honest moralist for such "suggestions".

The surprising element here is not the irrelevance of the justifying logic but the failure to recognize this irrelevance. Whenever a positive hypothetical ethical generalization is made there is no intention to validate--the author is merely expressing a possible resolution of an ethical situation. The same problem of verifying correlations mentioned just above, also exists here but to a greater degree. This expression of mere possibility, without correlation to factual events allows the formulation of an ethical generalization with a correct form and ridiculous prescription, e.g. If all men married only after their fiftieth birthday then the percentage of young people would be greatly diminished, therefore no one should marry after his fiftieth birthday. This also accounts for "pseudo-generalizations" which appear to be generalizations chiefly because of their "if . . . then . . . therefore" form. How-

ever, these are actually just prescriptions masked to appear as generalizations presumably to gain a facade of universality. Examples are: "If all guns are outlawed only outlaws will have guns, therefore no guns should be outlawed" or "If no teen-agers are given information on sexual behavior they will not be aware of the consequences of their behavior, therefore all teen-agers should be given such information."

The negative theoretical formulations of ethical generalization may now be analyzed together. The formal expression was: "If no one were to do x the consequences would be undesirable, therefore everyone should do x." The inferences to be examined in this formulation are: (1) "undesirable consequences" are inferrable from "no one doing x" and (2) "everyone should do x" is inferable from the "undesirable consequences". Both these inferences have the same logical relations as their positive counterparts. That is, the first inference may be validated (although not assured of correctness); the second inference is not subject to validation.

If the negative generalizations are considered as abstractions the first inference is as valid or invalid as the particular generalizations from which it is abstracted. For instance, where (1) "if citizens do not enforce their laws the situation is undesirable" and (2) "if law enforce-

ment agencies do not enforce the laws the situation is undesirable" and (3) "if children do not enforce the laws the situation is undesirable" allows the generalization "if no one enforces laws the situation is undesirable." This generalization is valid if all the particular formulations are valid and if no relevant cause is excluded; but it is invalid if the particular parts are invalid or if a relevant cause is not included.

If the generalization is a negative abstract generalization the second inference is logically valid; as in the positive abstract generalization. Both of the negative abstract inferences will be less susceptible of validation than the similar inferences in the particular formulations because in the particular formulations one can examine the empirical (pragmatic) results or their absence. Similarly, if the generalization is a hypothetical theoretical generalization then logical inference must once again be judged to be inapplicable. Neither "inference" is meant in a logical sense in these generalizations. Their simple, logical-sounding forms unintentionally create the aura of validity for the average man, much as a politician's emphasized speaking creates an aura of authority. For example, "If no one were to help lower income city-dwellers they would eventually affect the entire city (via disease, riots, strikes, and the

like), therefore everyone should help these people." I think it is obvious this is an over-simplification at best and an illogical inference at least.

Differences between these four expressions and their accord or lack of accord, with the inferential rules have now been shown. Such differences of accord would have seemed precluded because of the stability of the rules of inference. It would have seemed the four theoretical formulations all should have agreed or not agreed en bloc with these rules (however understood). This collective judgment is erroneous because of differences in the origins of the two types of formulations. If the origin of the formal expressions of the generalization argument is construed as hypothetical then the question of the accord with the rules will be viewed chiefly as a syntactical activity, i.e. do the words (symbols) accord with the inferential rules? However, if the origin of the formal expression of the generalization argument is construed to be abstraction from actual ethical formulations then the question of the accord with the rules will be viewed as a semantical activity, i.e. does the meaning accord with the inferential rules? These differences will exist for both the positive and negative formulations of each of the two interpretations of the formal expression.

There is certainly a possibility of different answers

to the question of justifying these theoretical expressions depending on the interpretations given the function of the rules--adequate expression of symbolization or meaning. Some statements will be subject to syntactical but not semantical accord, e.g. moral strictures poetically expressed. Other statements will be subject to semantical but not syntactical accord, e.g. a cartoon or pun based on some moral principle.

Another reason supporting the possibility of different judgments of accord is that rules of inference require interpretation and are subject to disagreement, viz. the question of the necessity of the rule of the excluded middle. In view of these challenges to the traditional interpretations of the rules of inference it is not unrealistic to recognize the possibility of differences in the judgments of the question of accord between the inferential rules and an ethical generalization.

Justification of Practical Ethical Generalizations

I now turn to the more complex question of the justification of actual, practical formulations of ethical generalizations. This requires the examination of criteria different from those used to evaluate the theoretical formulations. The question is now whether practical ethical generalizations may be vindicated or 'shown correct'. The criteria are no longer rules of inference but are now

"intentions or purposes and empirical knowledge about ends-means relations", that is, the wide area of planned actions and their actual consequents. Because of this difference in criteria the method of justification for practical ethical generalizations is quite different from the justification of theoretical ethical generalizations. The criteria for vindication are partly more vague and partly more certain than the criteria of validation. The certainty is in the reference to "empirical or practical knowledge" and the vagueness appears in the "intentions and purposes". Yet these criteria of vindication, whatever their difficulties, will be suited to the justification of practical generalizations. In addition, the criteria for vindication avoid a possible over-emphasis of symbolic expression which might result from using the logical criteria.

To begin the practical ethical generalizations: If every capable person were to procreate, the results would be undesirable (in terms of population), therefore no one should procreate. Here the first part of the generalization is only a matter of correlating birth and fatality rates with practical consequents. If the population were increased greatly there should be increased food, housing, and the like in order to maintain life at the same level. If everyone who is capable were to procreate with the predicted results, there would arise the undesirable situation of overpopulation.

Thus the criteria are able to vindicate (show correct) the first part of the generalization.

However, the prescription cannot be shown correct for two reasons. First, the practical considerations show it would lead not only to the retardation of a population explosion but to the extinction of the population. This is rather obvious from the further application of the same criteria. It is a matter of empirical fact that if no new births occur and deaths continue, the eventual result is extinction. Second, a logical consideration is relevant here. As mentioned in Chapter Two (p. 28) it may be fallacious to argue from "everyone were to do x" to "no one ought to do x". The generalization principle must hold true if the fallaciousness is to be avoided. In the theoretical generalizations this is possible. In these practical generalizations the principle cannot be assumed; it must be pragmatically justified for each generalization.

This approach is required to vindicate any practical ethical generalization. The preceding example was analyzed without resort to the more vague criteria of "intentions and purposes". But a more complex example should be analyzed: "If everyone were to take the law in their own hands the situation would be undesirable, therefore no one should take the law into their own hands." This generalization is not

justifiable using the criteria given: First, the generalization principle would not be pragmatically justified (as Edel shows, for another purpose, in the quote on the bottom of page 76). There can be no universal judgment for this generalization. Thus the generalization is logically fallacious. Second, the "intentions" motivating the lawless action would be the same "intentions" motivating the lawful action, namely living an ordered (or perhaps "The Best") life. This is a probable motivating intention not only for the law-abiding citizen but for the criminal as well. Both wish an existence where they are protected from the malevolent desires of others and where they may gratify their desires. Because of customs and laws certain attempts to satisfy intentions are not acceptable within a given society. Thus a citizen must protect his private property in a manner which does not infringe on the legal rights of others, even if the others are engaged in criminal activity. Not even the first part of this generalization can be vindicated. More specifically there could easily be a conflict between personal and public interest in the matter of taking the law into one's own hands. If the action was done by a group, e.g. vigilantes, the analysis becomes even more complex. In some countries citizens are encouraged to detain or "arrest" a criminal suspect while other countries discourage private citizens from helping law

officers. But there is no way to show correct the judgment that an undesirable situation would result from everyone taking the law into their own hands. If those doing so were responsible members of a society acting in the interest of the society the result might be beneficial, say where a group of citizens decide to censor area publications on the basis of quality. But this same attitude presumably allowed the "justification" for genocide in Hitler's regime. The criteria of 'intentions and purposes and knowledge about ends-means relations' are not specific enough to vindicate the first portion of this example. These few examples indicate the complex analysis required to be clear about "intentions and purposes". The final chapter illustrates this with an example of Skinner's complex analysis of a simple verbal request (pp. 83 & 84).

The same lack of vindication would affect the prescriptive portion of the generalization. It is easy enough to imagine a practical situation where censorship is a "lesser evil", say where there is a danger of inciting to riot.

The criteria of "intentions or purposes and empirical or practical knowledge about ends-means relations" cannot vindicate either part of this ethical generalization. There are too many possible consequents which might result from everyone censoring at will. Too many unspecified factors would be relevant and prevent choosing one as the most likely

consequent. And, as the most likely result is not ascertainable, there is no possibility of vindication for either portion of the generalization.

It is interesting to note that a more extreme illustration might be vindicated by the criteria--say cheating one's government of tax money due it. In this situation the first part of the generalization could be vindicated ("if everyone were to cheat the government of finances due it the situation would be undesirable"), but not the prescription ("therefore everyone should desist from cheating the government of its funds"). It is obvious that a government requires funds for its operations and if it does not receive these funds an undesirable situation would result from the inability of the government to perform its functions. But this will not vindicate the prescription for all individuals, e.g. the bizarre case of an individual who viewed his tax evasion as providing employment for men to locate and prosecute his evasion.

A negative practical generalization which is unjustifiable should also be presented to allow an examination of the failure of the criteria to vindicate some generalizations of this type. This presentation will also allow a comparison of the failures of the positive and negative expressions in order to note any problems due to the positive or negative character of the generalization. For example: "If no one

were to make laws the situation would be undesirable, therefore everyone ought to make laws."

The first portion of this generalization would be justifiable by applying the criteria of "intentions and purposes". The intent of making laws is to provide order within a society and this is the usual result of making laws. But it is not justifiable to conclude that everyone ought to make laws. Our knowledge of ends-means relations shows that a small percentage of a societies' population is sufficient to make adequate laws for that society. However, it is clear the criteria cannot identify or predict the exact percentage of the population necessary to make laws and in this sense the criteria are limited. But although the criteria of vindication are not adequate for prescribing the exact degree or proportion or percentage of some activity they are often adequate to determine some practical limits (in the above illustration that far less than the entire population was required to make laws).

This failure of exact prediction on the part of the criteria due to lack of sufficient information is to be expected in most negative practical ethical generalizations. Positive practical ethical generalizations will also be subject to this lack of exact prediction. This is because ethical action entails judgment by a specific ethical system

(else it would not be ethical or unethical action). Further, this judgment will usually involve criteria which (except for certain fundamental rules or maxims) are not exact but which are more like proportions. For example, with respect to a given mode of behavior (e.g. the agent obtaining what is not his) there is a continuum of means for this "obtaining" which vary from "honest to dishonest" or "legal to illegal". Although a given method of "obtaining" may be judged, after the fact, to be "honest" or "legal", there cannot be exact prediction of these judgments for the agent.

"Weaknesses" or Limitations of Vindicating Criteria

Several weaknesses of the criteria for vindication appear in these brief analyses. The major types have been identified; more complex analyses would identify only more complex combinations of these weaknesses.

First, a major weakness for the theoretical formulations was observed in the (positive and negative) abstracted generalizations in that only the transition (to the more general formulation) could be justified. The inferential rules cannot be used to analyze the correctness of the generalization itself.

For the practical formulations the first weakness of the criteria was that the prescribed results of a generalization may be exceeded by further extension of the

same criterion (e.g. overpopulation). That is, application of the criterion (viz. people to food retio) will appear to vindicate the generalization up to a point, but further application of the same criterion may show the prescription to be incorrect.

The second weakness of the criteria for the practical formulations was the possibility that the specific criterion might have a dual function either to show the prescription correct or to show it incorrect.

A third weakness was that the situation might be too complex for clear analysis. Either a specific criterion could not be identified or too many criteria might be identified, with no way to choose the most fitting one. This would probably be partly due to problems of relativism, especially where two or more views of justification seem feasible.

A fourth weakness is that the criteria may adjudicate the correctness of a generalization but not be able to discern or preclude specific amounts, percentages (e.g. of those required to make laws) and the like.

These four weaknesses do not indicate that the justificatory criteria are useless or impractical. They are chiefly "weaknesses" only when not identified. They are easily mis-labeled as effects ("weaknesses") due to relativism, but if properly identified they would correctly

be viewed as limitations. Since the former is the most likely situation I have discussed them as weaknesses. I believe a more thorough analysis and a more careful attitude of moral investigation suggested in the last chapter will lead to their eventual recognition as limitations rather than weaknesses.

Strengths of Vindicating Criteria

Now that the "weaknesses" of the vindicating criteria have been pointed out I will try to show their strengths by examining formulations of generalization which are vindicated. A negative and a positive practical generalization will be examined to demonstrate the application of the criteria. The negative formulation is the most common expression of ethical generalization. The negative formulation is behind the common question: "What if everyone were to do that?"; inferring that "not everyone should do that" which *via* the generalization principle becomes "no one should do that". An illustration here would be: "If no one were to keep their promises the results would be undesirable, therefore everyone ought to keep their promises." The criteria can vindicate both portions of this expression assuming the generalization principle is valid. It is clear that false promises would lead to an undesirable situation of confusion. If a society assumes promise-keeping then a departure from this norm would be undesirable; the resultant

confusion, frustration, and anger would be incapacitating. Even the simple examples of promising a child a reward or promising another person some item of exchange or promising to meet another at a specified time and location are familiar enough to illustrate this point. Abjuring these promises would result in an undesirable situation which in the extreme instance, would create distrust and perhaps force people to do most things for themselves. Thus one of the major reasons for forming a society would be lost, namely the sharing of functions. One must take the time to catalogue his dependence on others during an average week in order to feel the importance of this possible consequent. City dwellers should be especially frightened at such a prospect.

The prescriptive part of this generalization may be vindicated by the criteria for the same reasons. Everyone ought to keep their promises to avoid the undesirable consequences resulting from no one keeping their promises. The more often promises are kept the more smoothly society functions and vice versa. Thus to obtain the maximum stability for a society the maximum number of members (everyone) ought to keep their promises.

A justifiable positive generalization would be: "If everyone were to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, of political affiliation the situation would be undesirable, therefore no one ought to discriminate on these bases."

Assuming the generalization principle valid both portions of this generalization may be justified (shown correct). Common knowledge shows the first portion correct. If there exists discrimination (positive or negative) on the basis of race, religion, or political affiliation the situation is eventually undesirable, e.g. racial discrimination except perhaps in a situation where such discrimination is expected and willingly condoned by all, e.g. where the democratic nominee for President of the United States shall be a Democrat. In other (unexpected or non-condoned) situations discrimination will eventually result in some undesirable consequents according to all proctical knowledge of such matters, e.g. housing sales, business employment, club membership, educational curriculum, and so on.

The prescription is also shown correct by common knowledge if the generalization principle is valid. That no one ought to discriminate on these bases is indeed correct where "what is right (or wrong) for one person must be right (or wrong) for any similar person in similar circumstances." The usual acceptance of the generalization principle by all the members of a society assures the validation of the prescription. Eventually the issue of discrimination, on this acceptance, seems to reduce to a formulation similar to The Golden Rule where assuming one does

not wish to be discriminated against then one should not discriminate against others. It is also common knowledge, however, that the generalization principle is often not accepted by those who "can afford" to ignore it for reasons of social, political, religious, economic, or racial "superiority", e.g. apartheid policies, "machine" politics, slavery, and so on. But where the generalization principle is held valid there will be no question of the applicability of the criteria to examine the validity of the prescription.

Two major strengths are observed in these analyses. The first strength of the practical formulations (positive and negative is that the criteria of vindication reduce to common knowledge. No special training nor analytical ability is necessary although it is helpful. The ideal attitude for this analysis will be recommended in the last chapter. Attainment of this attitude should be the first step to allow adequate moral analysis without special experience or training.

Second, the criteria are applicable to both portions of the practical generalizations (assuming the generalization principle is valid). Both the descriptive and the prescriptive portions of practical ethical generalizations are subject to the criteria of vindication. And further, vindication is necessary for all practical ethical generalization; their component parts cannot be (merely) assumed

as in the theoretical generalizations.

A third strength, not mentioned above, is the increasing progress in the ability to understand and apply "intentions and purposes and empirical or practical knowledge", the criteria of vindication. This is especially observable in the behaviorist researches within psychology and similar methods in related fields, (e.g. anthropology and sociology). Although present applications of these criteria are much less than universal, there has been increasing agreement on the applications of such criteria. Some of the advances will be illustrated in the last chapter.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND THE ETHICAL GENERALIZATION ARGUMENT

Numerous authors have stated that the criteria for moral evaluation do and should change. This chapter will accept and further this position for both moral judgment in general and the ethical generalization argument in particular. I do not intend to preclude specific criteria which may be identified for an ethical system if such be given adequate time for development. I do intend to reduce the importance of identifying such specific criteria because of their usually short-lived, although often brilliant, success, e.g. the early logical positivist formulations of the verification principle.

My concern in this chapter is to indicate the methodological directions and boundaries for this activity so that objective criteria may be identified for any specific moral evaluative technique and to view the ethical generalization argument in light of these methodological considerations. By surveying portions of three prior attempts to analyze moral justification I will present the elements I judge to be the most promising for this endeavor. Thus I believe further analysis of the moral realm will achieve the greatest amount of success if a method is used similar to Skinner's, if an

attitude is maintained similar to Toulmin's, and if ethical indeterminacy is reduced by a program similar to Edel's "valuational base". This recommendation does not imply a complex result. I believe a simple result will eventually be attained in the moral realm from such an advanced, complicated methodology. The eventual goal is to approach more closely a unity of moral concerns parallel to the metaphysical unity suggested by Einstein's field equation or the epistemological unity of Zen Buddhism.[1] The direction of ethical analysis indicated by these men is towards science (including an eventual science of language) and greater complexity. This is not to demand that the resultant conclusions of ethical analysis become more complex. Just as Aristotle is reported to have remarked that 'we must philosophize if only to avoid philosophizing' so also must our moral evaluation become more complex if only to avoid complexity.

This attitude and an awareness of the concomitant responsibilities was expressed many years previously by B.F. Skinner, a chief investigator of a scientific view of behavior:

> We have not wholly abandoned the traditional philosophy of human nature; at the same time we are far from adapting a scientific point of view without reservation . . . . If this

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[1]As explicated by Alan Watts; e.g. "This is It", This is and Other Essays (New York: Collier Books, 1967), pp. 17-58.

> were a theoretical issue only, we would have no cause for alarm; but theories affect practices. A scientific conception of human behavior dictates one practice, a philosophy of personal freedom another. Confusion in theory means confusion in practice. The present unhappy condition of the world may in large measure be traced to our vacillation . . . . We shall almost certainly remain ineffective in solving these problems [between nations] until we adopt a consistent point of view.[2]

Further, a similar view is expressed by Stephen Toulmin:

> It is for those who are expert in the natural sciences to discover the means of reducing the amount of misery in the world, and so to provide fresh channels for satisfaction and fulfilment: but the evidence of science remains evidence about what is practicable, and so about facts--what is or could be, not about what ought to be. It is in the hands of the moralist that possibility becomes policy, what can be done becomes what ought to be done.[3]

These investigators are joined in their views by A. Edel when he examines both the possible contributions and the limitations of four perspectives of human science: the biological, psychological, cultural and social, and the historical. Although he is examining ethical relativity rather than ethical generalization his comments are valuable for more general considerations within ethics. Through the examination of five types of moral rules combined with the analysis of the above perspectives he arrives at a suggestion for "a common ethic" utilizing a "valuational base" which would diminish ethical indeterminacy in a number of ways. As he summarizes:

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[2]B. F. Skinner, Science and Human Behavior (First Free Press Edition, 1965; Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1953), p. 9.

[3]Stephen Toulmin, Reason in Ethics (Cambridge: The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 223.

> All these ways of reducing indeterminacy showed that no a priori bars should be set up to the contributions that the several sciences can make to rendering ethical judgment more determinate, that the contributions so far are already considerable and significant, and that once the channels for ethical-scientific cooperation are cleared, considerable further advance may be hoped for.[4]

Toulmin's valuational base is an integrating concept to establish unity of the findings of present ethical analyses and provide a position from which to conduct further analyses. "It is a base because it acts as a standpoint for evaluation, providing moorings to which a morality may be fastened, and sailing-charts for its general course. It is valuational because it embodies major decisions of policy supported by an interlocking structure of human knowledge and human striving."[5] The valuational base will be a fusion of universal and local elements. The former are "the fundamental human needs, the perennial aspirations and strivings, and the discovered high values that are deeply grounded in these needs and aspirations."[6] The latter are "the central problems of the age including its central necessary conditions and special contingent elements (not necessarily values themselves) which may press heavily upon men's pursuit of values in the given age."[7]

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[4]Abraham Edel, op. cit., p. 295.

[5]Ibid., p. 297. [6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

These three authors indicate a promising direction for ethical analysis.[8] Next I shall present Skinner's model of behavorial analysis, Toulmin's attitude of the moralist, and Edel's description of the limitations of this type of analysis. The reader may then judge whether this combination is applicable to investigation of the moral realm in general and ethical generalization in particular.

Skinner's Model

Skinner's main concern is with control; specifically, control of the factors which do or may control human behavior. His material consists of casual and extensive observations of behavior, controlled field observations, clinical observation, and laboratory studies of human and sub-human behavior. The variables used to investigate this behavior include deprivation and satiation, emotion, aversion, avoidance, anxiety, and punishment. The Appendix (pp. 83-84) gives Skinner's analysis of a simple verbal behavior, viz. asking for a cigarette. Here Skinner shows how "a single verbal response is especially likely to be a function of more than one variable because it may be part of several different repertories."[9] This complex analysis of behavior seems to be required for

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[8]In addition, all three authors deal with common objections to their analyses: Skinner, op. cit., Chapter One and pp. 17-22; Edel, op.cit., Chapter Three; and Toulmin, Reason in Ethics, Part I.

[9]Skinner, op. cit., p. 210.

a thorough understanding of ethical judgment. This is why the more scientific (objective), multi-method analysis of ethics using numerous variables appears to yield a more thorough analysis than the classical but limited analysis of choosing one method which uses one pre-determined variable, e.g. hedonism and pleasure.

This recommendation of a Skinnerian analysis must be tempered, however, with the fact that a successful determination of causal operants does not necessarily provide the analyst with reasons for behavior. There is no assurance of a direct relation between causal operants and reasons for behavior in all analyses. This relation is more certain where the behavior is more common and less complex. But at the level of value judgment or the determination of moral decisions certainty has not been achieved.

Toulmin's Moralist

In his Reason in Ethics Toulmin provides a model of the moral analyst. He does not assume that everyone is or can become a competent moral analyst. His model is also in the direction of science yet he retains an awareness of limitations seldom implied and rarely admitted in most models of moral investigators. His program was to provide a methodological prpcedure for ethics in terms of the function of moral (versus scientific) judgment, the logic of moral reasoning,

and the relations between ethics and society. Toulmin produces his concept of the moralist while describing these changing concepts and identifying their stable constituents.

For Toulmin the moralist is someone with combined traits of the psychologist, the engineer, and the artist. These qualifications mark those who should be capable of assessing and directing the existing code we rely on for our moral formulations. Thus "the psychologist" in the moralist contributes an understanding of human nature; a knowledge of the ways people will propably act in various situations. "The engineer" in the moralist encompasses the practical view of applying knowledge and understanding both within the existing code and in new patterns of behavior, new rules of conduct, or new social institutions where necessary. "The artist" in the moralist allows him to forsee, to conceptualize the present and future needs and possibilities in the moral realm; he must be sufficiently sensitive to perceive situations requiring new solutions and to envisage the early start of these solutions. The moralist should view the practices of society not only for what they do, but also for what they could be made to do. Yet Toulmin includes a warning:

> But there is a danger in this kind of talk: the danger of suggesting that there is a superior class of persons, worthy of special respect, who are alone entitled to criticize the moral practices of society. In talking of the 'moralist', however, I have not been meaning to assume the existence of such a privileged class. The title of 'moralist' can be thought of as something to be earned, rather

> than as the name of a caste or profession. The notion is akin more to that of a 'citizen' than to that of a 'surgeon'--certainly it cannot be anybody's job to be a moralist. In fact, of course, social institutions develop to a great extent without the need for people with special vision: it is not the ideas of Great Men, but the refusal of ordinary people in their day-to-day behavior to conform to an out-of-date code which produces the changes required. But this is not to discredit my notion of a 'moralist': it is to say rather that we are all moralists in a limited way, and that this refusal to conform is often based on protest against the rule, whether or no one can see how a better rule could be introduced.[10]

Edel's Indeterminacy

Edel's analysis is similar to Toulmin's but Edel's concern is more specifically directed toward ethical relativity, namely its final reduction into "residual indeterminacy":

> We have seen that many avenues are open for further scientific investigation which may in time reduce the indeterminate zone even further [than the growing awareness of the biological, psychological, social, and historical structuring of human life]. But, of course, indeterminacy has not been completely eliminated, nor can it ever be.[11]
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> The characteristic feature of residual indeterminacy is that it is residual. That is, it is not tied to the core of ethical judgment, nor does it constitute its "essence"; it is only something left over.[12]

Edel accomplishes this reduction of ethical relativity by use of the valuational base and by an emphasis on what he terms "phase rules".[13] This type of rule was one of five types

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[10]Toulmin, op. cit., p. 179.

[11]Edel, op. cit., p.336.

[12]Ibid., p. 337.

[13]Ibid., pp. 46-48.

distinguished by Edel in his brief examination of the phenomenology of moral rules.[14] He distinguishes "must-rules", "always-rules", "for-the-most-part rules", "the complex singular situation", and the "break-always-with-regret rules" considered as phase rules.

> [By regarding] a break-only-with-regret rule as referring not directly to the results of moral calculation of a situation but to the process of reaching such results . . . [the rule] states an operational universal or rule of reckoning. What it states is that in every situation in which a moral reckoning is taking place, the killing aspect [for example] is to be regarded as negative (wrong). This is a universal statement. It does not guarantee that the outcome of the reckoning (one's duty in that situation) will be negative in the sense of excluding the act.[15]

Recognition of the phase rules reduces relativity and allows a truer formulation of the moral view of killing, viz. "most people wish neither to argue that every actual case of killing is unjustified, nor to deny there is some sense in which killing is wrong as a universal."[16] But the use of the phase rule (as above, "in every situation . . . ") allows one to retain the general "Killing is wrong" instead of slipping into the relative "Most killing is wrong". In a like manner other phase rules will result in other areas of moral concern.[17] In addition Edel believes the elaboration and

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[14] Ibid., pp. 42-50. [15] Ibid., p. 47. [16] Ibid.

[17] Edel examines general and specific values by use of phase rules and other ethical generalizations, e.g. obligations and tasks, strivings and aspirations, pleasure, and the evil of pain and frustration. Generalizations were "seen to be possible through phenomenal description and analysis which revealed common human feelings and attitudes in varying socio-cultural forms . . . . "; op. cit., p. 293.

and multiplication of theoretical tools for discovering generalizations and applying them in particular evaluations would also reduce indeterminacy.[18] Edel gives examples of the utilization of findings of contemporary psychology to analyze or discover an individual's values beyond his introspective account of them and the insistance on using an empirical analysis of the self in doctrines of egoism. But these activities must be done without "overlooking the possible development of human nature and possible changes of quality in the human situation."[19]

The valuational base then enters Edel's formulations as an integrative concept for the growing area of ethical determinacy resulting from "the variety of phase rules, the variety of tools for value analysis, and the several modes of relating the rules to the particular context of application."[20] Edel believes the formulation of a valuational base is by implication the responsibility of whoever may wish to use it. What must be done is "to locate the constituents of the bases and trace the particular pattern of their linkage."[21] Specifically this requires the identification and association of the four major constituents of the base: the two universal elements of (1) universal needs and (2) perennial aspirations

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[18] Ibid., p. 294. [19] Ibid., p. 296. [20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., p. 297.

and major goals , and the two local elements of (3) central necessary conditions and (4) critical contingent factors. Illustrations of the first are "survival, need for affectionate warmth, and so on."[22] The second is illustrated by "the provision of food", . . . "the love of beauty", and "the desire for friends", . . . and "the goal of growing into the particular language upon which communication with the group depends."[23] The third and fourth would be illustrated by industrialization and the threat of war.[24]

These elements are to be determined and their relations described to produce the valuational base. The ultimate validation of the valuational base will "be found in the lessons of the human sciences that human life on the various levels of investigation does exhibit some degree of systematic structure."[25]

Conclusion

What are the applications to and implications for the ethical generalization argument from a Skinnerian analysis, a Toulminian attitude, and an Edelian reduction? Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior would seem to be directly applicable to the ethical generalization argument and similar

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[22] Ibid., p. 299. [23] Ibid., p. 301. [24] Ibid., p. 303.

[25] Ibid., p. 306. This latter point is being demonstrated by B. F. Skinner and the behavorist approach.

analyses in non-verbal modes of behavior are strongly indicated to be applicable to the ethical generalization argument to some degree (e.g. overt group actions, ethical formulations of groups or committees and the like). The direct applicability would be shown by an analysis of the Socratic example of the request by an enraged friend to return a weapon loaned previously. Presumably this analysis would be more complex than Skinner's example of the request for a cigarette, but the chief difference would be in the subject matter. The cigarette example would be examined without moral judgments being actively discussed, while the Socratic example must examine moral judgments, e.g. "obligation".

The practicality of the behavorist method should be encouraged because once there is available a thorough method for analyzing verbal behavior the ethical generalization argument will be much more likely to be vindicated since its effect is chiefly dependent on the verbal mode of behavior. In addition, a successful analysis of verbal behavior would greatly reduce the present "weaknesses" of the vindicating criteria mentioned in chapter three.

Toulmin's attitude is also directly applicable to the ethical generalization argument. His characterizations of the moralist appear to be ideal qualifications for those attempting to locate or vindicate applications of the

ethical generalization argument. His emphasis on the classlessness of these psychological-engineerish-artist-like investigators of the moral realm who are aware that changes are produced not from 'the ideas of Great Men' but from "the refusal of ordinary people in their day-to-day behavior to conform to an out-of-date code"[26] seems especially accurate for our present populations. Toulmin's statements that "it cannot be anybody's job to be a moralist" and "we are all moralists in a limited way"[27] point to the required attitudes of a population for the acceptance of the ethical generalization argument.

The more traditional views of the moral realm ("ideas of Great Men") if emphasized, would detract from the otherwise more open hearing granted the ethical generalization argument. This is basically because the conditions presumed for traditional views are apparently different from conditions now prevalent in the world population. Some of these would be: (1) the tendency to irrationality (non-reason)as an acceptable mode of thought and action; (2) the revitalized ideals of world language, world government, world money and the like; (3) the recognition by

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[26]Toulmin, op. cit., p. 179.

[27]Ibid.

the "newly emergent countries" of their collective strengths and individual weaknesses; (4) the communication explosion and its unknown ability to gather and disseminate information at incredible speed, plus more subtle effects of media; (5) the continuing transportation revolution which enables people and things to be moved to even isolated locations with great speed and in almost original condition; (6) the future environmental revolution allowing community habitation of previously inhabitable regions and bringing almost total change to certain types of present communities, especially large cities.

Edel's reduction of ethical relativism is not directly applicable to the ethical generalization argument because it is not yet formulated for such a specific approach to ethical methodology. But there is a clear relevance of the complimentary nature of Edel's reduction and the use of the ethical generalization argument. Edel himself refers to the diminishing of ethical indeterminacy he has found by "establishing phase rules or other ethical generalizations."[28] Presumably the ethical generalization argument could be part of this reduction of ethical indeterminacy leading to his valuational base or perhaps some other "common ethic".

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[28]Edel, op. cit., p. 293.

These methodological suggestions present the direction (scientific) and the limitations (operational) of the further evaluation of the moral realm in general and the ethical generalization argument in particular. The final result (a common ethic) is not yet apparent, but the pre-conditions for such an ideal are now forming. These examinations also show the limitations of the present justifiable use of the ethical generalization argument and the lack of validated use for the hypothetical form of the argument. Yet neither the present limited vindication nor the partial lack of present validation is discouraging to the present or future moralist. These conditions are to be expected granting (1) the present relation of science and human behavior and (2) the failure of the moralist to accept and creatively develop the relation between science and human behavior.

APPENDIX

Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Episodes

Verbal behavior supplies many examples in which one person is said to have an effect upon another beyond the scope of the physical sciences. Words are said to "symbolize" or "express" ideas or meanings, which are then "communicated" to the listener. An alternative formulation would require too much space here, but a single example may suggest how this sort of social behavior may be brought within range of a natural science. Consider a simple episode in which A asks B for a cigarette and gets one. To account for the occurance and maintenance of this behavior we have to show that A provides adequate stimuli and reinforcemant for B and vice versa. A's response, "Give me a cigarette", would be quite ineffective in a purely mechanical environment. It has been conditioned by a verbal community which occasionally reinforces it in a particular way. A has long since formed a discrimination by virtue of which the response is not emitted in the absence of a member of that community. He has also probably formed more subtle discriminations in which he is more likely to respond in the presence of an "easy touch". B has either reinforced this response in the past or resembles someone who has. The first interchange between the two is in the direction of B to A: B is a discriminative stimulus in the presence of which A emits the verbal response. The second interchange is in the direction A to B: the response generates auditory stimuli acting upon B. If B is already disposed to give a cigarette to A--for example, if B is "anxious to please A" or "in love with A", the auditory pattern is a discriminative stimulus for the response of giving a cigarette. B does not offer cigarettes indiscriminately; he waits for a response from A as an occasion upon which a cigarette will be accepted. A's acceptance depends upon a condition of deprivation in which the receipt of a cigarette is reinforcing. This is also the condition in which A emits the response, "Give me a cigarette", and the contigency which comes to control B's behavior is thus established. The third interchange is A's receipt of the cigarette from B. This is the reinforcement of A's original response and completes our account of it.

If B is reinforced simply by evidence of the effect of the cigarette upon A, we may consider B's account closed also. But such behavior is more likely to remain a stable part of the culture if these evidences are made conspicuous. If A not only accepts the cigarette but also says, "Thank you," a fourth interchange takes place: the auditory stimulus is a conditioned reinforcer to B, and A produces it just because it is. B may in turn increase the likelihood of future "Thank you's" on the part of A by saying, "Not at all."

When B's behavior in responding to A's verbal response is already strong, we call A's response a "request." If B's behavior requires other conditions, we have to reclassify A's response. If "Give me a cigarette" is not only the occasion for a particular response but also a conditioned aversive stimulus from which B can escape only by complying, then A's response is a "demand." In this case, B's behavior is reinforced by a reduction in the threat generated by A's demand, and A's "Thank you" is mainly effective as a conspicuous indication that the threat has been reduced.

Even such a brief episode is surprisingly complex, but the four or five interchanges between A and B can all be specified in physical terms and can scarcely be ignored if we are to take such an analysis seriously. That the complete episode occupies only a few seconds does not excuse us from the responsibility of identifying and observing all its features.[29]

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[29]B. F. Skinner, Science and Human Behavior, (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 307-308.

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