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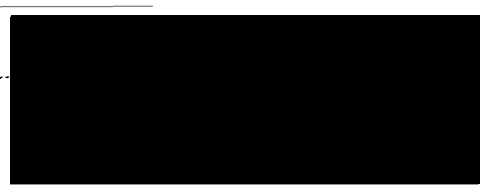
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JUDGMENTS OF INTRINSIC VALUE
AND CURRICULUM PLANNING: A CRITIQUE OF
J.P. WHITE'S ARGUMENT FOR A COMPULSORY CURRICULUM

by

H. Spencer Drysdale
B.A., Simon Fraser University (1978)

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (EDUCATION)
in the Faculty
of
Education

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JUDGEMENTS OF INTRINSIC VALUE AND CURRICULUM PLANNING:

A CRITIQUE OF J.P. WHITE'S ARGUMENT FOR A COMPULSORY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis critically evaluates and reconstructs J.P. White's argument for a compulsory curriculum. A compulsory curriculum, for White, is one structured by objectives educators are permitted to compel children to attain. Its justification involves establishing that the attainment of its objectives by pupils serves either their own good or the good of others. White's argument is concerned with establishing the former. It has two main steps. First, paying particular attention to R.S. Peters's transcendental argument, White criticizes attempts to establish objectively that some pursuits are intrinsically more valuable than others. He then argues that the intrinsic value of things is determined by what people want although it must be what they want when they are fully aware of their options and future priorities. White infers from this that it is very much in a child's own interest that educators seek to enlarge as much as possible his knowledge of the various things he might want for their own sake and encourage him to reflect on them, not only from the viewpoint of the present moment but his life as a whole.

In the first chapter of my thesis I explain what White means by a compulsory curriculum and outline what its justification involves, showing how it is different from the justification of compulsory schooling. In the second chapter I

outline and criticize White's argument. I argue that White misinterprets Peters's argument and offer a more adequate counter-argument. I object to the method White uses in arguing for his account of intrinsic value and show that it is not an account of intrinsic value but something more akin to value, all things considered. In the third chapter I reconstruct White's argument. Drawing on Richard Brandt's work on rational intrinsic desires, I provide a more adequate account of intrinsic value. I offer my account as an ontological view which explains what intrinsic value is and show that it meets to some degree the complex conditions of adequacy of such accounts. I then argue that White's objectives can be defended by establishing the intrinsic value of living one's life autonomously.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is offered as a contribution to the philosophical foundations of curriculum theory. It is a critical evaluation and reconstruction of J.P. White's argument for a compulsory curriculum.¹ A compulsory curriculum is one structured by objectives educators are permitted to compel children to attain. White's argument for the curriculum attempts to show that certain objectives are in fact the sort that permit compulsion. White claims that there are two varieties of these objectives:

. . . it would be right to constrain a child to learn such and such only if (a) he is likely to be harmed if he does not do so, or (b) other people are likely to be harmed.²

(b) indicates one basis of moral education (e.g. teaching children not to cause suffering to others) and White says very little about this. He is mainly interested in thinking through the implications of (a) which he says is logically more basic since "with (a) we shall be studying what it is for a person to be harmed, a notion which we must clearly understand before we go on to ask what it is for others to be harmed".³ White's argument for a compulsory curriculum, then, consists of an attempt to establish objectives the attainment of which serves the individual's good in such fundamental ways that educators are permitted to deprive the student of his liberty in the name of this attainment. His argument has two

main steps. First, paying particular attention to R.S. Peters's transcendental argument, White criticizes attempts to establish objectively that some pursuits are intrinsically more valuable than others: He then argues that the intrinsic value of things is determined by what people want, although it must be what they want when they are fully aware of their options and future priorities. White infers from this that it is very much in a child's interest that educators (1) seek to enlarge as far as possible his knowledge of the various things he might want for their own sake and (2) encourage him to reflect on them, not only from the viewpoint of the present moment but his life as a whole.

Before I proceed to the second chapter of this thesis which presents a critical analysis of White's argument and the third which reconstructs it, there is one preliminary point that should be made. (a) and (b), as White presents them, represent only a necessary (disjunctive) condition of the legitimacy of infringements of the child's liberty, and this, I think, is quite correct. There are other conditions besides the nature of the curriculum objectives (which constitute the point of the interference) that must be satisfied if infringements of the child's liberty are to be morally unobjectionable. First of all, the form of compulsion employed must be morally acceptable; compulsion should not, for example, involve the use of force or threats or the infliction of pain or injury. Secondly, educators must have good reason to believe that infringements of the child's liberty are necessary if the child

is to attain the curriculum objective. No matter how worthwhile the objective involved might be, it does not justify gratuitous compulsion. Educators are committed to investigating, developing, and employing a number of ways in which they might noncompulsively engage children in activities that they must successfully complete if they are to attain the curriculum objectives which satisfy (a) and (b); educators might, for example, explore various forms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, attempt to schedule activities in a more flexible manner, etc.

Consequently, in showing that certain curriculum objectives satisfy (a), White is not providing a justification for the use of compulsion in schools. All he indicates is something about the kind of curriculum that must be implemented in compulsory schools as a necessary condition of their moral legitimacy. So although it is true that if a school's use of compulsion is legitimate, then the activities it implements must be directed toward the attainment of objectives which satisfy (a) or (b), it does not follow that if a school implements a curriculum that satisfies (a) and (b), then its use of compulsion is legitimate - it may gratuitously employ compulsory measures which take morally objectionable forms.

The justification of any compulsory institution or system of institutions must also show, then, that the forms of compulsion such institutions employ are legitimate and that their use is necessary - and the latter is extremely difficult to show. It

requires that one consider a host of empirical factors such as the abilities and interests of the students, the motivational skills of the teachers, the social and financial feasibility of changing present arrangements in the direction of less compulsion, etc. In addition, a moral problem must also be considered here: to what extent can we reasonably and legitimately demand that educators, curriculum planners, teachers, etc., seek noncompulsory ways of engaging children in curriculum activities? Should compulsion only be used as a last resort? What counts as a "last resort", exactly? Thus, in justifying compulsory schooling, much more is at issue than determining what curricular requirements might be appropriate for compulsory schools, and one should keep in mind that White's argument, if correct, provides a justification of a compulsory curriculum, that is, the sort of curriculum demanded of compulsory schools, not of the actual practice of compulsory schooling in Britain, Canada, or anywhere else.

II. CRITIQUE

If White is to determine what objectives serve the individual's good, he must, as he well realizes, have some coherent conception of the individual's good:

It appears that the fundamental problem which now confronts us is no less than the traditional philosophical problem of the Good for Man. Until we know what is good for a person, we cannot know what is bad or harmful to him, and so we have no criteria for deciding when we are justified in restricting his liberty.⁴

White then draws the familiar distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value and notes the corollary that claims about extrinsic goodness presuppose claims about intrinsic goodness (as something is good extrinsically in virtue of being a means to something that is intrinsically good). Thus, the logically basic problem is that of the justification of claims about intrinsic goodness.

Before outlining his approach to the problem, however, White considers a particular substantive claim concerning the intrinsic worth of activities which is of considerable importance for the curricular theory he is trying to advance. The claim is that all men who want to pursue the most worthwhile activities in life must be committed, on pain of irrationality, to theoretical and aesthetic pursuits rather than games or simple pleasures such as pinball or lying in the sun. How, White asks, can one advance such a claim and avoid the charge of arbitrariness? After registering certain dissatis-

factions with the past, attempts of Mill and Moore to answer this question, White goes on to note that there is a recently developed approach to this problem which bears considerable promise: the use of a Kantian or "transcendental" type of argument which is concerned with presuppositions. One of these arguments, that of R.S. Peters, has exercised considerable influence on educational theorists, and White considers it in some detail.

White's Refutation of R.S. Peters's
Transcendental Argument

In Peters's argument White notes,

. . . we are asked to imagine someone seriously asking the question, 'Why do this rather than that?' (e.g. 'Why pursue poetry rather than bingo?') Peters's argument is to show that presupposed to asking this question is a commitment to certain 'higher' pursuits. The person who asks the question seriously must realize, on reflection, that it was otiose. By thinking about what is presupposed to asking such a question he will come to see that he must value certain pursuits, e.g. the pursuit of literature and science, rather than others.⁵

In what White regards as the argument's crucial passage, Peters claims that, insofar as a person seriously asks, "Why do this rather than that?", he must

. . . already have a serious concern for truth built into his consciousness. For how can a serious practical question be asked unless a man also wants to acquaint himself as well as he can of the situation out of which the question arises and of the facts of various kinds which provide the framework of possible answers? The various theoretical enquiries are explorations of these different facets of his experience. To ask the question 'Why do this rather than that?' seriously is therefore, however embryonically, to be committed to those enquiries which are

defined by their serious concern with those aspects of reality which give context to the question which he is asking.⁶

The argument's central claim, then, is that in asking about what ends in life are most worth pursuing, one is committed in some way to the pursuit of theoretical activities, at least those, as White notes, concerned with illuminating the nature of the world and man's place in it. These will certainly include activities like natural science, history, and philosophy. One cannot say the same of activities like bingo and billiards; thus, theoretical activities occupy a sort of privileged position.

White, however, questions both the clarity and validity of the argument's presuppositional claim. What exactly, he wonders, are the practical questioner's commitments vis-a-vis the pursuit of truth?

In one sense one could not but agree that a person who seriously asks this question is necessarily committed to the pursuit of truth. If he asks the question seriously, he must want a true answer to his question. But this is commitment to truth in a far weaker sense than that required by the argument. For to say that he must want a true answer to his question is not to say that he must be committed to the pursuit of truth in science (or history, or maths or philosophy). He could, indeed, be a sceptic asking, 'Why should I pursue science, etc.? Why not bingo?' If he is, he is certainly not committed to the pursuit of such subjects as science or history.⁷

White's line of reasoning is less than fully formed on this point. The sceptic is not free from any commitment to the pursuit of truth in science simply because he questions the value of engaging in scientific activity. Rather, it is

because such questioning is not itself an instance of scientific activity. "Why pursue science?" is not a scientific question; thus, in asking it, one is not ipso facto committed to science and scientific truth. However, consider the question, "Why pursue ethics?", where ethics is construed fairly broadly as encompassing prudential questions concerned with intrinsic worth and the individual's welfare. Here the sceptic is not free from commitment to truth in ethics simply through asking, "Why pursue ethics?", for to ask this sort of question is to ask an ethical question and to seek some sort of true answer to it. Thus, in asking, "Why pursue ethics?", the sceptic is committed, at least prima facie, to truth in ethics.

However, White goes on to acknowledge that

. . . there is perhaps more to the argument than this. The questioner must, to ask his question, 'want to acquaint himself as well as he can of the situation out of which the question arises' and this, we are told, will require some exploration of science, philosophy, literature and history. It must be stressed here that this cannot be taken to be an instrumental argument - that one should explore these things in order to throw light on the question. For this would make them at best extrinsically valuable activities, whereas the argument is designed to show that they are intrinsically valuable. It is rather that to ask this question presupposes some commitment to these activities, pursued as intrinsically valuable. But how far is commitment to them presupposed? One might well argue that some kind of understanding of them is presupposed. If a person is seriously asking himself which kind of activities he should engage in, he must have some kind of understanding of the different options. In so far as the options include the pursuit of science, philosophy, etc. he must have some understanding of these.⁸

This, then, is White's interpretation of the transcendental argument. It is here that the problems with White's critique of the argument lie - chiefly in his confusing what is presupposed or entailed by the notion of making a choice among options with what is presupposed by the notion of participation in practical discourse, i.e., of asking questions of the form, "Why do this rather than that?" - rather than his criticisms of the argument so interpreted. Before developing this point, however, let me proceed to White's criticisms.

White goes on to point out that the fact that one who seriously asks himself what activities he should engage in must have some kind of understanding of the various options facing him does not

. . . prove that he would have to be committed to their pursuit above other things, either in the weak sense of simply valuing these things for their own sake or in any stronger sense of 'commitment' - for two reasons. First, it has not been shown that understanding X implies commitment to X; and second, other activities - such as bingo or billiards, perhaps - as well as science, literature, and so on, might well also figure as options, and so far are on equal footing with the latter.⁹

White counters the second point, arguing that

. . . science, literature, etc. are not presupposed merely as possible options, but in another way too, which is not applicable to bingo and billiards. The man who seriously asks himself what he is going to do with his life must have some idea of what kind of thing a human life is. He must have some kind of idea of the boundaries within which he can choose.¹⁰

White cites as an example of the kind of thing he is talking about here the relevance of evolutionary theory, of claims such as that human life has no divine purpose, that man

is descended from the lower animals, etc., to the question of what one is to do with one's life. He goes on to point out that much the same thing could be said about philosophy and parts of literature. The point White is trying to state here has in fact been stated quite succinctly by Peters himself elsewhere:

... activities like history, literary appreciation and philosophy, unlike bingo and billiards, involve forms of thought and awareness that can and should spill over into things that go on outside, and transform them. For they are concerned with the explanation, evaluation, and imaginative exploration of forms of life. As a result of them, what is called 'life' develops different dimensions.¹¹

White thinks that this point enshrines an educationally important truth, and I am inclined to agree with him. Certainly any curriculum concerned with developing and expanding the individual's capacity for choice must assign an eminent place to such studies as philosophy, literature, history and certain of the human and natural sciences. However, what this shows is that some understanding of science, history, etc., does not just constitute an understanding of particular options one might choose but modes of understanding one's options in general. It does not show that one must make certain choices; in particular, it does not show that one must choose or value activities such as science and history, distinguished, to use an expression of Peters, by their wide-ranging cognitive content. Thus, White's first point still requires a reply:

. . . it is not enough to show that understanding of these activities is presupposed, one has also to show that there is commitment to (favourable evaluation of) them. On the face of it, it looks as if one could ask, 'What ought I to choose?' understanding something of the 'illuminating' activities, but still, when it comes to the choice, valuing something entirely different. Since Peters's argument is designed to show that science, etc., are intrinsically valuable, i.e. of such a sort that any rational man must value these things for their own sake, this possibility leaves the claim unproven.¹²

The point White makes here is a sound one. One might argue that, for a choice of one's ultimate ends in life to be rational, one must have some understanding of science, philosophy, history, etc., not just because they represent certain options one might pursue, but because one must have the sort of understanding of one's options that can only be acquired through the pursuit of science, etc. - yet nothing about the direction or content of one's choices follows from this. There is no logical inconsistency in denying that one must choose to do science, etc., that the pursuit of such truth-seeking activities must be included among one's basic ends in life. In short, the claim that one's choice is knowledgeable does not entail, at least prima facie, that what one chooses is the pursuit of knowledge. White, however, acknowledges that such a claim holds only prima facie and that it is open to Peters to "try to show that despite appearances, understanding these activities does entail commitment to them".¹³ Peters does, in fact, present such an argument just prior to presenting his transcendental argument. White quotes the argument as follows:

In the case of such activities [as science, etc.] a strong case can be made for Socrates view that if a man does not pursue or at least feel drawn towards what is good then he does not really understand it, for the activities in question all have some general point which must be sensed by their participants and they all have standards of correctness and style built into them which give rise to characteristic appraisals. For a man to grasp what these activities are he must be on the inside of them and be sensitive to these aspects of them. Could a man really understand science, for instance, who was unmoved by the passion for truth and concern about evidence and clarity? What sort of mathematician would a man be who cared nothing for neatness and elegance of proof? . . . That is why we could and always would say of a man who seemed to refute Mill's hypothesis that he could not have understood what the activity was about. For to understand an activity is to be committed in some way to its pursuit.¹⁴

White, in his reply, does not raise the question that comes first to mind here: Why does Peters think that this point about understanding and commitment applies exclusively to theoretical truth-seeking activities such as science? Activities like football and chess also "have some general point which must be sensed by their participants", they also have "standards of correctness and style built into them which give rise to characteristic appraisals". If one cannot grasp what the activity of science is without being committed to (or "on the inside of" or "sensitive to") its general point and associated standards and rules, then one equally cannot understand activities like football and chess without being committed to their general point and associated standards and rules. But if, on the basis of Peters's explanation of the relationship between understanding and commitment, one can

say of any activity, at least any activity structured by some definite point to which standards of excellence in the activity are related, that to understand it is to be committed in some way to its pursuit, then one must either seek other sorts of reasons for choosing theoretical activities over games and recreational pursuits (maintaining that the sort of commitment that understanding activities implies is a prima facie commitment or a commitment other things being equal) or admit (absurdly) that non-arbitrary choices among options fully grasped are impossible.

White wants to make a somewhat different point. He admits that there is a sense in which to understand an activity like science is to be committed to its pursuit, but wants to say that this is still not the sense that the transcendental argument requires, the sense of commitment which is authoritative for one's choice. His argument, however, is surprisingly weak. He simply reiterates Peters's claims, making no attempts at further clarification, and counters by reiterating his previous point - the point at issue - that one can understand the nature of theoretical "illuminating" pursuits such as science and still consistently choose to pursue other sorts of activities:

There is a sense in which this conclusion is right, that understanding an activity like science does involve commitment to it. We may grant that a man could not understand science, say, if he was 'unmoved by the passion for truth and the concern about evidence and clarity?' In order to come to understand science, he must come to value these things. But this does not

imply that having understood what science is, or more generally what other illuminating activities are, one cannot give up their pursuit in favour of big-game hunting or anything else. This is not to say that it is false that understanding these activities brings with it commitment to them; but that if it is true, it is true only as a matter of fact and not necessarily so.¹⁵

This is a confusing reply. If, as an inevitable result of fully understanding science, a man comes to value truth and evidence, how can he consistently decide to disregard scientific pursuits completely and devote himself to activities like big-game hunting? The problem with White's reply is that he doesn't really explain the sense in which Peters's conclusion is right. Why is it, exactly, that we would say that a man does not understand science if he is indifferent to truth and evidence? We must make this clear before we can explain why the sort of commitment that understanding science requires is irrelevant to the transcendental argument, at least as White interprets it. The required explanation proceeds, I think, from the familiar point that scientific activity, or any activity for that matter, is constituted, not just by a sequence of physical acts or behaviors, but behavior regulated by, and inseparable from, a complex web of understandings and concerns. In order for an individual to be described as "doing-science", his behavior must have a point or direction of a distinctive kind, and to say this is to say that he is concerned to do certain things and avoid doing others. In engaging in scientific activity an individual is, roughly speaking, trying to attain a rational understanding of the

world and this entails a concern for truth, evidence, and clarity. Thus, it is a logically necessary condition of an individual being described as engaging in science that he is not indifferent to considerations of truth and evidence and clarity. But, what follows from the fact that scientific activity is constituted by behavior regulated by a concern for truth and evidence and clarity? All this entitles us to say is that, given that a person claims that he is engaging in science or is attempting to, we can say that he does not understand the nature of scientific activity if he disavows any concern for truth, evidence, and clarity. But this is not the same as saying that if a person denies any interest in spending his time doing science, then he does not understand the nature of science. Moreover, this latter claim presupposes that science is constituted by behavior regulated by the concern to engage in science which is impossible, for this concern is a second order concern, one that presupposes or is about scientific activity, not one that is constitutive of scientific activity itself. Consider the example of a teacher attempting to introduce his pupils to science. If the teacher fails to get his pupils to see that in doing science, vaguely stated, untestable hypotheses are bad things and clear, empirically testable hypotheses are good things, he has failed to properly teach them science. However, what if he fails to draw their attention to the fact that science may be a worthwhile way to spend one's time? The teacher here has not failed.

to teach his pupils some science but some ethics. In the case of the latter, the point of inquiry is not to explain why events happen in the world the way that they do but whether science is worthwhile. In this case, then, ethics is inquiry about science and scientific understanding, the question being: Is the activity, considering all its intrinsic concerns and objectives, worthwhile? Thus, the claim that scientific activity is worthwhile is a second-order claim, not a first order claim that falls within the domain of science itself. Consequently, an individual's commitment to science is a second-order commitment to those commitments constitutive of scientific activities.

We must conclude that Peters's argument about the relationship between understanding activities and wanting to spend one's time pursuing them fails. An individual's failure to be committed to science could only entail a failure to completely understand science if the commitment to science were constitutive of science in the way that a concern for truth and evidence is. However, this is impossible because such a commitment is necessarily up one logical level from where it is supposed to be. So the general point White takes against Peters is a sound one. The notion of a choice in which great value is placed on clearly understanding and being informed about one's options does not entail anything about the content of the options chosen; in particular, it does not entail that they be activities concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and understanding.

However, this point does not refute Peters's transcendental argument, for Peters's argument does not turn on this notion. The notion of someone asking questions of the form, "Why do this rather than that?" does not presuppose that the questioner actually possess any understanding of his options, only that he is concerned, at least in some vague way, to acquire such understanding. Peters is quite explicit about this in the lines directly proceeding those which White quotes:

A man's consciousness of possibilities may be highly differentiated in scientific, aesthetic historical and religious forms of awareness. Or these possibilities may only be obscurely intimated in an undifferentiated way. But insofar as he can stand back from his life and ask the question 'Why do this rather than that?' he must already have a serious concern for truth built into his consciousness.¹⁶

In light of this passage, and the fact that Peters, in the passage White himself quotes, allows that the practical questioner may only be "embryonically" committed to theoretical activities, it is a little puzzling why White, at the crucial point in his interpretation, says:

But how far is commitment to them [theoretical activities] presupposed? One might well argue that some kind of understanding of them is presupposed. If a person is seriously asking himself which kinds of activities he should engage in, he must have some understanding of the different options. In so far as the options include the pursuit of science he must have some kind of understanding of these.¹⁷

How did White come to interpret the argument in this way? Largely, I think, through focusing on what is presupposed by the question, "Why do this rather than that?" when the

questioner raises it in the context of an attempt to make a choice between specific options. In this case, the questioner does presuppose some understanding on the part of the questioner of his options, otherwise the notion that he is attempting to make such a choice or is confronted with some choice problem would be unintelligible.

However, for Peters, the expression, "Why do this rather than that?" represents practical inquiry as such, i.e., any inquiry concerned with what reasons there are for doing certain things rather than others. This inquiry obviously seeks, ultimately, to guide choices, but engagement in it does not necessarily involve attempts to make choices among options. An individual may, for example, be exploring certain pursuits with the aim of determining whether they could be options for him, or he may be seeking justifications for general principles for distinguishing worthwhile options. Neither of these tasks presuppose the situation where the inquirer is confronted by options and is trying to decide which one to choose. In the former, the options have yet to be properly distinguished, in the latter, no specific options are at issue, only criteria for distinguishing options as worthwhile.

The question of what is presupposed by asking, "Why do this rather than that?" does not turn, then, on what is presupposed by the notion of someone making a choice between options (or, in terms that anticipate the next section, the person asking, "Why do this rather than that?" is not

necessarily the chooser in the ideal choice situation central to White's account of intrinsic value - White's own views have quite possibly distorted his grasp of the transcendental argument). Thus, White's refutation of Peters's argument is false. White's argument was that the transcendental argument does not establish a commitment to theoretical activities on the part of one who asks, "Why do this rather than that?", because (1) what this question presupposes is an understanding of theoretical activities and (2) this does not entail that they are valued or the sort of thing the individual would choose other things being equal. But asking practical questions does not presuppose such an understanding, so the point that understanding does not entail commitment, while sound, is irrelevant. Thus Peters's argument still stands.

Another Counter-Argument

However, I am not convinced that the transcendental argument establishes either the intrinsic value of theoretical activities or their intrinsic superiority to games or recreational pursuits. Before stating my criticisms, however, I should first offer a brief reconstruction of the argument.¹⁸ My approach here will be a dialectical or Socratic one. I will first attempt to establish the clearest and strongest account of Peters's transcendental argument that I can - then I will explain what is wrong with it.

First, what the question, "Why do this rather than that?" does presuppose is a concern for "truth" which, as

Peters's passage suggests, is a concern to know and rationally understand the facts about one's options, the criteria relevant for assessing their worth, the specific conditions and consequences of their pursuit and attainment, and, although this is a little vague, the general context within which the questioner's ends are formed and pursued - the human predicament one might say. This presuppositional claim is not an arbitrary one, for the possession of such a concern does seem to be a condition of intelligibly describing an individual as being seriously engaged in practical inquiry. Unless the individual possessed this concern (i.e., for "truth") we would not be able to say that what the individual was engaged in was, first of all, inquiry, i.e., activity directed toward finding out about something or justifying beliefs, and, secondly, practical inquiry, i.e., finding out about how to conduct one's life. And unless the individual possessed this concern, he could not be described as seriously engaging in this activity (and, as was previously noted, the notion of an individual's very engagement in an activity becomes problematic as he approaches total indifference to that activity's defining point). Thus, seriously asking, "Why do this rather than that?" undeniably presupposes a concern for what Peters calls "truth".

How does this commit us to theoretical activities? Does this presupposition entail commitment to such activities? It does, and in the following way. If a person is concerned to

find out how he should live his life, what reasons there are for pursuing certain ends rather than others, etc., then he must value or prefer certain pursuits rather than others, viz., theoretical pursuits, activities such as science, history, literature, philosophy, and ethics, rather than bingo, billiards, bridge, boxing, etc., because these activities are concerned with forms of thought which illuminate human activities, ideals, aims, aspirations, etc., and their relationship to the human predicament. Some awareness or mastery of these forms of understanding is a necessary precondition for thinking seriously and rationally about how one should live one's life. Furthermore, this commitment to theoretical activities like science, history, literature, etc., is not of an instrumental sort. This commitment is internally related to the presupposed concern for truth; the latter cannot be described independently of the former. The concern to engage in science, for example, to find out the facts about the consequences of pursuing certain ends, logically instantiates the concern for truth, it represents a specific form of it. A description of the required mastery of such forms of thought as science, philosophy, ethics, etc., is not an account of the means to attain the end of knowing the truth about how one should live one's life, it is a further specification or full articulation of that end.

An individual, then, cannot consistently assert that he is concerned with truth, with coming to know and rationally understand the human condition, and deny any interest in

engaging in such "illuminating" activities as science, history, and literature, for such activities are articulations of this concern, it constitutes their underlying point. Thus, the transcendental argument appears to make an impressive case for theoretical activities. An individual who seriously asks, "Why do this rather than that?" must be concerned about truth, for such a concern is presupposed, it is a condition of being intelligibly described as asking the question; in still other terms, the individual who seriously asks "Why do this rather than that?" is ipso facto concerned with truth. But, if the individual is concerned with truth, he must, on pain of inconsistency (logical as well as practical), be concerned to engage in theoretical, illuminating activities with wide-ranging cognitive content such as science, history, literature, etc., for the concern for truth just is - it is nothing over and above - the concern to engage in such activities. A non-instrumental commitment to theoretical activities is, then, a presupposition of practical inquiry. If so, scepticism about the value of such activities appears to be incoherent, for the sceptic who asks why he should choose to engage in theoretical activities is employing practical discourse to challenge one of its presuppositions.

On closer examination, however, the argument has some problems. First of all, it does not establish that an individual is unconditionally unjustified in expressing indifference to theoretical activities. What it establishes is that he is

unjustified if he is committed to seriously asking, "Why do this rather than that?" But this raises the question: Are we unjustified in being indifferent to practical inquiry? Moreover, Peters, if he wants to establish the intrinsic worth of theoretical activities, must justify the intrinsic concern to ask practical questions. He must show that asking practical questions is worth valuing for its own sake. This leads me to my second and more fundamental criticism. Peters's argument does not, in fact, establish anything at all about the value of engaging in certain pursuits. All his argument shows is that if one has a certain valuative attitude (a concern for truth), then one must, on pain of inconsistency, have other valuative attitudes (commitments to theoretical activities). The practical questioner's attitude of indifference toward theoretical activities is less than fully rational or unjustified, at least prima facie, not because theoretical activities are in fact valuable or worth valuing, making concern rather than indifference the appropriate attitude, but rather because ~~of~~ this attitude is inconsistent with the attitude he logically must have if he is to be described as a practical inquirer. But consistency does not guarantee Goodness anymore than it does Truth. What Peters's argument tells us, or enables us to say, is that we must admit, on pain of inconsistency, that theoretical pursuits are intrinsically worthwhile if asking practical questions is intrinsically worthwhile. However, this leaves all the work to be done, for the problem that originally faced us, and which has

troubled philosophers for a long long time, is: How is it possible to establish objectively that certain pursuits are worthwhile in themselves or more worthwhile than others?

It appears, then, that the transcendental argument Peters presents in Ethics And Education fails to even meet, much less solve, the fundamental ethical problem of justifying judgments of intrinsic value. The argument turns on what are essentially epistemological considerations of logical consistency and certain conceptual relationships between practical inquiry, "truth", and theoretical activities such as science, history, literature, etc., rather than ethical considerations that concern intrinsically good-making features of things.

Some Replies

However, we should not proceed too quickly to White's account of intrinsic value, for Peters's later writings¹⁹ make it clear that he would vigorously denounce the above assessment of his argument. Such an assessment, Peters would claim, completely fails to grasp the thrust of the transcendental argument. He has accomplished something quite significant in showing that a (non-instrumental) commitment to theoretical activities is presupposed by engagement in practical discourse, for in establishing this, he has reached "bedrock", as Wittgenstein has put it, in the attempt to justify this commitment and defend it against sceptical charges of arbitrariness - further sceptical questioning here about engagement in practical discourse is simply incoherent. The sceptic

asking, "Why should one engage in practical discourse?" is, in asking the question, engaging in practical discourse; he is asking a question of the form, "Why do this rather than that?". The sceptic commits himself to practical discourse by the very act of questioning this commitment. So the sceptic's position here seems inherently paradoxical or self-defeating, presupposing what it is trying to refute. Thus, our commitment to theoretical activities cannot fail to be incoherent. Since the sceptic, in raising his questions about the commitment, is ipso facto involved in practical discourse, he cannot coherently deny its presuppositions, one of them being a non-instrumental commitment to theoretical activities. Transcendental arguments would seem, then, to have more appeal than ever. Far from failing even to come to terms with the fundamental problems of ethical justification, they appear to offer the panacea against sceptical ills that philosophers have been trying to develop for centuries. Peters has shown that we can immunize our ethical commitments against doubt by establishing that they are presuppositions of practical inquiry.

The sceptic accused of incoherently questioning practical discourse might reply to Peters in a number of ways, however. He might, for example, admit that he is inexorably committed to practical discourse and consequently theoretical activities, but go on to question the value of engaging in practical discourse and theoretical activities for others, notably the upcoming generation of school children. If he states his

question in this way, he can maintain that Peters must still meet the issue of the value of engaging in practical inquiry, claiming that his previous counter-charge of incoherence rests, in Dearden's words, on "an ad hominem argument which is content to have shown a relative presupposition".²⁰

Peters, in his later writings, does attempt to make a case for the demand that people reason about and try to justify their conduct - and their beliefs and feelings as well - which does not rest on their trying to argue against that demand. Peters's remarks here are quite stimulating, but his manner of presentation is more suggestive than rigorous; thus, it is necessary to quote at some length:

There is an important sense, too, in which anyone who denies the value of justification, not by making a case against it which is to presuppose it, but by unreflectively relying on feelings in his stomach or on what other people say, is himself guilty of arbitrariness, for human life is a context in which the demands of reason are inescapable. . . .

To explain this point properly would require a treatise on man as a rational animal. All that can here be provided is a short sketch of the demand for justification that is immanent in human life. Human beings, like animals, have from the very start of their lives expectations of their environment, some of which are falsified. With the development of language these expectations come to be formulated and special words are used for the assessment of the content of these expectations and for how they are to be regarded in respect of their epistemological status. Words like 'true' or 'false' are used, for instance, to appraise the contents, and the term 'belief' for the attitude of mind that is appropriate to what is true. Perceiving and remembering are distinguished by their built-in truth claims from merely imagining. Knowledge is similarly distinguished from opinion. In learning we come up to standards of correctness as a result of

past experience. Our language, which is riddled with such appraisals, bears witness to the claims of reason on our sensibility. It reflects our position as fallible creatures, beset by fears and wishes, in a world whose regularities have laboriously to be discovered.

The same sort of point can be made about human conduct. For human beings do not just veer towards goals like moths towards a light; they are not just programmed by an instinctive equipment. They conceive of ends, deliberate about them and the means to them. They follow [sic] rules and revise and assess them. Assessment indeed has a toehold in every feature of this form of behavior which, in this respect, is to be contrasted with that of a man who falls off a cliff or whose knee jerks when hit with a hammer. Words like 'right', 'good', 'ought' reflect this constant scrutiny and monitoring of human actions. Man is thus a creature who lives under the demands of reason. He can, of course, be unreasonable or irrational; but these terms are only intelligible as fallings short in respect of reason. An unreasonable man has reasons but bad ones; an irrational man acts or holds beliefs in the face of reasons. But how does it help the argument to show that human life is only intelligible on the assumption that the demands of reasons are admitted and woven into the fabric of human life? It helps because it makes plain that the demands of reason are not just an option available to the reflective.²¹

This argument, like the transcendental argument, seems to turn on relationships between concepts rather than empirical facts and generalizations about human behavior and the conditions of human existence. (I say "seems" because I find Peters's remarks a little too sketchy and too metaphorically expressed to be completely certain about the direction he wants the argument to take. However, an expression like "human life is only intelligible" seems to me to indicate that he is interested in establishing certain conceptual relationships between the demands of reason and the concepts

through which distinctively human life and behavior must be understood.) Peters here is not saying, of course, that the concern for truth or justification is presupposed by descriptions of distinctively human life and behavior. It is not a condition of being intelligibly (and non-programmatically) described as a human being, a creature with beliefs and intentions, capable of action rather than reaction, etc., that one is concerned with asking, "Why do (believe, feel) this rather than that?" In forming beliefs, intentions, etc., individuals are certainly not ipso facto concerned with justification. What Peters does try to establish is that the demand for justification is presupposed by those descriptions that distinguish human life and behavior. Because we are human beings who are capable of choice, who have beliefs and interrelated intentions, emotions, and desires, we are willy-nilly subject to certain standards of assessment, viz., standards of rationality.

Belief, for example, is not just that naturalistic attitude of expectation humans share with other animals. It is characterized in normative terms as that attitude of mind appropriate to what is true. "Appropriate" here implies the applicability of certain standards which are standards of rationality and justification, for, by definition, rational beliefs are those beliefs which we have reason to believe are true, i.e., which satisfy certain tests of truth and standards of evidence. And, as Peters's remarks suggest, one should be able to say similar things about emotions, desires, and

intentions, particularly in light of the way these attitudes and states of mind are permeated with belief. Thus, individuals can ignore the demand for reasons and justification, and consequently the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, if they like, but this does not exempt them from certain criticisms. Such a disregard constitutes irrationality or unreasonableness, and, in being irrational or unreasonable, individuals are ipso facto failing to meet certain standards, they are "falling down" in certain ways. Peters's argument, then, though it does not attempt to show that certain concerns are written into the human condition, certainly shows that certain liabilities are.

However, one question comes very quickly to mind here. The unreflective person has to accept, on pain of failing to grasp the concept of "rationality", that holding beliefs about the world on the basis of feelings in his stomach is irrational but why does he have to accept that this is bad or undesirable? He has to accept that holding beliefs on the basis of evidence is rational; but does this entail that it is good or worthwhile to hold beliefs in this way? Why, in other words, are the various criteria of rationality, on the basis of which certain behavior or states of mind are classified as rational (rather than, for example, noisy or tiring or depressed), standards for assessing behavior and states of mind as good or bad? Granted, if an individual cares about the truth of his beliefs, if he cares about thinking about

things as they really are, then, on pain of failing to grasp what truth is, he must admit that consistency and relevance are good things and inconsistency and arbitrary claims are bad things. But why should he be concerned with truth? Why is it worthwhile, intrinsically or otherwise? Peters's argument appears to assume rather than establish the crucial point. Failing to meet the "demands" of reason can only count as "falling down" if adhering to them has some worthwhile point; otherwise, we are presented with the scenario of reflective people criticizing unreflective people in light of their own reflective values. But Peters says nothing here about the value of truth (and if he claims he doesn't have to, that the question, "Why care about truth?" is incoherent, then he is back, full circle, at the self-refutation argument and his human nature argument is otiose). It is not difficult, of course, to show that it is worthwhile to have true beliefs; one only reveals one's foolishness in denying that it is (although we are still sidestepping the problem of establishing the intrinsic value of truth; this is not so easy). Consequently, it is quite natural to think of the criteria of rationality as standards and a little odd to hear someone say that inconsistency and arbitrariness are not necessarily bad things. Nevertheless, speaking of the criteria of rationality as "demands" or "standards" assumes that truth and justified belief are desirable, and Peters's argument does not go any way toward establishing this. Thus, while the argument, fully

developed, will most certainly make an interesting contribution to philosophical anthropology, showing just how central the network of concepts falling under the rubric of "rationality" are to the understanding and explanation of human life and behavior, as an ethical argument it is question-begging.

Peters might reply that I have proceeded much too quickly here, focusing only on the relationship between the worth of rationality and the notion of "rationality" as applied to beliefs. The claim that a belief is a rational belief may not imply it is desirable, but certainly the claim that an action is fully justified or rational implies its desirability, because the statement that the action supported by the best reasons is the best thing to do is analytic.²² The Good is the telos of rationality in the domain of action, just as the True is in the domain of belief. Reasons for actions are good reasons to the extent that they determine the course of action it would be most desirable to pursue, just as a reason to believe something is a good reason to the extent that it establishes that the belief is true. Thus, the claim that an action is not supported by good reasons entails something about its desirability, or lack of it.

This point is not as helpful to Peters as it first appears, however. All it shows is that to escape criticism human beings must do that which is supported by good reasons, not that they must have beliefs, and thus justified beliefs, about these reasons. People are allowed to live unreflectively, following custom, the advice of others, etc., as long as their

actions ~~can~~ be supported by the best reasons from an objective or impersonal point of view (and in principle this is possible, although it is open to Peters to show that the human condition being what it is, and human cultures being what they are, this is not actually an option for people). But, what the human nature argument must show if it is to ground the transcendental argument, and consequently our commitment to education, is that people are criticizable if their beliefs about the supporting rationale of their actions do not conform to the demands of reason, for it is these beliefs which practical discourse calls into question. So it turns out that Peters's human nature argument turns on our human liability to criticism about the rationality of our beliefs. Thus, my previous argument stands.

Undaunted, Peters might take this tack. He might claim that if someone denies that rational belief is desirable and irrational belief is undesirable, he has failed to fully grasp the meaning of "rational" as it applies to belief. The claim that beliefs are rational does imply by definition, the claim that this is a desirable state of mind. Thus, if human beliefs are necessarily characterized in terms of rationality, the unreflective are inevitably liable to condemnation. Presenting his rationale,²³ Peters might go on to say here that, in focusing on the criteria of rationality (that indicate those properties of beliefs in virtue of which we classify them as justified), all we have noted is the descriptive meaning of "rationality"; we have failed to see its evaluative

meaning. Not all terms are like "good" in having almost a purely evaluative meaning, Peters might continue, or like "red" in having a purely descriptive meaning; some are like "steal" which has a mixture of descriptive meaning (taking property belonging to another) and evaluative meaning (wrongful action). "Rationality" is one of these "mixed" terms. It has a complex descriptive meaning (when applied to beliefs, it means beliefs which are consistent, clear, verified, etc.) and an evaluative meaning (desirable beliefs to hold).

This reply will not get Peters very far, however. If this Harean distinction between descriptive and evaluative meaning is sound (and if it isn't, there is no argument), then "rationality" has two distinct senses; consequently, the above argument can be charged with committing the fallacy of equivocation, for it runs as follows: (1) it is rational for a person's beliefs to be consistent, supported by evidence - in a word, justified, (2) what is rational is good, so therefore, (3) beliefs which are clear, supported by evidence - in a word, justified - are good. The argument slides from the descriptive meaning of "rational" in (1) to its evaluative meaning in (2); thus, the premises do not entail the conclusion and the argument is invalid. I conclude, then, that my original criticisms of the human nature argument hold.

There is, perhaps, one other argument Peters might use to defeat the sceptic who argues against the commitment to practical discourse but avoids paradox by raising his doubts

on behalf of others.²⁴ Peters might reply to the sceptic that demanding a justification for participation in practical discourse is no more coherent when requested for the participation of others than it is for the sceptic's own participation. In both cases, the sceptic wants to know what good reasons there are for participating in practical discourse, and what this question amounts to is a demand for practical reasons (as he is seeking reasons for doing something, viz., participating in practical discourse) for demanding practical reasons (for in asking, "Why this rather than that?" an individual is demanding reasons for doing some things rather than others). But this demand is incoherent, for it rules out the conditions required for its satisfaction. The sceptic does not want to be emotively persuaded, manipulated, brainwashed, hypnotized, or coerced into accepting the demand for practical reasons. He will accept the demand for practical reasons if and only if he has good practical reasons to do so. But he cannot consistently accept any practical reason, for the object of his scepticism is the entire class of demands for practical reasons, and one cannot consistently question the demand for something and accept the object of that demand. Thus, the very substance of the sceptic's demand makes it impossible to satisfy, for the object of the sceptic's doubt constitutes the necessary and sufficient conditions for alleviating his doubt. Consequently, the sceptic's questioning of the commitment to practical discourse should be summarily dismissed, for it fails to even make sense.

Unfortunately, this argument also fails to defeat the sceptic. The sceptic, in challenging engagement in practical inquiry, is not demanding reasons for demanding reasons. He is not challenging the authority of reason in the domain of action, suggesting that it might be better if actions were based on custom, habit, instinct, faith, revelation, or taste. Rather he is demanding reasons for demanding reasons; i.e., he wants to know why people should be more concerned to know the reasons that justify their own and others' actions. He grants that people must be concerned to perform actions that are sanctioned by reason, but he wants to know why they must stop and ask, "Why do this rather than that?" What the sceptic is doubting, in other words, is the act of demanding reasons, not the object of this act - but it is the act's object that constitutes the necessary and sufficient conditions of alleviating his doubt. Thus, the sceptic's demand for reasons for demanding practical reasons is not incoherent. Because he demands reasons, not acts of demanding reasons, his demand does not rule out the conditions of its satisfaction. Again, it appears that Peters cannot say that, in showing that a commitment to theoretical activities is presupposed by practical discourse, he has reached justificational bedrock.

There is one further reason for doubting that the transcendental argument represents the end-point for all coherent requests for justification (of the pursuit of knowledge, education, theoretical activities, etc.) which concerns

the epistemological status of practical discourse. A sceptic might ask Peters whether we really have any reason to believe that we have good reasons for doing anything.²⁵ How do we know that our criteria of good reasons are non-arbitrary and not merely matters of convention or preference? If Peters cannot come up with any good reasons to believe that we have good reasons for doing some things rather than other things, or for doing something rather than nothing, then how does he know that there are such good reasons? Does he have any apriori guarantee? But if there are no good reasons to believe that any end is worth the expenditure of effort required to attain it, then there is no point in asking, "Why do this rather than that?" Thus, if Peters cannot provide good reason to believe that there are good reasons for actions, his demand that people engage in practical discourse is, at bottom, arbitrary. The sceptic can also add that the burden of proof rests squarely on Peters' shoulders here, because Peters is the one who has taken it upon himself to issue the demand that people take time to stop and ask, "Why this rather than that?" Consequently, it is up to him to finish the job of justifying that demand. All the sceptic has to do here is show that his position is coherent.

Peters, of course, would probably be quite willing to argue that it isn't. The sceptic, he would say, has to presuppose some criteria of good reasons to get his claim off the ground. If the sceptic has no criteria whatsoever for the

identification of good reasons, then he doesn't know what a good reason is. If so, then he quite/literally doesn't know what he is talking about, and his position can be dismissed. On the other hand, if he does adduce the necessary criteria, then his position is self-refuting.

This argument will not do, however. It is just not the case that the sceptic has to presuppose the criteria of good reasons he is questioning. First of all, the sceptic is not claiming that we can't know or possess truly good reasons for action. He is not claiming apriori authority against theories of practical justification. He is not denying, in other words, the possibility of rational practical justification. All he is claiming is that we don't in fact have a good reason for thinking that there are good reasons for doing anything. In order to claim this, he does not have to claim to know what a genuinely good reason would look like. He just has to show that there is no existing account that adequately and coherently explains what a good reason for action is, and this, in principle, he can do. He simply has to take, one by one, accounts of practical justification, and show that, on their own terms, they are arbitrary or incoherent. Take, for example, the view that actions are justified because they conform to certain standards,²⁶ e.g., of efficiency and effectiveness with regard to promoting the end of pleasure. The sceptic can ask here: Are these standards themselves justified? At this point the account encounters difficulties.

Consistent with its own view of justification it must justify our acceptance of these standards by showing it to be based on standards. However, if the standards to be justified are appealed to in their own defense, the justification is question-begging. But if other higher order standards are appealed to, the same sort of question can be raised about them, leading us to either an infinite regress or an arbitrary decision to stop at some point and just accept the standard that we find ourselves with. Thus, if practical justification consists in appealing to standards, actions can never be justified.

This account of practical justification is only meant to be an illustration, of course. I am not trying to suggest here that the sceptic's position might be justified, only that it cannot be refuted in an apriori way. It is not incoherent to suggest that we have no good reason to believe that we have good reason to do anything. We can only defend our claim that we do in fact have good practical reasons by stating and defending theories of practical justification and, likewise, the sceptic can only defend his claim by refuting these theories one by one. Thus, we have a further reason to conclude that we do not reach bedrock in our attempts to justify normative principles by showing that they are presuppositions of practical discourse.

The conclusion established in this rather long section on the first half of White's argument, then, is that the transcendental argument Peters presents in Ethics And Education is not an argument about the intrinsic value of theoretic-

cal activities at all; it rests on epistemological considerations of logical consistency and conceptual coherence which go no way toward establishing that certain features of activities are genuinely intrinsically good-making properties. Furthermore, the argument cannot be conjoined with arguments about the justification of rationality to show that questioning the commitment to theoretical activities and the pursuit of knowledge is incoherent.

White's Account of Intrinsic Value

White's account is an attempt to state the logically necessary and sufficient conditions for saying that something is intrinsically worthwhile or good in itself. He begins in an "oblique" manner by examining the criteria of worth presupposed in specific cases where we think we know what is good for people. We think that depriving a drunken man of a knife with which he has been playing is in his interest, because unless we do, he is likely to inflict physical damage on himself, and we are confident that this counts as a harm. However, White says, we would not be so confident that depriving him of the knife is in his interest if we found out that he wanted to commit suicide by stabbing himself to death, because the reason for our confidence in the first place was our belief that physical damage prevents a person from attaining desired ends, and, in this case, depriving the man of the knife frustrates his attainment of a desired end, viz., to die. What these cases seem to imply, White thinks, is that what is

extrinsically good for a person is a means towards getting what he wants for its own sake. This in turn seems to imply that what is intrinsically good for a person is what he wants for its own sake. However, White notes, there are problems with this:

A drunkard who was playing with a knife and not wanting to commit suicide might have wanted to play with it for its own sake, but this could scarcely be considered intrinsically worthwhile if, on sobering up, he was grateful to us for taking it away from him. If a person wants X for its own sake but X cannot be intrinsically worthwhile because on reflection he would not have wanted X, this leads one to a further hypothesis that what is intrinsically worthwhile is identifiable with what a person would want on reflection for its own sake.²⁷

This passage raises problems of its own, however. Aside from the fact that the distinction between drunken and sober preference is not the same as that between reflective and unreflective preference (drunkenness is one possible cause of unreflectiveness but it is not constitutive of it; there can be drunken as well as sober reflection - furthermore, sobriety does not necessarily involve reflection), White's example does not show, at least in any very clear way, that being wanted on reflection for its own sake is a logical condition of intrinsic worth, much less a necessary and sufficient one. It seems at least equally plausible to claim that the drunkard was grateful because sobriety made him more fully aware of what it was that he wanted, and he realized that death has no characteristics that make it worth wanting in itself. Sober reflection, in other words, could just be a means of becoming

aware of the intrinsically good-making properties, or lack of them, constitutive of the objects of one's wants. But this means that the criteria of "intrinsically worthwhile" have to do with certain features of what is wanted, not whether things are wanted, reflectively or otherwise. Thus, White's example does not conclusively show that being wanted on reflection is part of our concept of intrinsic worth, much less equivalent to it; in fact, pre-analytically at least, it would seem to suggest the opposite.

However, at this point White begins to wonder how the "hypothesis" that what is intrinsically worthwhile is identifiable with what is wanted on reflection for its own sake might be more adequately tested, and, as a result, leaves the examination of specific examples behind. The problem with the argument so far, he says, is that "it rests on what one might be inclined to say in a particular case. Here, as elsewhere, common usage might hide logical inadequacies".²⁸ How can we be reasonably certain that "wanted on reflection for its own sake" does in fact mean the same as "intrinsically worthwhile"? White offers the following test. Can we, White asks, ask significantly, "I want X on reflection for its own, but is it intrinsically worthwhile?" If it is correct to define (in the sense of a statement of logically necessary and sufficient conditions) intrinsic worth in terms of what is wanted on reflection, the question doesn't make any sense, or at least it is quite silly, for what we are asking is, "I want X on

reflection for its own sake, but do I want it on reflection for its own sake?" However, if the question does make sense - and the onus, White thinks, is on the person who claims that it does make sense to be quite specific about how and why - then being wanted on reflection is not a necessary and sufficient condition for saying that something is intrinsically worthwhile, and the proposed definition must either be rejected or supplemented in various ways.

Criticisms of Method

White's decision to use this test is somewhat ironic in view of the fact that he offers a kind of naturalistic definition of intrinsic value (i.e., one which identifies intrinsic worth with an empirical property such as being the object of a reflective want or preference), for this test is the basis of a famous argument - called the "open-question" argument - G.E. Moore devised to show that naturalistic meta-ethical theories are untenable as such. The argument purportedly shows, in advance of any systematic investigation of the actual meaning of terms like "good" and "right", that any account which claims that "good" or "right" means the same as "having a certain empirical property P" must be mistaken, simply because it is possible to doubt that they mean the same. The argument runs as follows.²⁹ The naturalist suggests that some term "P" which refers to an empirical property means the same as some ethical term "E". Now, it is the case that no one can doubt that the concept of "P" is equivalent to the concept of

"P". So if the concept of "P" is in fact equivalent to the concept of "E", then by substitutivity of identity it should be impossible to doubt that the concept of "P" is equivalent to the concept of "E". But it is always possible to doubt this, it is always an "open question"; thus, naturalistic synonymy claims can never hold. (Consequently, Moore thought that "good" had to refer to an unanalyzable non-empirical property. However, non-cognitivists like Hare offer another explanation of this supposedly unbridgeable gap between the meaning of empirical and ethical terms. I will be discussing Hare's version of the open question argument in Chapter Three.

Moore's argument, however, is fallacious because it turns on whether we believe that the concept of "P" is the same as the concept of "E". However, we do not necessarily believe every proposition that is true (nor is every proposition we believe true). Thus, given that one believes the concept of "P" is equivalent to the concept of "P", and that it is true that the concept of "P" is equivalent to the concept of "E", it does not follow by substitutivity of identity that one believes that the concept of "P" is equivalent to the concept of "E". Thus, the fact that one can doubt a proposed identification of ethical and empirical concepts is no reason for thinking the identification to be mistaken.

However, although White's open question test cannot be used in advance of systematic investigation of the meaning of "intrinsically worthwhile" to refute his account, it cannot

be used to justify it either. If, for example, it seems to White that the question, "I want X on reflection for its own sake, but is it intrinsically worthwhile?" is pointless or silly, or at least that it is not at all obvious what answer to give, all this shows is that it is not obvious to White, given his grasp of how to use "intrinsically worthwhile" and "wanted on reflection for its own sake", that the two expressions do not mean the same. In other words, all that White is appealing to here are his pre-analytic intuitions about what "intrinsically worthwhile" means and what expressions are synonymous with it. This might be adequate if all that were at issue were the synonymy of expressions like "son" and "male child" which to every competent speaker of English are obviously, or, to use a term of R.B. Brandt's, "overtly"³⁰ synonymous. However, in the case of "is intrinsically worthwhile", or any other philosophically interesting expression (e.g., "is true", "is meaningful", "is the cause of"), the defining expression, when fully spelled out, is likely to be quite complex, and, if it is, it will not be obvious, even to frequent users of the expression, that it means the same as "intrinsically worthwhile". Nevertheless, after careful examination of the application of "intrinsically worthwhile" and its defining expressions, it is possible to say that the defined and defining expressions are synonymous, although, to use another term of Brandt's, "covertly" so. So White's condition of the adequacy of his account itself appears to be

quite inadequate. Despite the fact that the odds are that the defining expressions of "intrinsically worthwhile" will be covertly synonymous with it, White selects what is essentially a test for overt synonymy.

Furthermore, the open question test only applies to strict synonymy, i.e., where the defining expressions indicate necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of the defined expressions. However, it may not be the case that the meaning "intrinsically worthwhile" has in ordinary English can be as precisely stated as this. Very few or none of the criteria governing its use may be logically necessary. There may be only a range of conditions relevant to the use of the expression, an imprecise number of which are jointly sufficient, but not necessary and sufficient. If so, no proposed identifications could pass the test, including hypotheses that do correctly indicate a number of conditions relevant for the use of "intrinsically worthwhile" in English. In cases where there are no logically necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of a term, the test gives us no indication at all of the adequacy of proposed defining expressions, and its use prejudges the issue of the logical strictness of the conditions, an issue that can only be resolved by a careful, sustained examination of specific uses of "intrinsically worthwhile" with the aim of stating some logically necessary conditions to be tested by a series of possible counter-examples.

White might reply at this point that the fact that the defining expressions he considers pass his open question test establishes a prima facie case, at least, for their correctness, claiming that all he intends the test to show is that it is not obvious that his proposed defining expressions do not mean the same, not that it is obvious that they do, and going on to add that, after he has made some attempt to show that the identification of the defined and proposed defining expressions is an open question, the onus is then on the person who continues to disagree to show that the expressions do not mean the same. This position is untenable, however. It is not only the case that two expressions can fail the open question test but nevertheless be synonymous, although covertly so, but two expressions might pass the test but fail to be synonymous.³¹ Again, the reason is that the test only appeals to what its user thinks a term or expression means before systematic inquiry. For example, many people would probably consider "bachelor" and "unmarried man" to be synonymous in ordinary English, and thus would claim that "John is an unmarried man but is he a bachelor?" is unintelligible, despite the fact that it is intelligible, as the questioner could be asking whether John was a widower or divorced. Being a man and being a bachelor are not necessary and sufficient conditions of being called a bachelor. Few people are likely to realize this, however, because few people spend their time thinking about necessary conditions

for the use of words and testing them by proposing possible counter-examples, particularly words like "bachelor:". As a result, many people will draw false conclusions from the open question test.

Thus, I have serious doubts about White's criterion of the adequacy of his account, which seems, at least, to aim at capturing the meaning "intrinsically worthwhile" has in English. (Whether this is the sort of account we want when we inquire about the nature of intrinsic worth is another matter. In the last part of Chapter Three, I will present a view of meta-ethical theories which does not regard the specifically semantic intuitions of speakers of English as authoritative in resolving conceptual issues.) These doubts about White's method are vindicated, I think, by the substantive criticisms I develop below. They show that White's use of the open question test does not prevent him from going seriously astray in his thinking about the meaning of "intrinsically worthwhile".

Substantive Criticisms

Returning to White's development of his account, it turns out that he does think that "I want X for its own sake, but is it intrinsically valuable?" can be sensibly asked:

A man who has thought over the things he wanted for their own sake might well wonder whether what he now wants for its own sake is intrinsically valuable. 'After all', he might say to himself, 'I've changed my valuations of my wants in the past and I may well change my mind about my present wants.

One may well argue that this gives a sense to his question, but it does not get the sceptic

very far, since intrinsic worth is still to be understood in terms of what is wanted on reflection. But the identification of the two must clearly be qualified, since what is wanted on reflection at time, may be different from what is wanted on reflection at time. ³²

It is not clear to me why the fact that one's wants can change on future reflection indicates to White that his account of reflection must be supplemented in certain ways. If intrinsic worth is identified with, or understood in terms of, what is wanted on reflection, all that follows from the claim that one's wants change on reflection at a later date is that what is worthwhile at one time is no longer worthwhile at a later time, not that it was not worthwhile in the first place. (And one does not have to be a subjectivist about intrinsic value to accept that something can be valuable at one time and not valuable at another. One can claim that something can be red at one time and green at another, for example, without denying that objective claims can be made about the colours of things.) Furthermore, it seems that any specific example that might reveal the reason why wants must withstand the test of reflection over time would pose the same difficulties for White's account as his drunkard example. It would likely suggest that reflection over time is a condition of an individual becoming aware of all the good-making and bad-making features of his ends so that he can come to a fully informed judgment about their intrinsic worth. The essential problem with White's account to this point is that he hasn't explained why wants must be reflective in the first

place. Consequently, it is quite unclear why, or in what way, his account must be supplemented - and the following passage does nothing to help matters.

We need to establish some sort of criteria for what counts as 'on reflection wanting X for its own sake'. Would months of careful deliberation and exclusion of alternatives be sufficient? But suppose these were months of physiologically induced depression: a year later, in good mental and physical health, the priorities might be quite different. Again, suppose the careful deliberation had only been about a limited number of choices, a year later all other sorts of possibilities might reveal themselves and again the priorities might alter. This indicates, I think, that the want in question must be judged in terms of an ideal. In the ideal case what is wanted on reflection is what a man would want for its own sake given at least (a) that he knows of all of the other things which he might have preferred at the time and (b) that he has carefully considered priorities among these different choices, bearing in mind not only his present situation but also whether he is likely to alter his priorities in the future ((b) effectively rules out any preference adopted in a state of depression, euphoria, etc: a depressed person is shut off by his depression from considering certain options which would otherwise be open to him.)³³

If what we want to establish is the intrinsic value of X, i.e., value which is based strictly on X's internal features (its X-making properties), and thus is independent of X's relationship to anything else, why do we have to reflect on all the other things we might want? White, at first glance, seems here to be establishing a test for the most intrinsically valuable thing, or a procedure for ranking things in respect of their intrinsic value which consists of the individual establishing a rank-ordering of his reflective preferences; certainly he claims that we must carefully

establish priorities among our wants. However, if such a test represents the necessary and sufficient conditions for saying that one thing is more intrinsically worthwhile than another, the claim that it is valid presupposes that what makes something worthwhile is its being wanted on reflection for its own sake, for to say that an individual prefers X to Y is to say that he wants it more. Thus, (a) does not confirm, refine, or explain the hypothesis that being intrinsically worthwhile is identifiable with what is wanted on reflection for its own sake.

However, why is White so concerned that people bear in mind their future priorities and the chances of altering them? We seem to be back to the problem of explaining how changes in intrinsic wants and preferences are relevant to judgments of intrinsic worth. There is, however, one other thing that White might be suggesting here, although it involves an error so glaringly obvious on his part that it seems quite implausible that he does in fact intend to suggest it. White could be saying that what is presently wanted on reflection for its own sake is not worthwhile if its present satisfaction is likely to obstruct the satisfaction of a future want, possibly one which one views (as more important in a "cool" moment. This at least makes it clear why we must reflect on present wants in light of future priorities (and how we come to regard our past wants as undesirable). However, if this in fact is what White is suggesting, then not

only is being wanted on reflection for its own sake not constitutive of intrinsic worth (or worth of any kind for that matter), but the notion of worth that ends up being defined is not the notion of intrinsic worth. All that White would be drawing attention to here, and all that is the object of our concern when we reflect upon our wants, are the consequences of attaining what is presently wanted for its own sake, and all that this shows is whether what is presently wanted for its own sake on reflection is extrinsically worthwhile. Surprisingly enough, it turns out that this is fairly close to the truth. However, to see this, and to see the exact nature of White's confusion, it will be necessary to examine the curricular implications of this account of intrinsic worth, particularly those of (b).

White thinks that in order to satisfy condition (a) children must become aware of all the possible things (e.g., activities and ways of life) they might want for their own sake.³⁴ This objective is relatively straightforward (although it raises difficult issues about the selection of content which, fortunately, are beyond the scope of the present discussion). The curricular implications of (b) are a little more difficult to grasp. Essentially, (b) enjoins educators to develop in children the abilities they will require to assess their present options from the point of view not just of the present moment but their lives as a whole in order to establish some long term priorities among

them.³⁵ White makes two recommendations here. The first concerns what White calls "integration". Each child is to acquire the principles, attitudes, beliefs, etc., that will enable him to take his understanding of different activities and ways of life and "weave what he learns - rejecting some material, retaining other - into a coherent pattern of life."³⁶ Children must, in other words, learn to develop a specific plan of life for themselves, having regard, White adds, not only to their own but others' interests.³⁷ The second recommendation White makes concerns the development of understanding - which White calls "practical" understanding - that enables children to develop effective means for attaining their ends and overcoming various psychological, social, and political obstacles that impede their attainment.³⁸

The objectives that (b) implies are not concerned, then, with developing the child's understanding of things which are intrinsically worthwhile. The first recommendation is concerned with the child's understanding of the inter-relationship of ends from certain points of view (self-regarding and other regarding), and the second is concerned with the child's understanding of obstacles to the pursuit of ends and the means to surmounting them. Nevertheless, it is only White's first recommendation that reveals the confusion in his thinking about intrinsic worth. His curriculum is concerned with the development of practical understanding because, as a compulsory curriculum, it attempts to serve the pupil's good on the whole. Thus, it is concerned with

extrinsic as well as intrinsic goods. White's second recommendation concerning practical understanding does not seem to be inferred directly from (a) and (b); rather it seems intended to complement those objectives which are. The objective of "integration" does seem, on the other hand, to be a direct application of (b). When an individual "weaves" ends he considers highly worthwhile into a "coherent pattern of life", he must assess his desires to attain these ends from the point of view of his life as a whole in order to establish some kind of long-term priorities. When an individual tries to develop specific plans and goals for himself after coming to some sort of conclusion about their intrinsic worth, he must, on pain of imprudence, arrange his affairs so that present pursuits don't frustrate future ones and try to select those ends which result in the best possible life over-all for him. This requires that he establish some long-term priorities and, more generally, a coherent life-plan. So, the objective of integration does seem to be what White had in mind in stating (b). But when an individual integrates ends into a coherent pattern of life, he assess them in terms of their relationship to other ends, i.e., their consequences for the pursuit and attainment of other ends. Thus, White does seem to be making the error it initially seemed so implausible to accuse him of making.

However, it is a little misleading to put the point this way because it suggests that White has a clear idea of what

integration or the formation of life-plans involves but that he mistakenly identifies it with the meaning of "intrinsically worthwhile". The fact is, however, White spends very little time discussing this objective and he does not have a very clear idea of what it involves. This is revealed more than anything else by his claim that integration is an ideal of education and not necessarily of life; i.e., after an individual understands what is involved in weaving his ends into a total pattern of life, it is up to him whether he goes on thinking about his life as a whole or actually does try to develop a life-plan.³⁹ An individual might decide to live impulsively and chaotically, letting circumstances shape his fortunes, but as long as he has reflected about how he wants to live his life in a way that satisfies conditions (a) and (b) we have to accept his decision as legitimate. However, even if the intrinsic value of an individual's ends is determined by his wanting them on reflection for their own sake, the task of integrating his ends into a fulfilling pattern of life is still not optional for him. It is a condition of the individual pursuing his ends in a way that, at the very least, is not self-defeating. He is simply being inconsistent (or, in Kantian terms, he is inconsistently willing) if he strongly values certain ends in themselves but chooses to live in such a manner that their attainment is a matter of chance. No one who properly recognized the nature and value of the integrative task would claim that it is optional for individuals

who want to rationally pursue their good, and the fact that White does claim this indicates that he does not have a clear grasp of this objective.

However, it should be pointed out here that prudential rationality does not demand that integrative tasks be performed autonomously. The individual may not have to do all or most of his planning himself. He may rely largely on the advice of parents, friends, teachers, etc. The concern to perform the integrative task in a certain manner, i.e., autonomously, is a concern for a specific end or life-ideal which itself must somehow be woven into a total pattern of life (certain individuals may find, for example, that self-directed integration is too costly or inefficient and that in order to attain a fulfilling pattern of life they must rely largely on the advice of others), it must not be confused with integration itself which is the logically higher-order end of weaving all one's ends into a coherent pattern of life. White, incidentally, does confuse the two. Because he is so unclear about the nature of integration in the first place, he thinks that the criterion of the best total pattern of life for an individual is the same as for any other end: it is simply that pattern of life which the individual wants on reflection for its own sake. Since, for White, the individual is best situated to determine what it is that he wants, integration is optimally a self-directed affair. Thus, insofar as White grasps the nature of the integrative task at all, he

tends to identify it with the ideal of integration pursued and attained autonomously.

White fails to grasp the nature of the integrative task because he never actually examines what considerations are at issue when an individual chooses among the various activities, ways of life, etc., that he wants on reflection for their own sake with the aim of constructing a total pattern of life. Much more is involved than weighing the intrinsic worth of ends or establishing some general unifying point of view such as self-interest - but this is all White really talks about. Despite (b) and its demand that educators get children to think about assessing their wants in terms of long term priorities, White says nothing about how an individual might optimally and rationally plan his life.⁴⁰ He doesn't explain what is involved in establishing long-term priorities or indicate the importance of considering whether the pursuit and attainment of one end might frustrate, facilitate or realize the attainment of others. As a result, White fails to realize that the individual, in trying to rationally plan his life, is concerned to choose ends which are valuable, all things considered. When an individual selects from all those ends he has come to consider to be valuable in themselves those ends which will structure what is hopefully the best possible life overall for him, he is concerned with the value they have considering their intrinsic worth and the price of their pursuit and attainment in terms of the conse-

quences for all of his other ends. For example, even if a certain activity possessed an extremely high degree of intrinsic worth for an individual, it would not be worthwhile for him to integrate its pursuit into the way of life he actually intends to adopt if his circumstances were such that its pursuit would frustrate the attainment of many of his other ends. Such a pursuit might be extremely worthwhile intrinsically, but it is not worthwhile all things considered, and, as such, cannot fit into any coherent pattern of life.

If White had realized that the value-concept central to that part of his curriculum concerned with integration is that of value, all things considered, rather than intrinsic worth, it would certainly have dawned on him, I think, that (a) and (b) do not constitute an account of intrinsic worth at all, but, if anything, a vague sort of account of the reflective procedure one goes through in trying to consider, at any given time, which option it is most worthwhile to pursue, all things considered. (If someone asked us how he could determine whether something he wanted for its own sake was the best thing to pursue, all things considered, we would probably find ourselves vaguely enjoining him to make sure, when he makes his decision, that (a) he knows of all the other things which he might have preferred at the time and (b) that he has carefully considered priorities among these different choices, bearing in mind not only his present situation but also whether he is likely to alter his priorities

in the future.) As it was, the notion of integration exercised an unexamined influence on White's thinking, which, together with his lack of clarity about why intrinsic worth was to be identified with what is wanted on reflection for its own sake and his use of the open question test of synonymy, resulted in his account of intrinsic worth.

Curricular Implications of Critique

What this critique of White's analysis of the concept of "intrinsic worth" shows, then, is that White does not present a coherent analysis of intrinsic worth, and, in fact, his account cannot be considered an explication of any clear evaluative notion at all. Consequently, he cannot claim to have provided educators with any reason to be concerned with attaining his objectives. Why now should they be concerned with developing the child's understanding of as many activities and ways of life as possible? The correct account of intrinsic worth may turn out to tell them that very few things in life are actually worth pursuing for their own sake, and any curriculum must be extremely selective about the activities it offers on the grounds that they are among the most intrinsically worthwhile things in life. With regard to the objective of integration, however, White might argue, appealing to the very grounds I used in criticizing his account of this objective, that educators cannot shirk the demand that they develop those capacities in children that they will need to rationally develop coherent life-plans. But

here one must distinguish between integration and the specific life-ideal of integration pursued autonomously. Individuals must somehow come to do the things that are best, all things considered, but they don't necessarily have to accomplish this through their own understanding of why certain life-plans rather than others are optimal for them. They may rely largely on the advice and recommendations of parents, brothers, uncles, priests, grandparents, mentors, etc. Their lives, or at least their pursuit of their good, may not be notably self-directed. But heteronomous integration does not seem to be very significant as an educational objective. One might dispute this, of course, but it would be much more desirable to have a justification of the ideal of integration pursued autonomously. (This point should seem familiar. It is essentially the request for a justification of the demand that people be more concerned to ask, "Why do this rather than that?") A similar point can be made about the development of practical understanding. No one would deny the desirability of individuals coming to select effective means to their ends and overcoming obstacles of various kinds - legal, political, financial, psychological, etc. But why must the individual select effective means and surmount obstacles on the basis of his own understanding of these means and obstacles? Why can't he rely on the resources of friends and family and the aid of an assortment of experts - lawyers, psychiatrists, bankers, stockbrokers, and politicians? Again, it would be an

educationally significant achievement to show that, for any individual, the pursuit of an ideal of rational self-direction is extremely worthwhile intrinsically.

The reconstruction of White's argument for a compulsory curriculum requires, then, some justification of the demand (a) that educators introduce children to as many activities and ways of life as possible so that they might determine for themselves which are most worth pursuing for their own sake and (b) that they develop in children those capacities required for the self-directed integration of these ends into a coherent pattern of life and their effective pursuit. Together, (a) and (b) outline a fairly specific ideal of autonomy: the self-directed formation and execution of rational life plans which express the individual's conception of the life that is most desirable, all things considered, for him to lead. This ideal indicates something about the way or manner in which individuals should lead their lives; it indicates something about the form their lives should take. The sort of justification we are looking for is one which establishes the intrinsic worth of the ideal. Not only is it the strongest sort of justification, as it shows the ideal to possess a worth that is not contingent upon its relationship to other things which are valuable in themselves, it is also the simplest. In order to see whether the ideal possesses extrinsic worth, we have to explore the relationship between living autonomously and choosing and pursuing most effectively the most intrinsically

worthwhile activities, goals, and life-ideals. Furthermore, this approach presupposes a knowledge of the various ends that are worthwhile in themselves - but this is precisely the knowledge we have been having such a difficult time trying to acquire. Neither Peters's transcendental argument nor White's "definist" argument has offered even a clear conception of what might count as a good reason for thinking that some activity or way of life has intrinsic worth, much less an adequate justification of specific judgments of intrinsic worth. Thus the first, in fact the essential, reconstructive task that faces us is the development of an adequate account of the nature of intrinsic value. Once in the possession of such an account, we should be in a better position to determine whether or not autonomy is intrinsically worthwhile - or whether we can, in fact, conclusively determine this - and consequently, the fate of White's curriculum. More generally, we should have some indication of just how promising it is to state and defend objectives of compulsory curricula - particularly a common compulsory curriculum such as White's - in terms of considerations of intrinsic worth.

III. RECONSTRUCTION

Towards an Ontological View

I shall begin by attempting to establish White's hypothesis that intrinsic worth is to be identified with what is wanted for its own sake on reflection. The argument is not based on a careful examination of a number of specific applications of "intrinsically worthwhile", "good-in-itself", "valuable for its own sake", etc.; like White, I want to offer "reflections of a more general sort" to support the hypothesis, although I do not of course intend to use the open question test.

The first question we should ask ourselves in thinking about what the correct criteria of "intrinsically worthwhile" might be is: What sort of property is it most plausible to think that "intrinsic worth" refers to, such that when something - an activity, passive experience, event, character trait, etc. - possesses this property, we call it "intrinsically worthwhile"? Essentially, what we are asking here is an ontological question. We want to know what intrinsic value is; we want to become as clear as we can about the sort of entities or properties our talk about intrinsic values refers to.

Some Non-Cognitivist Objections

At this point a non-cognitivist such as Hare might interject with a version of the open question argument. As with Moore's argument, the appeal of this argument lies in its purported capacity to defeat in advance any opposing view - in this case, accounts which try to identify intrinsic value with a property or set of properties, empirical or metaphysical. The failure of any such account, no matter what its content might be, is guaranteed a priori. Hare's formulation is as follows.

Now an attack upon naturalistic definitions of 'good' was based on the fact that if it were true that 'a good A' meant the same as 'an A which is C', then it would be impossible to use the sentence 'An A which is C is good' in order to commend A's which are C; for this sentence would be analytic and equivalent to 'An A which is C is C'. Now it seems clear that we do use sentences of the form 'An A which is C is good' in order to commend A's which are C; and that when we do so, we are not doing the same sort of thing as when we say 'A puppy is a young dog'; that is to say, commending is not the same sort of linguistic activity as defining.⁴¹

Hare's argument, then, is that any analysis of a value-concept in terms of a set of empirical or non-empirical properties makes it impossible for us to commend things for having those properties, something we quite obviously do. Thus such analyses must be rejected and all ontological discussion jettisoned (Hare's argument, like Moore's, then, purports to show that terms like "good" cannot be defined; that the question whether something that possesses a set of characteristics referred to by descriptive, empirical terms is

good is always an "open" one. However, Moore thought that this was because "good" referred to a logically simple or unanalyzable property. Hare, on the other hand, thinks it is because of the non-assertive speech act potentials of sentences containing valuative and moral terms.)

Hare's argument, however, rests on a false premise: that tautologies cannot be used to perform speech acts of commending, approving, recommending, advising, etc.⁴² Consider, for example, the coach, who, after his team has won an important game but in a less than impressive manner, expresses approval to disdainful reporters by saying, "A win is a win", or the impoverished student who, after accepting a physically demanding job with an unimpressive wage, expresses his gratitude by saying, "A job is a job". Furthermore, non-tautologous analytic statements can also be used to perform non-assertive speech acts.⁴³ Suppose that for the past week a man has returned from a store where he regularly purchases his groceries to discover that he has not received the proper change. The next day, after again purchasing some items, the man, suspecting that he might again be deliberately short-changed, hands the cashier twenty dollars for a five dollar and twenty-five cent purchase and receives thirteen dollars and seventy-five cents in change. The man then performs the speech act of warning by saying in a menacing tone, "Five dollars and twenty-five cents and thirteen dollars and seventy-five cents equal nineteen dollars!" Thus, it appears that

Hare is quite wrong in thinking that it is impossible to perform non-assertive speech acts like commending through the use of tautologies and analyticities. If so, Hare's open question argument offers no reason to think that ontological discussions about what sort of properties "intrinsically worth" refers to are wrong headed.

At this point, however, Hare might state a more positive position. He might claim that it is part - the most important part in fact - of the meaning of "good" that it is used to perform speech acts of commending, recommending, and advising. Consequently, any analysis such as White's, which defines "intrinsically good" strictly in terms of words whose function is not to indicate certain sorts of non-assertive speech acts but to refer to certain empirical or non-empirical properties, must be false. However, this position rests on the much criticized assumption that the fact that a word is used to perform a certain sort of speech act can be offered as at least a partial explication of the meaning of that word. There is a condition of adequacy which any analysis of the meaning of a word must meet, but which analyses in terms of a word's employment in speech acts fail to meet, viz., that any analysis be consistent with the fact that a word means the same thing in all of the grammatically different kinds of sentences in which it can occur.⁴⁴ This is an obvious condition of adequacy, because unless the meaning of words remained constant across conditionals, negations, indicatives, interro-

gatives, etc., communication and conversation would be impossible.⁴⁵ However, an analysis like that which states that the meaning of "good" is given by the fact it is a word used in the performance of speech acts like commending and advising fails to meet it. It seems obvious that "good" means the same in sentences like "Is X good?" or "I wonder if X is good" or "If X is good, then Y". as it does in indicatives, but it would be odd to understand the speakers of such sentences to be commending anything. How, for example, could we possibly be understanding the speaker of the above sort of conditional which contains "good" in its antecedent clause to be performing the speech act of commendation?⁴⁶ It is much more plausible to first of all accept that "good" does mean the same in all of the above sentences or sentence-types, and explain this in terms of the fact that the same proposition is expressed (to the effect that X possesses a certain kind of property) by the utterance of each sentence, although in uttering the sentences the speaker is performing a different speech act each time.⁴⁷ Thus, it is far from clear that moral and valuative concepts are to be properly understood in terms of non-assertive speech acts. Analyses of the use we make of ethical terms in speech do not seem to be adequate analysis of their meaning.

Is Intrinsic Worth An Objective Property?

The question with which I began my argument was: What properties does "intrinsic worth" refer to? The central issue here concerns whether "intrinsic worth" refers to a characteristic that exists completely independently of, or has only a logically contingent relationship to, what human beings want. It is quite likely the case that our pre-analytic intuitions make us want to say that intrinsic goodness is such an objective property,⁴⁸ but on reflection it is not difficult to see that objectivist views face a serious problem. How can the characteristics constitutive of value be non-arbitrarily identified independently of our wants and preferences? The objectivist might claim, for example, that the fact that an activity is concerned with the pursuit of truth makes that activity intrinsically worthwhile independently of whether anyone wants to engage in truth-seeking pursuits. How can such a claim avoid the charge of arbitrariness? Truth, we want to say, is truth; in what way is it also goodness? Why does "intrinsically worthwhile" refer to activities in virtue to their concern for truth as opposed to something else? It is difficult to see what explanation the objectivist could possibly give here. He might say that it is simply a rule of linguistic usage that "intrinsically worthwhile" applies to activities that are concerned with truth; however, aside from the fact that we might still request an explanation of this usage, this reply creates still more problems for the objecti-

vist. It is unlikely that he wants to say that a concern for truth is a necessary and sufficient condition for calling an activity worthwhile in itself - "intrinsically worthwhile" is certainly not a synonym for "activity concerned with truth". However, if he claims that "intrinsically worthwhile" picks out a vague concept with cluster of independent conditions of application (e.g., the presence in activities, objects, and experiences of harmony, proportion, symmetry, freedom, consciousness, the Divine, etc.) an indeterminate number of which are logically sufficient, and that one of these is a concern for truth (which by itself is sufficient), how can he answer the charge that he has made "intrinsically worthwhile" a homonym? Again, this is counter-intuitive. What seems to be missing here, and what the objectivist seems unable to provide by pointing to properties that are constitutive of activities, objects, experiences, etc., is some general explanatory principle through which we can understand why "intrinsically worthwhile" is applied to things in virtue of possessing certain constitutive or intrinsic properties rather than others. A non-cognitivist like Hare, of course, feels that the required explanatory principle cannot be framed in terms of some general unifying property that the criteria of truth, harmony, proportion, achievement in science, or art might possess, but must appeal to the fact that "intrinsically worthwhile" is used to perform speech acts of commending, recommending, advising, etc. Essentially, then, non-cognitivists

seek to explain away the property-referring features of "intrinsically worthwhile". From a logical point of view, it is not necessary that the criteria in virtue of which "intrinsically worthwhile" is applied to things be of a certain specific sort. Commending, unlike commanding, implies that reasons can be given for the commendation; thus certain standards are presupposed by such speech acts but these need only be of a conventionalized sort, it is not necessary that they refer to certain properties rather than others. However, as we have seen, the conceptual significance of the non-cognitivist position is extremely doubtful; there is an important difference between our skill in using ethical terms in speech and our grasp of the concepts they pick out. What the explanation of the fact that only certain facts about objects, activities, etc., count as good reasons for saying that they are intrinsically worthwhile seems to require, then, is an appeal to some general unifying property. However, this generalization must not have a logically accidental quality like "All the coins in my pocket are nickels". It should help us see why all and, as far as we can see, only those intrinsic facts about things the criteria of application of "intrinsically worthwhile" pick out are good reasons for saying that an activity, object, etc., is intrinsically worthwhile. The question which can't help but come to mind here is: What else could this general unifying property be but that of being the object of a want or preference? As we shall see, this

subjectivist suggestion will have to be considerably refined, and it admittedly has disturbing relativist implications, but at least it has the potential to explain why certain facts rather than others are relevant for us in judgments about intrinsic worth - these facts are relevant because they are the objects of wants and preferences.

There is, however, one type of meta-ethical theory the objectivist might appeal to here which does appear to have a certain explanatory power: Moorean intuitionism. Moore claims that goodness is an objective property that is indefinable. Like the properties of yellowness and pleasantness it is logically simple or unanalyzable into further properties. However, unlike yellowness and pleasantness it is non-natural. It cannot be known empirically but only through a process Moore called intuition. Now, the reason why only certain empirical facts count in favour of certain states of affairs being judged intrinsically good is that, as a matter of universal and necessary fact, the simple non-natural property of goodness inheres in empirical properties or states of affairs such as friendship. The claim that friendship is good is a synthetic claim - it is not part of the meaning of "good" or "friendship" that the former inheres in the latter - nevertheless, it seems to have for Moore, an apriori necessity.

The problem with intuitionism is that it seems to incur insuperable epistemological and ontological difficulties. Even leaving aside the problems with the notion of synthetic

apriori truth, it is one thing to postulate indefinable properties that by their very nature relieve Moore of the burden of developing a detailed account of them, but it is quite another to describe how we might come to detect their presence in things. Moore claims that we come to know whether things are good through a non-empirical, non-inferential process he called intuition, and his account runs into notorious difficulties. The classic objection runs roughly as follows.⁴⁹ The problem with our intuitions is that they conflict, and when they do, since they have a certain propositional content (that some property exists), one of them must be false. Thus, they are not incorrrible or self-certifying. But then we cannot appeal to other intuitions to determine which of the conflicting intuitions is true, for if intuitions are not incorrrible, their veracity is suspect. It seems, then, that we have to appeal to empirical grounds if we are to justify our acceptance of our intuitions that certain things possess non-natural properties - but to say this is just to say that we have no intuitive knowledge. Furthermore, do we really have an understanding of what this non-natural property of goodness is like? Although it is indefinable, we should at least know by acquaintance what it is like. But I have never detected in my experience the non-natural property Moore talks about, yet, if it does exist, I feel I should have.

(Aren't values part of the mainstream of human experience?)

My conclusion, then, is that the kind of meta-ethical

theory Moore offers - which seems to provide the only objectivist account of intrinsic worth which has some explanatory power - raises too many difficult epistemological and ontological questions (not to mention the difficulties of squaring an account of intuition with contemporary psychological theory) to be plausible, although this does not entail, of course, that it is untrue.

Why Wants Must Be Reflective

Thus, those objective, intrinsic characteristics of things, in virtue of which we apply "intrinsically worthwhile" to them, cannot, it seems, be non-arbitrarily identified, at least in any plausible way, independently of what people want. Any acceptable description of what intrinsic worth is, or is to be logically identified with, must depict it as being, in some way, the object of a want or preference. So the first point that can be said in support of White's hypothesis that intrinsic worth is identified with what is wanted on reflection for its own sake is that its subjectivist orientation appears to be correct. But why must intrinsic worth be identifiable with what is wanted on reflection? White, we have seen, never succeeds in answering this question. The beginning of an answer, however, is not really very difficult to give. The claim that X is desirable, as opposed to desired, implies that desiring X is justified or rational. So any account which tries to understand intrinsic values in terms of intrinsic wants should, it seems, explain what it is for an intrinsic

desire to be justified or rational. White's account of reflection can be seen as an attempt to do this, although a rather wrong-headed one.

R.B. Brandt's Account of Rational Intrinsic Desires

The proper reconstruction of White's hypothesis, then, faces the formidable task of somehow developing an adequate account of what it is to rationally desire something for its own sake. The only philosopher to my knowledge who has seriously considered what "rational" might mean when applied directly to intrinsic desires is R.B. Brandt.⁵⁰ Brandt's account is especially relevant, in fact, because he offers it quite explicitly as a contribution to discussions about what things are intrinsically valuable, suggesting that the old question about which states of affairs are worthwhile in themselves might be more profitably stated as: Is it rational for a certain individual to desire certain things for their own sake?⁵¹

To begin, since Brandt is talking about the rationality of intrinsic desires, we should first have some idea of what he means by an "intrinsic" desire. For Brandt, an intrinsic desire (or aversion) for a certain state of affairs S, at time t is one "which would persist at t if the person involved bracketed, ignored, or put out of mind at t any thought or rather judgment about the probable consequences of S, or indeed any thoughts about S not included in the concept of S".⁵² This seems quite straightforward and is essentially a more precise

statement of "desires X for its own sake". Let us now proceed to Brandt's concept of rationality.

Rationality, on Brandt's account, is a logically dependent or logically private notion. By a "rational" intrinsic desire, Brandt means a desire that is not irrational.⁵³ He does not mean by a rational desire, a desire it would be irrational not to have, but merely a desire that it is not irrational to have. A desire is irrational to have, for Brandt, if it is one which

. . . would not survive, in a given person, in the presence of vivid awareness of knowable propositions. Or, to be a bit more explicit, I mean by saying that a certain desire is irrational for a given person, that the person would not continue to have the desire if he got before his mind vividly, with firm belief, not necessarily just once but on a number of occasions, all the relevant propositions the truth of which can be known to him, at the very moment at which he was reflecting on the object in a desiring way.⁵⁴

"Rational", then, picks out desires that would survive this hypothetical reflective process if they were subjected to it. (Notice that Brandt, like White, resorts to an ideal kind of reflective process framed in terms of counterfactual conditionals.)

The problem with Brandt's definition to this point is that it does not explain the way in which beliefs can be relevant to a given desire. A little later, however, Brandt does present two criteria of relevance:

First we want to insist on a causal property: a belief will be deemed relevant only if vivid reflection on it will tend to influence the desire or aversion, either by extinguishing or

reinforcing it. Second, the belief must be about either the intrinsic nature of the state of affairs at which the desire or aversion is directed, or about the desire of aversion itself, or about the conditions or consequences of these.⁵⁸

It is not at all clear to me why Brandt's second criterion is so loose. Why, if what is at issue are rational intrinsic desires, are facts about the consequences of satisfying such desires relevant? Reflecting on the aversive consequences of satisfying a desire for X may modify or extinguish that desire, but how does that fact reflect upon the rationality of the intrinsic desire for X which involves desiring X for its own sake quite independently of the consequences of satisfying or possessing the desire? For example, an individual's desire for a night spent drinking Scotch for its own sake (as opposed, for example, to fulfilling a social obligation) may dissipate if he brings vividly and repeatedly to his mind the painful facts about hangovers, but what does this have to do with the rationality of his having the desire to drink Scotch quite independently of his desires, concerns, or beliefs about anything else? If his desire to drink Scotch for its own sake does dissipate on reflection, all this seems to show us is that he wants to avoid hangovers more than he wants to drink Scotch. What Brandt's criterion of a rational desire - i.e., a desire which survives repeated vivid reflection on all the relevant facts - seems to say, then, is that it is rational to desire X if X is what the individual would want, all things considered. Thus, Brandt seems to make

exactly the same error as White, and, if his account of rational intrinsic desires is to serve as the basis of an account of intrinsic worth, his second criterion of relevance must be tightened up so that it only includes beliefs about the intrinsic nature of the state of affairs the desire is directed toward.

There are also difficulties with Brandt's first criterion of relevance which is concerned with the causal relevance of beliefs. Why does the causal relevance have to do with the tendency of a belief to modify a desire as opposed to what beliefs actually cause or causally sustain the desire?⁵⁶ Brandt, appealing extensively to learning theory, particularly the literature concerning the extinction of response tendencies, argues⁵⁷ that recent psychological theory gives us good reason to think that desires that arise from accidental association (e.g., intense aversion to non-achievement as a result of an early traumatic experience of censure by teachers at school) or excessive generalization (e.g., desire for intelligent conversation based on enjoyment of a particular species of such conversation) must extinguish on repeated confrontation with relevant facts. Brandt thinks that such cases provide support for this criterion that desires are irrational if they would extinguish upon repeated reflection. However, is Brandt's criterion doing any real explanatory work here? It seems that once we know that a desire is formed on the basis of arbitrary association, excessive generalization, or traumatic early

deprivation, we have good reason for calling such desires irrational, because they are based on irrelevant facts, and it isn't clear that we obtain any further reason upon finding out that such desires would extinguish upon repeated reflection. Furthermore, if we do regard the extinction of the aversion to non-achievement based on the accidental association of traumatic censure and the excessively generalized desire for intelligent conversation of any sort by repeated, vivid reflection as a reason for thinking the desires are irrational, isn't it because we assume they were extinguished through being overlaid by increasingly strong motivational responses caused by relevant beliefs about the untraumatic nature of non-achievement and the different varieties of intelligent conversation?

Consider another example. If an individual develops a strong intrinsic desire to take up playing the piano because the girl he can't stop thinking about plays the piano night and day, we have reason to think that the desire is irrational quite independently of finding out whether the desire would extinguish upon reflection, for it is not based on an appreciation of the intrinsic satisfactions of piano-playing. But, moreover, if the individual becomes fully and vividly aware of all the relevant facts about playing the piano (which will concern only the intrinsic nature of the activity), his desire might not diminish or be extinguished, and it may not get any stronger (let us assume he is madly in love), but it may end up being based on an appreciation of the intrinsic nature of

the activity of playing the piano. This does not show that the original love-struck desire to play the piano was not in fact irrational despite arising from arbitrary associations, rather it shows that what was once an irrational desire because based on arbitrary associations now is a rational desire because it is causally sustained by an appreciation of the nature of piano playing.

Thus, I think that causal relevancy must not be understood, as Brandt suggests, in terms of the tendency of a belief to modify a desire, but in terms of what it is that actually causally sustains a desire. Brandt's first criterion of relevance, then, cannot be understood independently of the second, rather it presupposes it; we cannot identify the beliefs the causal efficacy of which is relevant for determining the desire's rationality until we know what the beliefs should be about.

Towards a Correct Account of Intrinsic Worth

The above remarks suggest the following account of rational intrinsic desires. An individual's desire for X for its own sake is fully rational if and only if: (1) the person has a complete set of rational (clear, coherent, consistent, supported by evidence, etc.) beliefs about the nature of X or its X-making properties and (2) the complete set of beliefs indicated in (1), and only these beliefs, causally sustain the desire for X.

This definition is not complete, of course; much more needs to be said about epistemic rationality (rationality of belief) and what it is for a belief to cause a desire - (1) and (2) provide what is essentially a framework for an adequate definition. A few additional points should be made here. First, although the definition indicates an ideal, it is not stated in the antecedent clause of a counterfactual conditional. The claim that an intrinsic desire is rational does not commit us to claims about what will occur in hypothetically ideal situations, but about what approximation to an ideal actually is the case with respect to the epistemic rationality of the individual's beliefs and the network of causal relations that actually support the desire. Second, the ideal (1) and (2) indicate is an ideal of rationality. Rationality is not, as on Brändt's account, a logically privative notion signifying the absence of irrationality, but a positive ideal to which there are quite obviously degrees of approximation. Not all of the individual's beliefs about what he desires may be true or fully justified, not all of them may causally regulate his motivational responses, and the desire may be partially supported by arbitrary considerations. As a result, the above notion of intrinsic worth which identifies intrinsic worth with what is rationally wanted for its own sake will have a certain vagueness, for there can be no precise statement about how close to the ideal the individual must come before his desiring X for its own sake can count as rational and thus intrinsically worthwhile.

This last point indicates that the definition of intrinsic worth must be stated as follows: some state of affairs S is intrinsically valuable for a person P at time t if and only if, and to the degree that, P's desire for S is rational at time t - where "rational" is understood to indicate degrees of approximation to the ideal indicated by (1) and (2).

In closing, it should be noted that the ideal of rational desires as outlined by (1) and (2) is not an ethical ideal. "Ideal" here simply refers to the highest degree to which a certain property attains, this property being the rationality of desires, understood in terms of the epistemic rationality and causal efficacy of relevant beliefs which, in the case of intrinsic desires, have to do with the internal features of what is desired. There are no ethical notions involved here. Accepting the above definition of intrinsic worth does not require that one adopt a particular valuative or moral stance, but rather that one accepts (a) the adequacy of the account of rational desires as a conceptual account - i.e., assuming that there is some coherent, viable notion of rational desires, is it correct to try to explicate this in terms of the epistemological adequacy and causal efficacy of relevant beliefs? - and (b) the ontological presupposition that what intrinsic values are, are the objects of rational desires. An individual might accept my account of rational intrinsic desires but deny that it has any more relevance to an ethical notion like intrinsic goodness than the notions of rational belief or

rational action - at least when the latter is understood as being concerned with the optimality of an agent's actions in relation to his ends whatever these ends might be. His denial would probably be motivated, understandably I think, by the refusal to accept that in talking about values we are simply talking about the objects of individuals' desires, rationally constrained or otherwise. In the first part of this chapter I presented some considerations which I think might incline people to accept subjectivist ontological claims, but I am quite prepared to admit they are not conclusive. However, I am not sure it is completely clear what counts as conclusive justification. What range of considerations, exactly, can be brought to bear on a meta-ethical theory? Before noting the implications my account of intrinsic worth has for curriculum theory, I would like to indicate - although this is not intended to be an exhaustive list - the conditions of adequacy for meta-ethical theories. These conditions should give us some idea of what a complete justification of my definition of intrinsic worth would involve, and also clarify the nature of the account I have been trying to present in this thesis. I will also try to make brief comparisons, where I can, between the various meta-ethical theories I have been discussing with regard to their ability to satisfy these conditions.

Conditions of Adequacy for Meta-Ethical Theories⁵⁸

First, I should briefly explain the view of meta-ethical theories these conditions presuppose. On this view, meta-ethical theories are treated as explanatory accounts of what value and obligation are. The aim of such theories is not to provide an analysis of the meaning of moral terms which, although it can tighten distinctions, eliminate vagueness, etc., must ultimately square with the intuitions of competent users of English as to what these terms actually mean. The aim rather is to provide reductive accounts of moral concepts which are analogous, at least, to reductive accounts in the sciences. The meta-ethical bi-conditional, "Some state of affairs S is intrinsically valuable for a person P at time t if P's desire for X is rational at t" is not intended to capture the meaning "intrinsically valuable" has in English; like "Heat is mean kinetic energy" its claim for acceptance lies in its explanatory power. It is accepted on the basis of showing that we can say and do everything that we want to say and do, e.g., commend, persuade, argue, give reasons, contradict, etc. - and also explain how it is that we say and do these things - by talking about intrinsic worth in terms of what is rationally desired. If this can be shown, we will have "reduced" talk about values to talk about what is rationally wanted, and if no other account is adequate we will have conclusive reason for thinking that what values are, are the objects of our rational desires. The following is a brief account of a number

of conditions of explanatory adequacy which any good meta-ethical reduction should meet.

1. As is the case with any good theory, the meta-ethical reduction should be consistent with established results in science and the rest of philosophy. Moorean intuitionism, as I have noted, is committed to a number of problematic epistemological and ontological claims and is difficult to square with contemporary psychological theory. We have also seen that Hare's non-cognitivist prescriptivism may fail to meet a condition of adequacy required of any theory of meaning. The naturalistic account of intrinsic worth I have presented, on the other hand, incurs no obvious difficulties here, and, in fact, there is reason to believe its refinement will proceed apace with psychological theory.

2. Another general theoretical demand is that of simplicity. Meta-ethical accounts should not postulate problematic entities or processes that do no explanatory work. Again, intuitionism fails to meet this condition. My account, on the other hand, talks only about desires, beliefs, and causes, which are metaphysically unproblematic. It should be noted that simplicity is not just a matter of economy, convenience, or aesthetic preference. The more entities which cannot be understood or explained in terms of other things a theorist postulates in order to do what he regards as the necessary explanatory work, the less comprehensible his account of the account of the world becomes.⁵⁹ Moore's theory is a

perfect illustration of this.

3. A good meta-ethical reduction must, of course, be non-circular. Its account of intrinsic worth must not be understood in terms of moral or valuative notions. As I have already explained near the end of the previous section, my bi-conditional incorporates no distinctively ethical notions.

4. Closely related to (3) is the demand for normative neutrality. Meta-ethical accounts must have no distinctively normative implications. My account must not entail claims like "The only intrinsically good thing is pleasure". This condition has become a matter of controversy of late, as the distinction between normative ethics and meta-ethics has become increasingly subject to attack. At any rate, I think it is fairly clear that my bi-conditional does not entail any substantive claims about what sort of intrinsic properties of activities, experiences, etc., are intrinsically good - at least not in isolation from empirical generalizations about the objects and causes of human desires. On the other hand, it is not completely neutral about what we are to do. For example, it gives some general advice about how to attain intrinsically worthwhile things. One of the things that we can do in this regard is to try and make our beliefs about things as rational as possible. Also, in teaching and child-rearing we should try to avoid excessive reliance on extrinsic forms of motivation and try to get children to want more things on the basis of their intrinsic features. Furthermore,

the bi-conditional has an important role to play in reason giving as the last move up a hierarchy of principles or criteria for distinguishing those things that are intrinsically worthwhile. When pressed to the limit about why X is "really" worthwhile in itself we will arrive at the point we say that something is worthwhile if, and only if it is rationally desired for its own sake, and in this case P rationally desires X for its own sake, and thus, X is worthwhile in itself. So, although the bi-conditional does provide an explanation of what intrinsic value is, it can also serve as a principle in a practical argument.

5. With any reductive theory there should be a rough extensional equivalence between reduced and reducing theory; i.e., in the case of my account, most of the propositions to the effect that certain sort of things are good should retain their truth values. "Intrinsically worthwhile" should refer to roughly the same things as it does now. If this is not the case, then it would be better to claim that I have eliminated rather than reduced intrinsic value (intrinsic value, in other words, goes the way of phlogiston and caloric rather than mean kinetic energy). Non-cognitivist accounts are examples of eliminativist accounts.

6. A slightly stronger condition than extensional equivalence is the requirement that the statements in the reducing theory have the same logical relationships, e.g., contradictoriness and contrariety, as the statements in the

reduced theory. The issue is too complex to be entered into here, but this condition does pose difficulties for my account's claim to be a reductive rather than eliminativist. Roughly, the problem concerns whether the logical relationships of contradictoriness and contrariety which seem to exist among "good"-statements persist among statements about rational desires and preferences.

7. My reductive bi-conditional must be employable in non-assertive speech acts such as commending and advising, and must preserve the influence moral and valuative language has on human conduct. Ideally, it should also explain such phenomena. Now, as my critique of Hare's version of the open question argument has shown, naturalistic accounts do not render moral and valuative statements unemployable in non-assertive speech acts such as advising and commending. However, it is not hard to see that my bi-conditional also explains the central role of terms like "good in itself" in speech acts like advising if it does in fact capture something central about the meaning of "good in itself" in English. When a speaker advises a hearer to take a certain course of action he intends to be understood as saying that there are reasons why the hearer should choose or prefer a certain course of action. In light of this fact, and the fact that my bi-conditional identifies intrinsic worth with what is rationally wanted, it is quite clear why "good in itself", "intrinsically worthwhile", etc., are used in speech acts such as advising.⁶⁰ The bi-

conditional also makes it clear how "good in itself" is used by speakers to engage the motivations of hearers. If values are understood in terms of wants, then it is easy to see how so much of our valuative language has an emotive or persuasive quality. It should also be clear that when people speak about what is rationally wanted, none of the so-called "dynamic" character of valuative language is lost. Can one say the same thing about Moorean intuitionism here? Doesn't discourse about non-natural properties have a contemplative quality - in what way do these entities practically engage us?

8. The last, and perhaps most important, condition I will discuss is the demand that my account explain the practice of giving reasons for judgments that a certain thing is intrinsically worthwhile. It must explain why criteria are appealed to which indicate certain facts about activities, experiences, etc., which count as good reasons for saying that they are intrinsically worthwhile. Ideally, a good reduction explains why we employ roughly the criteria that we do, in such a way that we can claim that these are the appropriate criteria - that is, those which pick out the facts that really are relevant to judgments of intrinsic worth - rather than matters of convention which support nothing more than the appearance of objective argument. As I have already explained in the argument I presented in my support of White's subjectivism, it is one of the merits of the sort of account I am presenting, that it has the potential to explain, in a completely general

and nonarbitrary way, why we regard the range of diverse intrinsic facts about activities, objects, etc. (e.g., symmetry, harmony, concern for truth, enjoyment) that we do as good and relevant reasons for making judgments of intrinsic worth.

The above list is quite sketchy but it does clarify the nature of the account I have been trying to give, the problems it tries to solve, and the range of considerations relevant to its justification. Also, perhaps this much can be said about my meta-ethical account, viewed as an explanatory reduction, against accounts like Hare's and Moore's: There is no good reason to believe that my account does or will fail to meet any of the above conditions with the possible exception of (6); on the other hand, there is good reason to think that a theory like Hare's will fail to meet (1), (5), and (6), and that intuitionist accounts will fail to meet (1), (2), and (7). Thus, at the present time, the sort of account I offer is the most promising, incurring the least criticism.

Conclusions

It is now time to draw some conclusions. It should be apparent by now that my account of intrinsic worth does not, like White's, offer any direct justification of the autonomous form of life and consequently of White's curriculum. As I explained in my discussion of the fourth condition of a meta-ethical account's adequacy, my account's bi-conditional, which identifies intrinsic worth with what is rationally desired, while it gives some practical guidance, does not, in isolation

from empirical generalizations about the objects and causes of human desires, entail anything about what intrinsic features of objects, activities, and experiences (e.g., enjoyment and concern for truth) are intrinsically good-making. Thus, I can only state the conclusion of this reconstruction hypothetically rather than categorically: If we can justifiably claim that children will come to rationally desire the autonomous form of life for its own sake, then we are permitted to compel them to attain the objectives of White's curriculum. However, without obtaining empirical evidence about the nature of individuals' desires for autonomy - viz., the rational status of their beliefs about autonomy and the causal relevance of these beliefs - armchair curriculum theorists have no good reason for thinking that the antecedent true. And the theorist cannot argue, in the manner of White, that the requirement of my account of rational desires that the person's beliefs about the intrinsic nature of what he desires be fully rational has certain educational implications. Demanding that children go through a curriculum like White's in order to acquire fully rational beliefs about the autonomous form of life only aids the empirical research of curriculum theorists and planners, it does not promote the children's good - at least in the absence of any good reason to think that these beliefs will cause or sustain a desire for a life lived autonomously, curriculum planners have no good reason to think that it does. It might be better, perhaps, to attempt the justification of

the ideal of an individual who autonomously forms and executes rational life-plans' from a social or political point of view. Perhaps the sort of political community that has any reasonable chance of promoting true human flourishing requires autonomous individuals. At any rate, this critique of White's argument has demonstrated the educational significance of the ideal of autonomy, at least, and explained what counts as a good reason for saying that it is intrinsically worthwhile. Thus, in the light of the serious confusions in the arguments of Peters and White, I think I might claim that I have added a certain clarity to foundationalist discussions about the curriculum.

NOTES

¹John P. White, Towards a Compulsory Curriculum (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁵Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁶Ibid., p. 11.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 12.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Richard S. Peters, "What is an Educational Process?" in The Concept of Education, ed. Richard S. Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 8.

¹²John P. White, Towards a Compulsory Curriculum, p. 13.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Richard S. Peters, Ethics and Education (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 164.

¹⁷ John P. White, Towards a Compulsory Curriculum (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 12.

¹⁸ I also draw here on Peters's later "In Defense of Bingo: A Rejoinder," British Journal of Educational Studies 15 (June 1967): 180-94.

¹⁹ See "A Reply to John Kleinig," Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 7 (July 1973): 167; and "The Justification of Education," in The Philosophy of Education, ed. Richard S. Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 251-62.

²⁰ Robert F. Dearden, "Autonomy," in Education and the Development of Reason, ed. Robert F. Dearden, Paul H. Hirst, and Richard S. Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 459.

²¹ Richard S. Peters, "The Justification of Education," in The Philosophy of Education (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 253-54.

²² Kurt Baier, The Moral Point of View (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 22-28. For an excellent analysis of the different forms of rationality see the collections of essays in Rationality and the Social Sciences, ed. Stanley I. Benn and Geoffrey W. Mortimore (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976).

²³ Here I draw on John Wilson's discussion of what he calls "mixed" terms and the fallacies of equivocation they give rise to. The example of "steal" is also his. Language and the Pursuit of Truth (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), pp. 25-28, 36-38.

²⁴ One discussion I found extremely useful in developing this argument was Paul W. Taylor's analysis of the question, "Why be rational?" in Normative Discourse (Englewood-Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), pp. 178-86.

²⁵ I was influenced here by an article of Stephen L. Darwall's. See "Practical Skepticism and The Reasons for Action," Canadian Journal of Philosophy 8 (June 1978): 247-58.

²⁶This theory of justification and its refutation is presented by John Kekes in "Rationality and Problem Solving," Philosophy of the Social Sciences 7(December 1977): 351-66. See also William Warren Bartley III, "Rationality versus the theory of Rationality," in The Critical Approach to Science and Philosophy, ed. Mario A. Bunge, (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 3-31.

²⁷John P. White, Towards a Compulsory Curriculum, p. 17.

²⁸Ibid., p. 18.

²⁹I obtained this interpretation of the open question argument from David A.J. Richards, A Theory of Reasons for Action (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 9-10. The explanation of the fallacy is my own formulation, however.

³⁰Richard B. Brandt develops the distinction between overt and covert synonymy in Ethical Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959), pp. 163-66.

³¹Ibid., p. 165.

³²John P. White, Towards a Compulsory Curriculum, p. 19.

³³Ibid., pp. 19-20.

³⁴Ibid., p. 22.

³⁵Ibid., p. 22, 24.

³⁶Ibid., p. 53.

³⁷Ibid., p. 59.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 56-59.

³⁹Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁰In the manner of John Rawls, for example, in A Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 399-446.

⁴¹Richard M. Hare, The Language of Morals (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 90-91.

⁴²David Zimmerman, "Open Questions, Speech Acts and Analyticity" Philosophical Studies 37 (February 1980): p. 153.

⁴³Ibid. My example below is patterned after one of Zimmerman's.

⁴⁴John Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 137.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶This is a significant example for Peter T. Geach in an argument which is quite similar to Searle's. See his "Ascriptivism", in Ethics, ed. Judith J. Thomson and Gerald Dworkin (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 22-26.

⁴⁷David A.J. Richards, A Theory of Reasons for Action (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 6.

⁴⁸John L. Mackie says some interesting things about the pressures toward objectification in Ethics (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 42-46.

⁴⁹John A. Bailey, "Are Value Judgments Synthetic A Posteriori?", Ethics 89 (October 1978): 43.

⁵⁰Bernard Gert has studied rational desires but not rational intrinsic desires. See Bernard Gert, The Moral Rules (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), Chapter 2.

⁵¹Richard B. Brandt, "Rational Desires", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association 43 (1969-1970): 43-45.

⁵²Ibid., p. 45.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 46.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁶ Robert K. Shope, "Rawls, Brandt, and the Definition of Rational Desires," Canadian Journal of Philosophy 8 (June 1978): 334-35. I am much indebted to this article for my criticisms of Brandt's first criterion of relevance.

⁵⁷ Richard B. Brandt, "Rational Desires", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association 43 (1969-70): 53-61.

⁵⁸ This section is completely indebted to an article by David Zimmerman, "Meta-Ethics Naturalized," Canadian Journal of Philosophy 10 (December 1980): 637-62, especially 652-62. The scientific analogies I suggest below are also Zimmerman's.

⁵⁹ Arthur C. Danto presents a good discussion about the importance of theoretical economy in What Philosophy Is (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 85-90.

⁶⁰ A similar point is made by John Rawls in A Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 404-7.

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