

VI. THE PATERNAL PRINCIPLE IN MALE SEXUAL NATURE

V.0 Goal and character of the chapter

The purpose of this philosophical chapter is to strengthen my case for the Paternal Principle by identifying our sexual nature as its authoritative source. There is much repetition of earlier themes. The repetitive character reflects my concern over whether or not I have expressed clearly a thesis that our sexuality gives our sexual morality. I totally avoid metaphysical terminology of nineteenth century systems of Absolute Idealism which, amongst other things, tried to locate reasoning in nature. I do not address the vast literature on natural law morality. So, if anything I advocate has been better expressed and more cogently argued, those people deserve the credit.

VI.1 Difference from “standard” natural law argument

Comparison of my case with arguments in “standard” natural law moral theories would not improve the rhetorical force of my case. I would have to argue cogently that my argument fits some natural law theory and then make a strong case for that theory. Such scholarly detour would make a complicated case even more complicated and error prone. Of course, if any of my correct or significant claims originate in a standard theory that theory should be given credit for them.

To dramatize my distance from stereotypes of natural law moralities, I will criticize a popular caricature of a “natural law” condemnation of homosexuality. My own condemnation of homosexuality, in the next chapter, is based on the Paternal Principle. However, comments on the case for the Paternal Principle, especially about teleology, were developed after long felt dissatisfaction with this naïve argument. Whenever I had tried to convince myself by myself of

traditional sexual prohibitions using natural law I used the stereotypic natural law theory I now set aside.

VI.1.1 Dismissal of a Naïve Natural Law Condemnation of Homosexuality

Some passages in Simon Blackburn's *Lust*¹ provoked me to note the seriousness and constructive character of my critique of a version natural law moral reasoning. Blackburn laments the damage to sexual morality by the putative philosophic error of finding it given by nature. He wrote "Yet it is almost impossible to exaggerate the effect of this simple combination of thoughts about lust, restraint, reason and what is natural. The entire Catholic doctrine of birth control depends upon it." He then starts his very short seventh chapter criticizing this moral theory by writing:

"We pause to reflect here on the argument that sex is for procreation, and hence that any sexual activity or desire that does not have reproduction as its aim is immoral. Here philosophy can come to the rescue. The dry way of doing it would be through teasing out various different senses of "natural," and then worrying quite how the move works from what there is in nature, and what ought to be there, in human activities. The quick way of realizing that something must be wrong is through humor."

Simon Blackburn, *Lust*

Blackburn uses humor. It is easy to sketch out scenarios of how ridiculous it is to take interfering with what a system typically produces as immoral. I do not use humor. I use the dry way. But I do not use the dry way to show the folly of saying that nature gives sexually morality. My goal is the constructive one of showing that there is good sense in saying that nature gives us sexual morality. A crucial phase of the construction is dividing the notion of end into non-moral function and moral purpose.

More details than that two males both attempt and attain sexual climax by physical contact with the other are unnecessary. Since we are focusing on typical homosexual acts we may assume that the partners are aware that the attainment of orgasms which they seek to enjoy are main features of human reproductive acts. They know the “facts of life.” We can focus on one of the partners; call him Adam. The line of reasoning below is presented as deductively valid. However, several intermediate steps and forms of expression which help make the validity apparent have been omitted. Let us pass a “natural law verdict” on Adam who is seeking to use his natural inclination for reproductive acts for the end of personal, or mutual, pleasure.

- [1. The natural end of the natural inclination for reproductive acts is reproductive acts.
2. The natural end of a natural system is that to which the natural system ought to lead.
3. If a person uses a natural system to attain an end contrary to the end to which the natural system ought to lead, the person uses the natural system in a way in which it ought not be used.
4. If a person uses a natural system in a way in which it ought not be used, then the person acts in a way in which he ought not act.

Since our example is about homosexuality we may apply (4) expressed as:

5. In his homosexual act Adam is seeking to use his inclination for reproductive acts in a way in which he ought not use his inclination for reproductive acts.

Line (1) faces least two challenges. First: With what right do we attribute ends to natural systems? Processes happen in nature and we have no reason for talking as if nature sets goals for them. Second: Why use “the end” rather than “ends?” After all the sexual inclinations may have other ends in the evolutionary process besides reproductive acts. A recipe for proposing multiple ends is to think of male sexual behavior and pick out aspects which seem to be conducive to the survival of the species and label that an end. For instance, inclination for orgasms may lead to

bonding or male competition. Line (2) is accused of equivocation when used with (3). Even if it is granted that we may talk of ends in nature. This is only functional talk. With what right do we re-interpret the functional claim such as “the heart ought to circulate the blood” as a claim about moral obligations instead of a claim about what a well operating heart does? If the “ought” in (2) is simply another way of talking of functions it adds little to (1) and is subject to no challenges beyond those against (1). However, if (2) is used with (3) to yield (4) the “ought” is interpreted as a moral “ought.” This is equivocation. It is used functionally to seem as if (2) is a slight re-expression of (1) while it is used morally to get to (4).

This blurring of a non-moral functional “ought” into a moral “ought” supports **popular** objections to this so-called “natural law reasoning.” Consider a “compression” of (3) and (4) in which the functional “ought” of (2) is read as a moral “ought.” *If a person uses a natural system to attain an end contrary to the end to which the natural system ought (functionally) to lead, then that person acts in a way in which he ought (morally) not act.*

Using a natural system to attain an end contrary to the end to which the natural system ought to lead is not sufficient for an act’s being immoral. For instance, facial hair ought to grow to protect the face against cold. However, a man who shaves his facial hair into a very thin moustache to make his face pleasing to himself frustrates the natural end of facial hair but has not clearly acted immorally. When we go outside the human body, we find people using, without moral fault, natural systems which are not primarily for human ends but which are used for human ends which frustrate the natural end. For instance, eating hen’s eggs is contrary to the natural end for the egg but it is not clearly immoral.

Is using a natural system to attain an end contrary to the end to which it ought to lead a necessary condition for acting immorally? Do counterexamples cast legitimate doubt upon the

following claim? *If a person acts in a way in which he ought not act, then he uses a natural system to attain an end contrary to the end to which the natural system ought to lead.*

Morally culpable negligence provides counterexamples. A man because of slight fear or indifference allows a child to drown, whom he could easily rescue, has misused no system. Rather he simply allowed nature to take its course – operate as it functionally ought to do *So acting contrary to the end of a natural system is, in general, neither necessary nor sufficient for the immorality of an act.*

Finally, we can locate a contradiction in this naïve natural law reasoning if it is granted that the end of practical human intelligence is to use natural systems for human ends which are sometimes contrary to the ends of the natural system. Sometimes, then, people ought to use their intelligence for ends contrary to the ends of the natural systems. Hence, sometimes people ought to use their intelligence as they ought not use it.

VI.1.2 Models of laws of nature set aside

There are models for moral laws of nature which I hope to avoid. These models picture laws of nature existing apart from our thinking on how we ought to be. For me the Paternal Principle does not express a law existing apart from natural individuals and communities. I resolutely suppress my dream of a mathematical model. We do not discover being bound by the Paternal Principle in the way in which we may feel that a geometric proof leads us to see the truth of a theorem. The basic principles do not get authority by expressing what is given in some laws for nature apart from nature such as Divine commands or thoughts. They certainly do not get authority from some natural laws in something like natural law books. I continually struggle against Bentham's (1748-1832) caricature of natural law books in some special intellectual realm. As a beginning student in philosophy a chilling philosophical insight came from reading a

quotation of Jeremy Bentham's mocking natural law theorists as believing in laws written in heavenly law books. Is advocating natural moral laws advocating what Bentham called "nonsense on stilts?"

By seeking authority by reference to some law external to our reasoning we would have also an is/ought issue. Why ought we obey those external laws? I do not accuse standard natural law theories of holding that the natural laws are articulated in some special realm apart from human beings since I do not address those theories. I want to say that we rethink or re-reason the basic principles when we engage in fundamental deliberation with ourselves and others. The basic principles get their authority during the course of reasoning. Cogent reasoning is the authoritative reasoning. Authority for reasoning is not something beyond the reasoning activity which reasoning represents or refers us to. Reasoning is its own authority.

As acknowledged when I began my argument for the Paternal Principle in my fourth chapter, this view that the authority of reason lies in the force, rhetorical force, of reasoning was suggested to me by Wittgenstein's remark "It is not something behind the proof that proves, but the proof proves." This internalist view that there is no source beyond reasoning to adjudicate disputes about correct reasoning allows deep skepticism for those so inclined. The basis of the skepticism is that nothing beyond our assertion that we are saying the same as before can meet a challenge that we are not saying the same. Bare assertion is not cogent reasoning. Wittgenstein (1889-1951) introduced this type of skepticism with his frequent questions about how we know the right way to complete a series. In 1982, S. Kripke systematized this type of skepticism in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*². My reaction to the skepticism is simply to acknowledge it. A human being can, without logical contradiction, advance a line of thought to

cast doubt on any reasoning. This Wittgensteinian skepticism about reasoning provides the foundation for my skeptical conceptualism.

Am I saying that the moral laws of nature are invented rather than discovered? I am saying that with careful reasoning accompanied by experience we can discover that the laws we invent are as correct as human beliefs can be.

VI.1.3 Dismissal of a pseudo-Euthyphro dilemma about a “reason command” theory

This section assumes some familiarity with Plato’s dialogue titled “Euthyphro.”

One way to appreciate my claim that the authority of reason lies in the reasoning process is to try to formulate a Euthyphro dilemma for reason as a moral authority. Because we are the reasoning authority, it is a pseudo-Euthyphro dilemma. Suppose I say “Reason says adultery is wrong.” I am challenged with a question “Is adultery wrong because reason says it is wrong or does reason say that adultery is wrong because reason recognizes that adultery is wrong?” If I reply “Reason says that adultery is wrong because reason recognizes that adultery is wrong,” then I am told “Reason, then, is not the authority for adultery being wrong for the wrongness of adultery is out there for reason to discover.” If I reply “Adultery is wrong because reason says that it is wrong,” the reply is “Anything could be wrong or right by reason saying it. For instance, if reason said that anal intercourse between a **forty**-year-old man and a **four**-year-old boy is right, then it would be right.” The way to confront the dilemma is to “grasp the horn” about reason being able to say that anything is right. The way to grasp the horn is to say: “Let us see whether or not reason says this is not wrong.” To see whether or not reason really does say this we return to reasoning which was where we should have stayed.

What, though, about the challenge that reasoning could say all sorts of horrible things are right? Some careful reasoning leads to harsh conclusions. There is a just war doctrine! Reasoning guides us on morally right ways to butcher non-human animals for food.

VI.2 Sexuality as the source of sexuality morality

Our sexuality is involved in reasoning about sexual morality. So I claim nature, indeed our sexuality, as the authority for the Paternal Principle. In linking reasoning with nature I share beliefs with natural law theories; especially beliefs about purposiveness in nature as a foundation for morality and that on this foundation nature gives us moral direction. These shared foundations need critical examination before I link moral reasoning with sexual thinking.

VI.2.1 Founding morality on natural teleology

My “Top Down Kantian” foundation for first principles shows explicitly how my case relies on assumptions of teleology in nature.

A natural system S, e.g. sexuality, is found to have a function of bringing about G. This function is taken as its purpose. As brought out in the last two chapters this transformation of function into purpose must be recognized as use of sexual moral reason. Crucial steps in the bringing about of G with S are left to free choice. For the species as a whole free choice operations appear to be evolutionarily successful for human beings. In many particular cases, free choice leads to operations which prevent the attainment of G along with other crucial human goals. The morally normative rule for controlling free choice is to have free choices made along the lines that nature would have used to have S bring about G without actions which are contrary to bringing about G.

VI.2.2 Scientific legitimacy of assuming natural teleology

The stance from which I argue, the character stance, does not assert that the purpose of *nature* for human sexuality is reproduction. Purposes or goals are not attributed to nature as a whole. It is said that in nature the purpose of sexuality is reproduction. From “in nature the purpose of X is Y” we cannot infer “the purpose of nature for X is Y.” To say “in nature the purpose of X is Y” is to say “study of nature has shown that very likely the function of X is to bring about Y.” Talk about the function of a natural system is compatible with acceptance of nature as an evolutionary process in which nothing, including origin and development of functional systems, is done for the sake of anything. *Systems in nature with the natural capacity to think morally think functions as purposes.* Humans are such systems.

There is no threat of attributing thoughts to systems of nature beyond those systems which clearly do think. Talk of a function for a natural system does not involve attributing purposes, with plans and intentions, to any natural system. Most functional systems operate in involuntary nature. For instance, to say that the kidneys are to purify the blood attributes no thoughts or plans to the kidneys.

Further challenges against talking of the purpose of sexuality along the lines that, in principle, functional talk can be eliminated from scientific theory are not appropriate moves in this conversation on the legitimacy of the Paternal Principle. We are asked to stop the conversation until some ideal language for natural science is attained and then, at that far off date, resume discussion in this technical language. Without getting into the complex issues of mid twentieth century philosophy on ordinary language philosophy vs. ideal language philosophy, we can note that such a challenge is question-begging. The question runs: Is there a legitimate position on sexual morality based on an assumption that sexuality has a function? The challenge, in effect, proposes: Let us defer discussion of the question about the function of

sexuality until we have established that there is no legitimate assumption that sexuality has a function. I conjecture that removing functional talk from science would hinder the fantastic development of neurobiology more than behaviorism inhibited psychology in mid twentieth century.

VI.2.3 Moral neutrality of frustrating an ends of natural systems

Does not the assumption that systems in nature have purpose carry with it an assumption that there are moral obligations for natural systems and, perhaps, an assumption that it is morally wrong for us to interfere with the functioning of a natural system? I have already argued that there are natural systems, viz., human beings who have moral obligations because of our normative natures, and that attention to the functioning of some natural systems is crucial for establishing these human obligations because functions are a necessary condition for purposes. Here, though, I shall explain my negative answer to the beginning question of this paragraph. The question is provoked by the easy transition from functional talk to normative talk.

VI.2.3a Functional vs. moral ‘ought’

In an area where we talk of functions, to say that X ought to do Y is used as nearly synonymous with the function of X is Y. For instance, we can say either “The function of the pancreas is to produce insulin” or, especially when the pancreas is defective, “the pancreas ought to produce insulin.” This “ought” which could be called “functional ought” is not moral. At least it is not moral in the sense in which someone or something can be blamed if it fails to do what it ought. I prefer to say “X is supposed to bring about Y.” But I slip into saying “X ought to bring about Y.” To think morally of a function as a purpose special conditions hold. Under the following conditions a functional “ought” provides a situation for thinking a moral “ought.”

A. There is a functional system X to bring about Y

B. Y is crucial for human life

C. X operates with both voluntary and involuntary subsystems.

VI.2.3b Nature as systems in conflict

A useful way, for my argument, to appreciate that functional “ought” does not entail a moral “ought.” is recognizing the massive number of conflicts in nature. Almost always, in my limited knowledge of science, the function of one system X is to stop the functioning of another system Z. For instance, the function of serotonin reuptake inhibitors is to stop the normal function of reuptake of serotonin. If we use the functional “ought” we can say of numerous systems: What X ought to do is prevent Z doing what Z ought to do. Such an obvious reminder sets aside sophomoric objections to a natural law view of morality wherein it is charged that a consistent natural law theorist should reject any interference with nature as immoral. I dismiss this sophomoric point because, although I am not presenting any standard natural law morality, what I say about morality is reminiscent of traditional natural law moralities.

Of more significance for the case now being developed, is the point that if human sexual morality is a natural system with a function, what it ought functionally to do may legitimately be to frustrate what other natural systems ought functionally to do. For instance, what human sexual morality ought functionally to do could be, and is, to frustrate what many subsystems in human sexuality ought functionally to do. For instance, on one hand what visual perception of a very attractive girl ought to do in a married man is produce courtship behavior. On the other hand the function of the moral system ought to be to inhibit such responses.

Recognition that systems of nature conflict is important for my case. Men are naturally inclined to seek orgasms. There are systems in nature whose goal is to have men seek and have

orgasms. I am arguing, of course, that there is a system in nature whose function is to make males seekers of orgasms only under conditions of the Paternal Principle.

It is worth repeating that the stance on nature which includes the parental stance does not regard nature as harmonious. Nature is a realm of struggle, destruction and survival. In a way I am confronting J.S. Mill's (1806-1873) charge³ that natural law moralists advise following nature but forget that nature is an arena of conflict which is a bad example to follow. We do follow nature by taking a side in the struggle of one part of nature against the sexual wantonness of another part.

Is there even conflicts in morality? Yes, of course. Within the same stance, though, there is no disagreement on the basic moral principles. That conflicts about basic moral principles for sexuality arise from different stances towards morality and nature will be exhibited in the discussion of stances. I concede that the best possible reasoning within the stances can leave irreconcilable moral differences between the stances. More than moral reasoning is needed to vindicate taking a stance. Providing an antidote to nihilism is a vindication I offer for the parental stance.

VI.2.4 Choosing a way to be reasonable from conflicting views of reason

If nature is an arena of conflict, how do we know which side to take? The question presents a misleading picture of our condition. We are not outside of nature as observers of a conflict, say, between a system for seeking orgasms and one for inhibiting such pursuits. The conflicting systems are within us. One is focused on inclination satisfactions while the other is focused on control of the satisfaction pursuits. Both are natural but the first is amoral while the second is moral at least in so far as it uses the semantics of moral judgments in its rules. Both systems use intelligence, or reason, which is, of course, natural. We do not have to conclude,

with David Hume, that natural intelligence or reason is to be primarily at the service of the first system and function in the second, or moral, system only for the ends of the first or inclination system. (Here again I am setting aside Hume's dogma that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions). However, noting that we can still say that reasoning is functioning naturally without conceding to Hume that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions, why not agree with Hume nonetheless? My answer is that I adopt what I have called the "top down" Kantian method of justifying basic moral principles. I adopt this method because it is apt for setting character development as a goal and character development as a goal is an antidote to nihilism. This adoption requires the pragmatic justification.

VI.3 Possibility of nature telling us what we ought to do

My goal is to say that nature through our natural bodies which have natural physical and mental features gives us moral laws. First, though, I want to make the general point that it is not odd to talk of nature giving us morality.

VI.3.1 Moral commands through natural human normative thinking

How can nature tell us what we ought to do and how we ought to be? Humans have evolved to control areas of our behavior with maxims and general moral rules. This shows us that our giving rules on what we ought to do and how we ought to be is a feature of nature. So, our telling ourselves what we ought to do and how we ought to be is nature telling a part of herself what it ought to do and how it ought to be with maxims and general laws. We must not forget that the human capacity to guide conduct and character by rules is as much a part of nature as humans' capacity to walk erect. The weight of an obligation on a man is as natural as the weight of a load on his back. The physical and social sciences tell us about nature but so do history, biography, diaries and daily gossip about ourselves and neighbors. Sacred texts,

theologies, homilies and maybe mathematics putatively tell us about more than nature. I do not use assumptions from sacred texts, theologies etc., although I have been influenced by them.

Of course, it is also very useful for much scientific study to distinguish nature apart from control by human desires and beliefs. But the abstraction of beliefs and desires from nature obviously does not mean their absence from nature. When we reconsider operation of natural human desires and beliefs in nature we find normativity in nature.

A syllogistic series summarizes my naturalization of morality.

1. Whatever a natural being does comes from nature
2. Humans are natural beings.
3. Humans create and control themselves by moral laws.
4. So: Creation and control of humans by moral laws comes from nature.

VI.3.2 Three observations on natural normativity,

The reminder above about the naturalness of normative control is not trivial in light of what has been thought about normative control.

First, control of sexuality by rules is not contrary to nature even if such control conflicts with natural sexual inclinations. There are conflicts in nature. For instance, conditions for survival of one species conflicts with those for survival of another. Perhaps there is nothing nature ought to do or no way nature ought to be. However, it would be a fallacy of division to conclude that there is no way nature tells us that we ought to be because nothing tells nature how she ought to be. There is no basis for assuming that inclinations which have evolved are any more natural than normative controls which have evolved. A thesis of primacy of naturalness for

inclinations may be held by those thinking that an inclination should be favored over a rule when there is a conflict. I do not hold that inclination satisfaction has some type of primacy in nature.

Second, normative rules of nature are not outside nature and imposed upon nature. They arise in nature with the natural development of intelligence. They reside in human reasoning both as reasoning is preserved in customs and statutes and is carried on in current discussion.

Third, reasoning to represent what is the case has also evolved in human beings. Such reasoning is called theoretical reasoning while reasoning to control behavior with rules is called practical reasoning. With theoretical reasoning, nature, through people, tells herself what is the case with her both in human beings and the whole of nature. With practical reason the focus is on human beings; not the whole of nature. Nonetheless, I do not think that we are in any position to assign natural primacy to one type. In particular, I do not think that we are in any position to hold that theoretical reasoning is more primary because it seeks the truth. Both types try to get it right. We should not use the model of practical reasoning being based on theoretical reasoning as in the axiomatic model. There really is not an is/ought gap because in practical reasoning we are focusing on what is to find out what ought to be. The “ought” lies in how we are thinking about what is. It misrepresents the situation to suggest that we first find out what is the case and on that basis judge what ought to be. We think what ought to be done and to be while thinking of what is.

VI.3.3 The “stuff” of natural morality

Let me use the term “stuff” to emphasize that I am trying to make morality physical or material. Someone trained in use of Aristotelian categories could probably express better what I try to bring out by using “stuff.” The material of which we are made is not bare matter but is a

matter with an actual potentiality for moral action and development. But I go no further with use of Aristotelian categories.

In physical and moral development, the focus is on development and maintenance of the stuff of our everyday life in response to the stuff by that stuff. Here by the crude term “stuff” I refer to our thoughts, desires, moods, actions, relationships etc., which make up our daily life. This “stuff” is all part of nature. My analogy is that character building is like body building and education except that it is guided by moral thought and is aiming at developing a character in accordance with those thoughts. But it must be emphasized that just as the rules of bodily development and maintenance are articulated by people responding to the stuff of daily life and are part of the stuff of daily life, the moral rules are articulated by people responding to the stuff of daily life and are part of the stuff of daily life.

Most likely my plea to locate morality in the physical conflicts with some people’s concept of the physical. It certainly conflicts with concepts of the physical according to which the physical is totally characterized by length, mass and time. Pleading for conceptual change while pleading for a principle in a rhetorical argument is legitimate; especially if one holds the skeptical conceptualism I proposed back in the third chapter.

VI.3.4 The spiritual model of the moral life I am trying to dismiss

I am trying to erase the picture of the moral life as a bipartite conceptual or linguistic product which can be written on two lines of a wide page. On an upper line there is a long description specifying how my life ought to be conducted in accordance with the laws of morality. On the lower line there is a description of how I lived. At the end of my life – at judgment day - I have lived well if my biography matches that ideal biography specified by morality. Why would it matter whether or not my biography matched, more or less, a normative

description of how my life ought to have gone? I have disappeared. All the physical and mental “stuff” of my life is, as it were, the ink with which my biography has been written.

This “two line” model seems appropriate to the other stances on morality and, of course, sexual morality. In a way they are “spiritual.” It is something left over after the stuff of every day life has vanished which is there to be evaluated, if anything. Let me focus on sexuality. By itself the stuff of our sexual life does not matter to the alternative stances. What matters is whether or not our life as a whole matched fairly well the idealized description. Since, obviously, no one is perfect, the evaluation of a person depends on how well the description of their actual life corresponds to the idealized description. On this model how well, or poorly, the stuff is developed does not matter. Only conformity to the law matters. In general, on this model the law does not arise from the nature of the stuff which has its internal norm for how it ought to be. The law is external: a product of reason, or even God, for religious people.

VI.4 Various thoughts on moral authority coming from nature

These sections, down to the section titled “*Motivation for locating morality in natural stuff*” bring together several themes to encourage acceptance of morality as a factor operating in nature with moral authority. This is essential to my view since no other factors operating in nature have moral authority.

VI.4.1 Where authority does not reside

Success in nature is irrelevant to her telling us what to do. I cannot argue that the human species would be as evolutionarily successful as it now is if all men followed the Paternal Principle. I cannot even claim that humans would not become extinct if all men followed the Paternal Principle. I certainly cannot claim that humans as a whole or individuals would be happier if the Paternal Principle were generally followed. So the basic principles do not get their

authority by empirical evidence that adherence to them produce a result apart from some value in mere adherence to them. On this model of getting authority by producing some result we would have an is/ought issue. Why ought we produce this factual result?

Definitely, I will not argue that a sexual moral thought is shown to be correct by showing that it is pervasive, if not fundamental, in human sexual thinking. I have repeatedly expressed agreement with Hume that we cannot logically derive an “ought” from an “is.” To try justifying a moral rule by claiming that it is pervasive, or even innate, in human thought would be trying to derive an “ought” from an “is.” I do not commit the *ad populum* fallacy by basing the Paternal Principle on the consensus of people throughout the ages and across different cultures. However, if it is a fact that the principle is widely recognized as true, even if not widely practiced, that fact is a reason for taking it seriously enough to pay attention to arguments on its behalf.

VI.4.2 Moral authority needed for categorical imperatives

I need to be very clear about the purpose of this analogy between physical health and a well developed moral character. The purpose is to show that the authority for our moral laws is based in our nature as are the guidelines for physical health. The purpose is not to show that being moral is a good condition which intelligent people will pursue once they know about it. I am trying to answer: What is the authority for moral laws? **In this chapter**, I am not answering: Why be moral?

What is the authority for the health guideline: Do not smoke cigarettes? Humans while reasoning, which is natural, have paid attention to what happens to the natural body because of smoking, paid attention to natural inclinations of human beings and formulated in our collective practices, which are natural, that smoking is bad for your health. There may be issues about whether or not governments have a right to ban smoking. But there is no significant challenge

along the lines: With what right do people have to say “Smoking is bad for your health; so don’t smoke!” To be sure, the command, or imperative is only what is called an hypothetical imperative: If you want to be healthy, do not smoke cigarettes.

Moral laws are supposed to be categorical imperatives such as: Don’t commit adultery! Does this semantic difference distinguish moral guidelines from health guidelines on openness to scientific investigation? Is the development, formulation and practice of moral guidelines as open to the physical and social sciences as that of health guidelines?

Moral rules are developed and practiced to solve natural problems. For instance, whatever rules a society has for male/female bonding for care and development of children, there is almost certainly to be inclinations, especially for males, to break those regulations from time-to-time. Men tend to be promiscuous. In general, these issues are too important to confront with the permissive semantics of hypothetical imperatives. The semantics of moral thinking includes categorical imperatives. If morality is being discussed, sooner or later, there are conclusions: Do it! Don’t! Even in highly theoretical discussions about methodological principles such as some type of consequentialism or my “top down” Kantianism, a point is reached where an ultimate imperative is issued. An egotist who presents egoism as a moral principle asserts a categorical imperative: Make your own interests primary! However, having this semantic capacity need not be interpreted as humans having contact with some features beyond the natural. Thinking with categorical imperatives is as open to psychological investigation as is the thinking with hypothetical imperatives.

What gives the moral rules authority? *The reasoning for the moral rules provides the authority.* This is why I acknowledge that the status of my argument is rhetorical or conversational. There is no citation of authorities which supplants reasoning to support a moral

judgment. Even saying that reason supports a judgment seriously distracts from using reason effectively. The challenge can be: Why should I listen to reason? This challenge can lead to a pseudo-Euthyphro problem as we saw above. To confront challenges in moral discussion, present reasons. If one runs out of reason and there is no convincing of the opponent, then there is an issue which cannot be resolved by reasoning.

VI.4.3 *De facto* legitimate moral conflicts

I conceded above that the view of morality being developed here admits the possibility of moral disputes which, for all that we know, cannot be resolved. That is a sorry fact about the human condition. Given the limitations of our reasoning there could be a just war in which both combatants are justified. However, my belief in moral objectivity or realism, which is justified by a pragmatic argument, holds that only one party is right. However, both parties may give their lives moral significance by choosing what is right, in so far as they know it, because it is right.

VI.5 Motivation for locating morality in natural stuff

These motivating observations are relevant to a rhetorical argument even if they are not crucial to its main Kantian lines. It is legitimate to make observations which facilitate acceptance as long as no fallacious appeals are used.

VI.5.1 Existential motivation for health model of character building

A recognition of morality as coming from our nature confronts a sense of insignificance of our lives by bringing out the importance of what constitutes our daily lives. For the character stance, it is what we live with every day that matters. Morality comes from our beliefs, desires and deeds of our daily struggles. What we try to develop by being moral is the “stuff of which we are made.” It is development of that “stuff” which gives meaning to what we live with day-by-day. The thoughts, passions etc., of daily life are the occasion for control, the source of rules

for their proper control and then when well developed that which is right and proper to be. For instance, it is my sexuality that requires control, as the source of how it is to be controlled and, is ultimately what becomes proper if I work at making it proper.

More generally, there is a way our bodies should be. By paying attention to our bodies as beings with intelligence our bodies tell us how they ought to be. This stance on sexual morality is to be contrasted with the spiritual model that we formulate moral laws based on some general considerations about utility or justice or rationality and then apply those laws to sexuality. On this second view there is no way that our sexuality ought to be and it does not matter by itself how our sexuality is.

VI.5.2 Factual motivation for health model of sexual morality

I am loathe to make empirical claims that resemble those of popular folk psychology. I will, though, suggest that our sexuality, infused with human normative thought, gives negative feedback when used primarily as an instrument of pleasure. This returns to the case against sexual trivialization. A certain sadness develops when our sexuality, ourselves, remind us that play is not what it is for. At the end of her essay on contraception Elizabeth Anscombe wrote of chastity⁴:

“But it, like the respect for life, is a supra-utilitarian value, connected with the substance of life, and this is what comes out in the perception that the life of lust is one in which we dishonor our bodies. Implicitly, lasciviousness is over and over again treated as hateful, even by those who would dislike such an explicit judgment on it. Just listen, witness the scurrility when it's hinted at; disgust when it's portrayed as the stuff of life; shame when it's exposed, the leer of complicity when it's approved. You don't get these attitudes with everybody all of the time; but you do get them with everybody. (It's much too hard work to keep up the façade of the Playboy

philosophy, according to which all this is just an unfortunate mistake, to be replaced by healthy-minded wholehearted praise of sexual fun.)”

Elizabeth Anscombe, On line essay on birth control

I close this chapter by returning to the theme introduced early in my third chapter that contemporary fiction of the late twentieth and twenty first century confronts us with the bleak truth about contemporary progressive sexuality. I recommend Jonathan Franzen’s *Freedom*⁵ whose tale opens in the St. Paul, Minnesota, Ramsey Hill neighborhood where I began married life.

¹ *Lust: The Seven Deadly Sins*, Simon Blackburn, Oxford U. Press, New York 2004

This book was developed from a lecture given at the New York, Public Library

²Harvard U Press, Cambridge MA 1982

³See J.S. Mill’s Nature essay in his 1874 book *Nature, The Utility of Religion and Theism*. There is a edition 1904, by Watts & Co. t.

⁴Access Anscombe’s essay on line:

<http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles/AnscombeChastity.php>

⁵ Farrar, Straus, Giroux, New York, 2010