

PERSPECTIVES
ON THE
RECOGNITION ^f AND RESOLUTION
OF DILEMMA
WITHIN AN
EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK | 1994

by

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ABSTRACT

This research is founded on an enduring interest in the concept of dilemma. This interest is in part philosophical (e.g. is it "inconceivable", as Kant believed, to have two equally valid moral obligations?); partly it derives from a concern to enhance the educational experience of adolescents, by giving greater attention to their preparation for the ambiguities of adulthood; partly, it is due to a fascination with its universality. There are dilemmas of personal relationships, public life, medical ethics, military tactics, or the "dirty hands" decisions of politicians. The experience has been captured in literature from Abraham and Agamemnon to Ibsen's *Norah* and Styron's *Sophie*. Defined briefly as "a choice between two alternatives which are equally unfavourable", dilemma usually carries as its aftermath a sense of regret or guilt.

There were three research objectives: to illuminate our understanding of the experience, to establish a case for including consideration of dilemmas more methodically in the curriculum, and to assist college counsellors and tutors. The method adopted has been phenomenological. Six perspectives were selected: four theoretical (moral philosophy, political ethics, psychology and social psychology); two empirical (student experiences, and a survey of the teaching strategies of Heads of Department). The intention has been to cross check the conclusions by illuminative evaluation and triangulation.

The research considered questions about the rationality of believing that two moral obligations can exist simultaneously, the difference between public and private morality, and whether a typology of dilemma can be derived. Further, the coping mechanisms of students and the benefits of including these matters in the curriculum are explored.

Students were interviewed and Heads of Departments surveyed. Amongst the conclusions drawn were: that pluralism accords more closely with experience than monism or single principle solutions; that ideological conflict is an essential precondition of being able to argue or think; that there is a need to prepare for the dilemmas of public office. The study ends with a plea for reflective common sense as the final arbiter in dilemmatic situations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This research is the culmination of a long-standing interest in dilemmas as a concept and the way value judgments are made by young people. Of particular concern has been the effect of decisions being taken under pressure to choose between difficult but valid alternatives. It is derived from experience gained in a number of different roles: as a priest in Portsmouth organizing a youth club, as a chaplain at the University Church in Cambridge, Great St Mary's, as a teacher of sixth form students at Manchester Grammar School and, later, in Sixth Form Colleges in Basingstoke, Sunbury and Esher.

This first led to an informal investigation with colleagues in the context of our work with 16-19 year old students, helped by a four month secondment granted to the researcher by Surrey Education Authority. Subsequently, a more formal study was devised but, as it progressed, its objectives developed and were recast. This process is described here together with a discussion of how the methods were adapted accordingly. First, however, it may be helpful to provide some preliminary definitions of the concepts "dilemma" and "recognition".

1.1 Preliminary Definitions of Dilemma

This is the study of a particular type of predicament which is experienced by everyone at some time or another. It occurs when the pressing alternatives available to us, or serious obligations we face, seem so evenly balanced that it is hard, and sometimes impossible, to make a choice. In ordinary conversation we may speak of being "between

the devil and the deep blue sea" or "between Scylla and and Charybdis". We call it a dilemma. Originally, it had a precise meaning and referred to two and only two alternatives, each with unpleasant consequences. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines a dilemma as "a choice between two (or *loosely* several) alternatives which are or appear equally unfavourable". If there were three alternatives, strictly speaking it would be a "trilemma" and, if four, a "quadrilemma"; many alternatives could be referred to as a "polylemma". Now, however, "dilemma" is the word for all cases.

Occasionally this may be a dramatic moral problem, such as in *Sophie's Choice* (Styron 1980), where a mother can save one of her two children from death but not both and she alone must make the choice. More frequently it will be an everyday situation, such as when you must decide which tender for a contract you will choose, the cheaper or the one with the higher specification, or which of two clashing diary engagements you will keep (Foot 1983 p382).

1.1.1 The interest of this study is not in the occasional irksome trifles in life (which travel route to take? which hors d'oeuvres?) but intractable quandaries requiring urgent solution. Rare though these may be and despite their level of perplexity, dilemmas of this kind are nevertheless widely reported and experienced. As Davidson (1980) commented:

Life is crowded with examples of the following sort: "I ought to do it because it will save a life, I ought not because it will be a lie; if I do it, I will break my word to Lavinia, if I don't I will break my word to Lolita"; and so on. (p34)

Arguably, such experiences are a more common part of everyday life than, say, employment or marriage, which after all can elude many of us. Some

situations will indisputably be moral dilemmas (where the alternatives are a conflict of obligations or "oughts"); others will be non-moral dilemmas, where each alternative carries with it an unacceptable opportunity cost (although, as will be seen, the difference is not always clear-cut). All, however, constrain us to make an urgent decision on the issue. They are most obviously seen in the biographies of those who hold important posts of responsibility, where we may read of politicians forced into making compromises, commanders in the field making tough calculations about acceptable loss of life, surgeons faced with hard choices.

It would, however, be a mistake to limit dilemmas to the lives of the great and the good, because they occur just as frequently in everyday life, decisions about jobs, about bringing up children, keeping promises, forming friendships, telling the truth, divorce and much else besides. They are the stuff of popular journalism. In the summer of 1993 the Independent carried a weekly column by Virginia Ironside, entitled "Dilemmas" which discussed such everyday issues and successfully invited mass participation. Light opera and romantic novels carry numerous examples of the kind: "How happy I'd be with either were t'other dear charmer away" (*The Beggar's Opera*, Act 2, Sc. 2, Air 25).

1.1.2 Despite this evidence from practical living or common sense, many moral philosophers have questioned whether it can actually be possible that a person morally ought to do one thing and morally ought to do another, when both cannot be done. This point of view is discussed in greater depth in 5A and 5B. It will be shown, however, that "dilemma" refers to a reality so widely experienced that to regard it as a misnomer or irrational would be unacceptably artificial.

The very fact that the occurrence of dilemma is universally reported is also used here as an argument for the greater use of dilemmatic situations in our schools and colleges, as a worthwhile, indeed essential, component in the education of young people.

1.2 Resolvable and Irresolvable Conflicts

Put briefly, and the question of definitions is discussed in more detail in chapter 2, it is assumed from the outset that a dilemma describes one of two situations: in the first the problem appears to be *irresolvable*. This may be when the choices available are difficult to compare. For example, in a moral dilemma, they may involve different principles. Plato (1974) gives the instance of whether you should return some weapons to the owner who will probably use them to kill. In this case the principle of promise keeping conflicts with that of life saving (p66). This is not, of course, the end of the argument (see 2.4).

Alternatively, there are some who claim that an irresolvable moral dilemma may describe a conflict within the *same* principle; for example, there could be a situation in which a team of surgeons has the duty of trying to save the lives of both Siamese twins when they must, for contingent reasons, choose between them (we will ignore for the present the argument that this is not a moral question at all [eg Donegan 1984 p305]). In a different case, single principle dilemmas may simply be evenly balanced situations presenting symmetrical alternatives such as the choice between two good applicants for a post.

1.2.1 A second type of dilemma is often said to arise even when the issue is in fact *resolvable* and a decision can be taken. There are many

kinds of resolution: it may be achieved by reconciliation between the alternatives, or by elimination of one of them; perhaps a solution can be found by conducting further enquiry. Each of these in theory cancels the original, apparent dilemma. It can, however, be argued that although it is clear, *all things considered*, which is the preferable course of action, and that therefore theoretically the matter can be resolved, the agent is left afterwards with serious doubts, a sense of regret or perhaps guilt about the rejected alternative. There is, as it were, a "remainder", even when a decision has been taken for the best. In these cases the problem has not been eliminated. The existence of this remainder is considered by some to be evidence of a genuine dilemma situation. (Williams [1973], though it will be seen that Foot [1983 p382] and Conee [1982 p90] argue strongly that this is a faulty argument).

1.3 The Recognition of Dilemma

The expression "recognition of dilemma" (or RD) is frequently used in this study and may need some explanation. It refers to two very different abilities, the first being to perceive the existence of an alternative and the second being to accept its validity. "Recognition" implies not only awareness but also taking cognizance of, "the action of acknowledging as true, valid or entitled to consideration" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary). It can therefore be said to have these two components:

(a) **Knowledge:** The awareness that there exist alternative perspectives. This is simply a recognition of reality in the sense that different people do as a matter of fact hold different opinions on the same issues. (This is referred to later as RD1).

(b) **Acceptance:** The acknowledgment that at least some of these points of view are legitimate, valid perspectives. This is the force of "entitled to consideration". (This is referred to as RD2.)

1.4 Rationalism and Phenomenology

It was pointed out above (1.1) that many moral philosophers question whether genuine dilemmas, the conflict of ultimate principles, can actually exist (whatever may *appear* to be the case). Depending on the philosophical standpoint taken, different views are taken on this issue. If one's approach to ethics is rationalist (in the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant or Mill) one's inclination will be to adopt a more restricted view of what constitutes a moral problem. For instance, a moral problem will be distinguished from a contingent question such as how to decide which of two clashing engagements to keep, or an epistemic issue, such as which operation is the best for a surgeon to decide on in the circumstances, and examples of practical problem solving; then, having narrowed the definition of "moral", one will be inclined to argue that there is always a preferred alternative and to deny the possibility of a moral dilemma altogether.

In a rational scheme of ethics to tolerate the existence of genuine moral dilemmas will seem to some like tolerating inconsistency (Donegan 1984 p291ff). On the other hand, others such as Brennan (1977) use the open textured nature of moral concepts to argue that a rational scheme of ethics need not be cut and dried, thus leaving room for dilemmas. This will be discussed in chapter 5.

If, however, one's standpoint is intuitionist or one's method

phenomenological (which is the case in this study), at least to the extent of taking seriously the individual experiences of those interviewed or observed, one is likely to be convinced of the existence of genuine dilemma. Even after clarifying misconceptions, errors and inconsistencies it is both necessary and desirable to respect their descriptions of regret, guilt or remorse (see chapter 7).

1.5 Why 16 -19 Year Old Students?

Students of the 16-19 age group are at a distinctive period in their development, forming a bridge between adolescence and adulthood (see 10.5). Although they are still in full or part time education, they would regard themselves as young adults; they may have, in Piagetian terms, passed beyond the stage of formal operational thought and have adopted many of the characteristics of adult cognition (Rybash 1986 p56 et passim). In chapter 8 and 10, it will be argued that they are a particularly interesting age group whose thinking has been valuable to study (see chapter 10, Louizos [1994], Marcia [1980] and Erikson [1959]).

1.6 Former Research Objectives

The purpose of this research developed significantly as it progressed and the objectives were altered (see 3.2). Originally, it was hoped to establish a connection between RD and ability. It was intuitively supposed that able students might be better at being aware of dilemmatic situations (RD1), but would not necessarily be better at accepting that they were "entitled to consideration" (RD2). It was further speculated that resolving dilemmas was a skill that could perhaps improve with practice. It was also supposed that ability at RD might prove to be a good predictor of future outcomes, such as examination success or adult

achievement. It proved too difficult, however, to establish proper operational objectives for such hypotheses (and even unethical to attempt it); moreover, the quantitative method proposed, even had it been feasible to implement, would have done little to advance our understanding of the experience of dilemma itself. It gradually became clear, therefore, that not only were the objectives impractical, but the methodology inappropriate. The recast objectives and the change in approach are described below in the chapters on research objectives and methodology (chapters 3 and 4).

1.7 The Current Purpose

In this way, the overall aim of this research became a qualitative one, namely to illuminate the nature of dilemma, especially as experienced by 16-19 year old students. There were three objectives (refined and discussed in greater detail in chapter 3):

1.7.1 The first and main objective was to provide insights into the experience of dilemma. This was carried out in two ways: partly by attempting to clarify the concept as understood by philosophers, psychologists, dramatists and other writers (chapters 5, 6, 8 and 9). In addition, and to counterbalance these theories, the experience of dilemma as described by 16 - 19 year old students themselves was explored in order to illuminate the phenomenon as lived in practice (chapter 7).

1.7.2 A second objective was to establish the case for including examples of dilemmas more methodically in educational programmes; this should be both a matter of increasing self knowledge and a preparation for adult responsibilities (chapter 10).

1.7.3 The third research objective was to assist counsellors, tutors and others whose work puts them in daily contact with young adults, by providing a better understanding of the kind of experience young people go through when faced by serious predicaments in their studies or in their personal lives (chapters 7 and 10).

1.8 A Phenomenological Approach and Multi Perspective Method

It was decided that the most appropriate approach to achieve these ends would be phenomenological and the multi perspective method, or "triangulation", was adopted (chapter 4). In order to understand an experience it is necessary to begin by listening to those who describe it; that is self evident. Many people, however, are more articulate in the written word. Therefore the formulation of theories, the classification of other people's experiences, and the formation of categories, though a separate component of research, is also a valid way of clarifying the experience. Thus, it was necessary to look at what philosophers have written (chapter 5). The responsibility for taking decisions in dilemmatic situations leads frequently to compromises and "dirty hands", which is why the debate about political ethics was also important (chapter 6). Likewise, dramatic literature has a contribution to make, in that it reflects and exemplifies life experience; the psychology of decision making (chapter 8) is also a relevant perspective, considering the process and the experience itself. The occurrence of contradiction and ideological dilemma in Western societies is also an interesting phenomenon and may arguably be an essential prerequisite for the development of debating skills, the ability to argue and the nurturing of common sense itself (chapter 9). Then, in order to relate the study directly to the classroom and the post 16 curriculum, a review

of relevant teaching strategies is also included (chapter 10).

In summary, then, these were the six perspectives which were used to provide the insights into dilemma. The definitions were steadily refined as the perspectives were considered. Together they provided a cross check (or "triangulation", see 4.8) on the ideas about dilemma which are put forward in the conclusion and helped to enhance our understanding of the experience.

1.9 Conclusion

It might be thought that to write about dilemma at all was either injudicious, by professing to know solutions to problems which escape others, or insignificant, by giving undue attention to commonplace troubles. However, it should now be clear that this study makes no claim to offer panaceas or ways of resolving problems, nor was it undertaken in order to establish the effectiveness of any particular technique for decision making; nor again was it to prove or disprove any quantitative hypotheses about dilemma. Inevitably, many questions remained unanswered and in the concluding chapter some suggestions are made about further research which could usefully be carried out. At the end, an analysis of the accumulated data is offered, indicating some structure to dilemma thinking with different levels of perception, recognition and resolution. In so far as insights emerge, it is hoped that their application will be found useful in the field of counselling and general post 16 education. Practitioners may find it helpful to bring to their work a framework for the analysis of dilemmatic situations and guidelines for approaching their interviews.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 WHAT IS DILEMMA? SOME WORKING DEFINITIONS

This chapter will have two aims: to develop the initial meaning of dilemma which has been proposed (1.1) and to look at some other definitions provided by the literature on the six perspectives which, together with related terms and concepts, were selected for this research. First the key terms and concepts which are used will be defined. Then some of the underlying issues will be introduced, as debated by moral philosophers (which will be the subject of chapters 5 and 6). The chapter will end with two summaries: one consisting of the separate elements contained in the working definition, as used for the remainder of the study; the other being a list of descriptive characteristics from the literature which have guided the research throughout.

Given that the purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of dilemma, whether described in interviews or analysed in philosophical debate, it was not necessary at this stage to decide finally between the various meanings given by others, nor to reach a clear definition, (indeed it would be contrary to the chosen approach to prejudge these issues); rather, the aim was to select the more significant examples of definition encountered and draw attention to their assumptions.

It could be argued that to include definitions at this stage is inappropriate, that it goes against the grain of a phenomenological approach to set out with preformed concepts of this kind. This, however, would be to misunderstand the part they have played. It would be

ingenuous and dangerously self deceptive to attempt to forget previously known definitions; it was therefore important to acknowledge their existence at the outset (to "bracket" them out, see 4.6.6) and deliberately to hold them in mind, not in order to provide tidy pigeon holes into which to catalogue each future observation and occurrence of dilemma, and by no means to close off further questioning of the assumptions made by those definitions, but to be alert to the different possibilities of interpretation and analysis.

As regards the working definitions, it was a matter of practicality that some assumptions should be made; otherwise it would not have been possible to converse at all. When students and others were interviewed, therefore, they were usually asked at the beginning a rough grained question, such as, "What do you yourself mean by a difficult decision, one where the alternatives are evenly balanced?" In other situations, the view which was held at the start of this research was adhered to, that dilemma was a common occurrence and could be described as:

A particular kind of predicament, which is experienced by everyone at some time or another (which) occurs when the pressing alternatives available to us, or serious obligations we face, seem so evenly balanced that it is hard, and sometimes impossible, to make a choice. (1.1)

2.1 A Common yet Serious Experience

That dilemma is a common experience must be beyond question. In addition to the examples quoted in 1.1 may be mentioned Barbara, in Shaw's *Major Barbara*, who was caught in the choice between giving up her work on behalf of the poor and accepting money that might have come from profits on drink and arms manufacture. Susan Howatch in *Glittering Images* portrays Archbishop Lang defending himself against a modernist's attack on his attitude towards the divorce laws:

Caught between the Scylla of my moral inclinations and the Charybdis of my political duty," declared the Archbishop, unable to resist a grandiloquent flourish, "I had no choice but to adopt a position of neutrality."(1988 p6)

The meaning of "pressing" or "serious" need hardly detain us. Whatever the agent regards as such will be sufficient criterion for the purpose of this research. Several writers have tried to ensure that the trivial is excluded, especially in the debate on the appropriateness of guilt feelings, (see 5A 5 and eg Statman 1990 p206). To attempt to discover some objective criterion of seriousness would be absurd in a study centred on the experience of dilemma. The claim itself is self justifying, even if the interviewer considers the opinion to be over scrupulous or precious, for that is not his or her concern. We can now add to this preliminary definition some other qualifying concepts.

2.2 Moral and Non-Moral Situations

In the first place, as was made clear (1.1) we are reviewing many kinds of dilemma situation; some could be described as moral and others as non-moral. In a moral dilemma the choices are normally referred to as obligations, duties, commitments or "oughts". In a non-moral dilemma they are simply referred to as alternatives. The distinction may not always be clear, but this is not critical; the concern here was not to establish at the outset a precise boundary between moral and non-moral; indeed, this might not be an achievable aim. Nussbaum (1985) stated the problem like this:

The use of the two categories "moral" and "nonmoral" suggests to numerous writers on the topic that the cases to be investigated fall into two neatly demarcated and opposed categories. They accordingly structure their discussions around this sharp division.. By contrast.. in everyday life we find, instead, a complex spectrum of cases, interrelated and overlapping in ways not captured by any dichotomous taxonomy. (p239, also 1986 p27f although Brennan argued

that the distinction is crucial to our thinking about morals, 1977
p55f)

Once again, it was considered sufficient to accept the agent's own description of the experience. If that was perceived as "moral" or "non-moral" then it was important to begin the analysis by considering it as such.

2.3 Resolvable Dilemmas

Reference has been made on several occasions to dilemma being either resolvable or irresolvable. If a dilemma is resolvable, it is taken to mean that a rational preference between the available alternatives can be given. This may be articulated in a variety of reasoned arguments: "option A has these favourable outcomes which make it superior to option B." Or "moral principle X has priority over principle Y". Or it may simply be expressed as an intuition: "I know this to be the right course of action", perhaps through introspection or some form of insight (leaving aside for the present the difficulties in maintaining such a position).

2.3.1 There may be objections to defining some dilemmas as resolvable. It might be asked whether this is not a contradiction in terms. Surely at the instant a solution is seen, the original dilemma disappears? The answer most frequently put forward is that there are different kinds of resolution. Sometimes, for example, in cases of extreme perplexity, a decision may be taken in desperation, spontaneously and with no attempt at reasoned deliberation. In these cases, the dilemma remains even though some relief may be felt at making a decision. The fact that a decision has been taken does not by itself eradicate the dilemma; it is possible that although a decision has been taken, no real solution has been found.

In this case the dilemma has remained unresolved.

Other dilemmas may be eliminated by finding a reconciliation (for example, by accommodating two engagements), or by finding a compromise between two seemingly irreconcilable points of view (for example in national territorial disputes). Hegel (1975) saw the role of tragedy as being to seek such a reconciliation (see 9.2.2).

2.3.2 More important, (and this is used by some as a justification for speaking of genuine dilemma) there are other occasions when, despite careful thought being given to the decision, there is some remainder attaching to the overridden obligation which makes the agent feel a sense of regret, guilt, remorse or even anguish. It is argued (eg Statman 1990 p206) that these sentiments are often appropriate to the case and that therefore they establish the reality even of an overridden obligation; thus the situation, though it had a reasonable solution, was indeed a "real" dilemma and perhaps continues to remain so. In these cases, the dilemma may be said to be resolved objectively but not eliminated subjectively.

To give an example: Diogenes Laertius tells the story of a young man who was much perplexed about whether or not to get married. He takes his problem to the philosopher Socrates and asks his advice. Clearly he hoped to receive some words of practical wisdom and guidance from the great man; instead, however, he received the somewhat stark reply: "Whatever you do, you will regret it" (Laertius 1972 p163).

Breaking a relationship is even more likely to leave regrets, guilt or remorse. Whether to terminate a partnership or not may be resolved by

decision but this by no means cancels out the dilemma, either at the point of decision or subsequently. Nora, in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1958), is faced with the problem whether or not to leave Helmer, her home and her children. She struggles with herself and eventually decides she owes it to herself to return to her former home. Helmer thinks she is mad, and chides her harshly. "All your father's want of principle has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty..." Nora says, "I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me..." Helmer calls her, "You blind, foolish woman!... It is shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties". Nora asks what they are. "Do I need to tell you that?", says Helmer, "Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?" Nora replies, "I have other duties just as sacred... duties to myself." (Act 3) Even though her mind is made up, the dilemma remains. "It gives me great pain," she says to Helmer, "because you have always been so kind to me, but I cannot help it. I don't love you any more."

2.4 Irresolvable Dilemmas

It was suggested above (2.3.1) that some dilemmas may be unresolved even though decisions have been taken, either because they were inadequate to the situation, or taken in desperation, or simply being the best available. A dilemma is described as "irresolvable" usually because there is no rational way of comparing the alternatives or obligations. They cannot be weighed against each other (see 1.2). They may involve two or more different principles, such as loyalty to one's friend and honesty. Pluralists, who argue that such a variety of principles is a normal part of the reality of practical living (eg Hampshire 1983 p151f), or a matter of common sense (Billig 1988), would therefore say that these are irresolvable because they are incommensurable. This means that it is not

merely difficult in practice to find a solution to the conflict but impossible in principle. Gaut (1993) gives the example of a mother whose son has committed a crime and he asks her to shelter him from the police. In some cases, depending on his crime, she will know what she ought to do. But in others her duty will be unclear:

In these cases the agony she may feel is a product of her recognition that she is caught in the vice of two independent moral principles - to save her son and not to harbour criminals- each of which is deeply embedded in a role she identifies with: as a mother and as a citizen. (p35)

It is as difficult, or so it is argued, to find a common standard by which to compare these "two independent moral principles" as to compare apples with pears. Of course, put like this, the challenge will immediately be taken up; in practice, just as we can compare the latter by price, or weight, so we can prioritise the former by a straightforward value such as her overriding obligation as a mother (see 5B.4,5,9).

2.4.1 Another type of dilemma which can be described as "irresolvable" is the conflict which arises when there are incompatible obligations derived from the *same* principle. Marcus puts it like this:

Under the single principle of promise-keeping, I might make two promises in all good faith and reason that they will not conflict, but then they do, as a result of circumstances that were unpredictable and beyond my control. All other considerations may balance out. The lives of identical twins are in jeopardy, and through force of circumstances, I am in a position to save only one. (Marcus 1980 p125)

Donegan, however, argued that this is not so much a moral conflict as a practical problem (see 5A 4). From the fact that I have a duty to save either *a* or *b* it does not follow that I have a duty to save *a* and a duty to save *b*.

2.5 Equal and Symmetrical Alternatives

These examples raise the question of whether, as many would argue, equal and symmetrical alternatives, obligations which weigh the same, are genuinely "irresolvable". The dictionary definition quoted in 1.1 refers to a choice between alternatives "which are or appear equally unfavourable". What is the meaning of "equally" here? If it were interpreted strictly, as meaning of equal weight on a scale, it would suggest that there could be no rational grounds for preferring either decision. The choice might just as well be settled by a toss of the coin. We could not seek a rational solution by selecting the more favourable of the two alternatives, because there would be, as we might say, nothing to choose between them. If the choice is in fact an equal one (which of two children to save from a burning house, or which of two equally deserving patients to operate on), it can be argued that it ceases to be a moral dilemma and becomes a matter of practicality.

Absolute equality of two obligations is in fact extremely unusual, and Sophie's choice is remarkable for its dramatic rarity. Moreover, symmetrical duties are the supposition of an impartial observer, someone who can withdraw himself or herself from the situation. In reality, this is unlikely to be the case. Dilemmas are sometimes resolved by a prejudiced participant, unjustly perhaps but still rationally because judgments will have taken place about the participant's feelings, or interests. The mother has a special involvement when asked to hide her son. She will resolve the dilemma by consciously rejecting the moral standpoint and the coldness and impartiality of justice. Or perhaps the moral dilemma is rejected by emphasising a different point of view altogether. Abraham may have perceived a moral dilemma but could see no religious one; the former he put behind him in favour of the absolute

obligation of the latter to obey God's command.

2.5.1 Etymology alone cannot settle issues of current meaning

("etymology is slight evidence of what the idea signified now is" [Mill, 1954, p43]) but it may shed light on this question of "equality". Dilemma in Greek ($\delta\epsilon$ - twice and $\lambda\eta\mu\mu\alpha$ - assumption) implies that there are two alternative premises which may be adopted. The two premises are usually referred to as "the horned syllogism", both of which prove a contrary point. There is no suggestion here that they are symmetrical and there is no reference to equality in this derivation, let alone equality on a calibrated scale. Thus, it is quite possible to make a rational preference for the best assumption. The agent can simply say "Let us take the first assumption, the consequences of which are such and such and compare it with the second, the consequences of which are less favourable. It is clear to me which is preferable and my decision is determined accordingly."

2.6 Alternatives Equally Unfavourable?

The next question to consider is whether dilemma should be defined negatively or positively. The decision to be taken may be between two equally favourable alternatives, but what makes us describe it as a dilemma is that each will have some cost; if it is a moral dilemma that cost may be a sense of guilt. It will have been noticed that the Oxford English Dictionary describes the alternatives as being equally *unfavourable*, so let us now consider this supposed negative characteristic of dilemma. Must it always have undesirable outcomes? Is it always the case that whatever you choose will have equally unpleasant implications? We have many expressions derived from common sense that

would suggest this was the case: we speak of "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire", or being "in a cleft stick", "in a tight corner", or between "Scylla and Charybdis", or "between a rock and a hard place." There is a Latin saying which reinforces the same idea: "In front the precipice, behind the wolf" (quoted in Billig 1988 p9). It is also interesting to see how many synonyms for dilemma carry a negative sense ("fix, jam, hole, mess" etc).

2.6.1 A negative dilemma, however, can sometimes be reversed by producing an equally cogent dilemma to the contrary effect. There is an example, in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, of an Athenian mother who advised her son "Do not enter into public business; for if you say what is just, men will hate you; and if you say what is unjust, the Gods will hate you." To this Aristotle suggested the following retort: "I ought to enter into public affairs; for if I say what is just, the Gods will love me; and if I say what is unjust, men will love me" (1975 p313). Aristotle may achieve a debating point with this argument, but it does not alter the fact that speaking justly or unjustly will in either case bear a negative cost.

2.6.2 Dilemmas may therefore sometimes *appear* to present favourable alternatives. Often they are expressed as choices between positive poles: deciding between two possible marriage partners, selecting which of two excellent candidates for a post, choosing between a job now with immediate income and further education with deferred advantages, these are all positive choices in themselves. However, in so far as dilemma is defined as a "situation" which has undesirable consequences as an opportunity cost benefit, it would appear correct to characterise it as unfavourable.

2.7 Dilemmas versus Problems

Another point which is often raised is whether it is necessary or even possible to distinguish between a "dilemma" and a "problem". Certainly, students are more likely to approach a tutor or a counsellor saying that they have a "problem" than a "dilemma", which is hardly their normal language. If asked, they will frequently make no further distinction. Some, however, are quite careful in their choice of words. One, for example, when asked what he regarded as a difficult decision, replied it is "when you have to make a choice between something that you want to do and something that you don't want to do and you have to decide which is the right way to go" (interview 3).

Another, in answer to the same question, said "It is one where you don't know which way to go, you don't want it to turn out wrong in the end, but you just think, am I going to regret this? But I don't know how to explain it" (interview 7). It was therefore assumed during this study that a distinction between a problem and a dilemma was not simply a technical philosophical point but could very well be made in everyday conversation. This led to a search for the distinguishing features.

2.7.1 The conclusion reached in this thesis was that "problem" can be distinguished from "dilemma" by focusing on the question of a post decisional "remainder". Some problems are resolvable, others are not. But the distinguishing characteristic of all problems is that, once solved, they disappear. A problem does not remain once it is resolved, nor leave the agent with a sense of loss or regret. "Dilemmas", on the other hand, require choices which will leave "remainders", in the form of regret, guilt or simply a poignant memory of personal involvement (see 5B 16). Therefore, a "dilemma" is not simply a problem with a difference; it is a

distinct category on its own, one in which "whatever you do you will regret it". A problem may range from a straightforward brain teaser to a complex personal quandary, but it will always carry the presumption that there is a correct solution to be found; once this is done, any remainder felt will not be regret, or guilt or sense of loss but, if anything, will be a sense of satisfaction that the task has been completed.

2.7.2 This raises the question, does not the remainder depend on the character of the person rather than the nature of the dilemma? This certainly seems to be the case. For example, if Abraham was the kind of person who cared little for morality but a great deal for religion, he might understand the moral dilemma but follow the religious duty of obedience. He would have no regrets. Alternatively, Abraham might be both deeply moral and religious. In which case, he might see the moral dilemma, struggle with it, but eventually follow the religious path. He would then be ashamed that he had forsaken the moral standpoint. This option, however, would not be open to anyone who (with Kant) defined "moral" as an overriding concern. Nevertheless, it is clear that the character of the agent will determine the nature of remainder and, to that extent, the nature of the dilemma experience. We should however avoid the trap of seeing dilemma as "merely subjective" simply because it is impossible to disentangle the two elements, dilemma and a person's reaction to it (see 4.6.4).

Some definitions from different philosophical standpoints and academic perspectives will now be given. They will show how, according to the way the idea of obligation is defined, it is possible either to rule out dilemma altogether or to allow for its genuine existence. The first will be used as the starting point in the discussion from the perspective of

moral philosophy (see chapter 5).

2.8 Ultimate Standards

Gowans (1987) defines dilemma in a way which highlights the incompatibility of conflicting obligations:

A moral dilemma is a situation in which an agent S morally ought to do A and morally ought to do B but cannot do both, either because B is just not-doing A or because some contingent feature of the world prevents doing both. (p3)

It is clear that, if by "ought" we mean a recommendation for action, and "ought" implies "can", then S is being recommended to do something which he or she cannot do, which *ex hypothesi* is impossible (but see 5B.7 where Gowans offers as a clarification of the inconsistency the suggestion that there is a distinction between "ought" and "must" and that only the latter is an all-things-considered obligation which cannot conflict with another "must").

Kant (1964) based his ethical philosophy, which has probably been the most influential rationalist system of the past two centuries, upon "categorical imperatives". These are "unconditional practical laws" according to which certain actions are "morally possible or morally impossible", of which some are "morally necessary, i.e. obligatory. Hence for morally necessary actions there arises the concept of a duty" (p21).

"The categorical imperative, which in general only expresses what obligation is, is this: act according to a maxim which can at the same time be valid as a universal law!" (p25). It is, according to Kant, an idea which is founded upon the concept of freedom. "Obligation is the necessity of a free action under a categorical imperative of reason"

(p21). By this is meant that, if it were not free, that is if the agent was prevented by some constraint from performing the action, it could not be described as an obligation. For this reason, in Kant's system "ought" implies "can" and the argument can be developed that dilemmas are inconceivable (see also 5A 3.1).

Since duty and obligation in general are concepts which express the objective practical necessity of certain actions, and since two opposite rules cannot be necessary at the same time, then if it is a duty to act in accordance with one of them it is not only not a duty, but contrary to duty, to act in accordance with the other. It therefore follows that a conflict of duties and obligations is inconceivable (*obligationes non colliduntur*). (p25)

Kant then goes on to say, however, that two "grounds" of obligation can be "conjoined in a subject and in the rule which he prescribes to himself", but in such a case we do not have two conflicting obligations but two conflicting "grounds", the weaker of which is overridden by the stronger and what we are left with is *one* obligation (see 5A 3).

2.9 All Things Considered

However, "ought" is only one, and perhaps the most undifferentiated, way in which we can express the obligation we feel. Searle (1978), for instance, listed those statements about obligation or duty which, in his view, it was important not to confuse:

- (a) X has an obligation to do A.
- (b) X has a duty to do A.
- (c) It would be a good thing if X did A.
- (d) X ought, other things being equal, to do A.
- (e) X ought to do A.
- (f) All things considered, X ought to do A. (p87)

Clearly the obligation expressed in (a) entails (d) and would conflict

with a demand to do something different, such as "other things being equal X ought to do B"; however, it does not entail (f) and would not conflict with a demand "*all things considered*, X ought to do B".

Therefore, a dilemma containing the twin obligations "X ought to do A" and "All things considered, X ought to do B" does not present X with incompatible demands. Clearly, these definitions allow us to speak about dilemma without self contradiction (see also Gowans 1987, Foot 1983 and 5A 7).

2.9.1 There is another similar attempt to distinguish between the types of obligation or "ought" which one might face. A "non overridden moral reason" is much like a reason which "*all things considered*" justifies the agent's choice (see above 2.3). It does not rule out that there may be other "oughts", duties or obligations. But it argues that in this particular circumstance the other sources of obligation do not override the decisive moral reason for the agent's choice.

Moral dilemmas can be defined as situations where there is a moral requirement for an agent to adopt each of two alternatives and the agent cannot adopt both, but neither moral requirement is overridden in a morally relevant way. Such situations vary from trivial to tragic, but what makes them all dilemmatic is that each alternative violates a moral requirement that is not overridden. (Sinnott-Armstrong 1985 p322)

2.10 Beliefs and Desires

In a very different definition, the ethical goal is likened to one of desire not belief. Williams (1973) argued that desires are not true or false in the same way as beliefs are. If you believe it is raining but go outside and find you are mistaken, your belief then terminates. Not so with desires:

A moral conflict shares with a conflict of desires, but not with a

conflict of beliefs, the feature that to end it in decision is not necessarily to eliminate one of the conflicting items: the item that was not acted upon may, for instance, persist as regret, which may (though it does not always) receive some constructive expression.... Moral conflicts are neither systematically avoidable, nor all soluble without remainder. (Williams 1973 p182)

From this standpoint, Williams seems to be arguing two cases: that there exist some genuine dilemmas which are resolvable *without* remainder; also that others exist which are resolvable *with* a remainder (in the sense that a choice could resolve the two conflicting obligations much as it could resolve two conflicting desires). This would imply that he allows "objective" dilemmas, with no remainder, and "subjective" dilemmas which have a remainder. A post decisional cost is therefore a sufficient but not a necessary characteristic (see 5B 16, A1 and B1).

2.10.1 Taking Williams' point further, Statman (1990) argued that dilemmas are both genuine and resolvable. Indeed, he considered the disagreement over the "so-called reality" of moral dilemmas to be misplaced. His own definition draws attention to what he sees as the essential distinguishing characteristic, which is the sense of "high moral loss" and the reasonableness of feelings of guilt. There is nothing inconsistent in saying, "It was the right action but I still have remorse", for this refers to a rational estimation of one's feelings. As he explained:

1. P ought to do A and ought to do B. (Or, if one prefers the terminology of reasons: P has a reason to do A, and a reason to do B.)
2. A and B are incompatible.
3. Doing A and doing B each (separately) involves a high moral loss.
4. It is rational for P to have guilt feelings whatever he does. (p206)

2.11 Dilemma in Traditional Logic

In traditional logic, a dilemma is a form of argument in which the participant is caught between two difficulties (the "horns"); he or she is committed to accepting one of two propositions each of which is undesirable because it contradicts his/her original contention. It can be defined as "a syllogism, having a conditional major premise with more than one antecedent, and a disjunctive minor" (Jevons 1913 p167). As Stebbing (1965) defined it:

A dilemma is a compound argument consisting of a premiss in which two hypotheticals are conjunctively affirmed and a premiss in which the antecedents are alternatively affirmed or the consequents alternatively denied. (p51)

2.11.1 There are at least three forms in which such a logical dilemma may be stated. The first is the Simple Constructive Dilemma:

If A is B, C is D; and if E is F, C is D;
But either A is B, or E is F;
Therefore C is D.

For example, one can argue as follows: "if marriage promotes stability in society, it should be encouraged; and if it provides the most satisfactory environment within which to raise children, it should be encouraged; but either marriage promotes stability in society or it provides the most satisfactory environment within which to raise children; therefore it deserves to be encouraged."

2.11.2 There are two further forms of logical dilemma; the Complex Constructive Dilemma which is of the form:

If A is B, C is D; and if E is F, G is H;
But either A is B, or E is F;
Therefore either C is D, or G is H.

For example, take the argument, "If a politician, who discovers that his first standpoint on an issue of public concern is founded on falsehood, does not change his policy, he will be misleading the people; and if he does change his policy he is open to the accusation of inconsistency; but either he does not change his policy or he does; therefore he is either misleading the people, or he is open to the accusation of inconsistency." In this example, as in the majority of dilemmas, the terms A, B, C, D etc are not all different.

2.11.3 The Destructive Dilemma, which is always complex, is in this form:

If A is B, C is D; and if E is F, G is H;
But either C is not D, or G is not H;
Therefore either A is not B, or E is not F.

An example would be "If this man were prudent, he would not make racist remarks as a joke; and if he were a good man, he would not do so in seriousness; but he does make racist remarks, either as a joke or in seriousness; therefore he is either not prudent or not a good man" (the examples have been adapted from Jevons 1913 pp167-169).

This excursion into the definitions of traditional logic has been made not because the details are particularly relevant to our present concern, but because they support the view that, if the alternatives are two premises, a rational choice can be made between them just as between any other two value principles and it is not in itself logically inconsistent that they should co-exist as alternatives. This approach also prepares the ground for the next definition.

2.12 Dilemma and Rhetoric

In traditional rhetoric, such as in Quintilian's *The Training of an Orator* (1958), the emphasis lies upon the instruction of those who wish to communicate. In modern rhetoric, the focus shifts to the listener or reader and, especially under the influence of Existentialism or Phenomenology, considers that our basic method of judgment is through argumentation either in dialogue with others or with a text, or even with ourselves. The outcome of this transaction will inevitably be a relativistic one, temporary and dilemmatic. As Billig (1988) stated it:

The characteristic of a dilemma which makes it significant for social analysis is that it is more complex than a simple choice or even a straightforward technical problem....the characteristics .. are revealed as *fundamentally born out of a culture which produces more than one possible ideal world*, more than one hierarchical arrangement of power, value and interest.... in this sense social beings are confronted by and deal with dilemmatic situations as a condition of their humanity. (Billig 1988 p163 researcher's italics)

Billig in this definition (which incidentally makes no distinction between moral and non-moral dilemma, see above 2.2) argued that genuine dilemmas are a natural part of our human existence. We have to learn how to deal with them. We shall consider this further in chapter 9 also taking up his claim, made elsewhere, that common sense itself contains the seeds of dilemma and that a thinking society depends on conflict and debate to exist and to be sustained.

2.13 Summary of the Salient Features of Dilemma

It will now be useful to summarise the salient features of dilemma, both in our working definitions and in the selected literature, *at this stage* in the research. It is worth bearing in mind that any differences seen in this selection of definitions from the preliminary reading may arise

either from variations in world view (some of which will be mutually incompatible, as with the pluralist and the utilitarian) or simply from differences in the objectives of the particular perspective in question (in which case they may only reflect the interests of that perspective).

2.13.1 The working definitions in the initial stages of the research required that dilemmas would exhibit the following characteristics.

They would all be:-

- (1) Everyday occurrences, yet pressing and serious to the participant, not trifling or inconsequential.
- (2) Conflict situations, presenting evenly balanced choices or obligations.
- (3) Conflicts derived from the incompatible demands of either a single principle or a pluralist ethic.
- (4) Situations which cause unfavourable consequences, i.e. leaving some remainder, whichever alternative is selected.
- (5) Distinguishable from problems in that only the latter leave no remainder and are eliminated when solved.
- (6) Either resolvable or irresolvable.

2.13.2 *Some dilemmas will be:*

- (1) moral conflicts (e.g. is it right to kill in these circumstances?), whilst others will ostensibly be non-moral (e.g. which operation has fewest side effects?).
- (2) Situations where the existence of alternatives is perceived but

where their validity may not be acknowledged.

- (3) Symmetrical in appearance, while others will have an ostensible preferred option.

2.13.3 Finally, depending on one's philosophical standpoint or particular perspective, dilemmas may be described as:

- (1) Either "real", in some objective sense, or a construct of the agent.
- (2) The "horned syllogism" of traditional logic.
- (3) Inherent in a thinking society and implied by common sense reasoning.
- (4) Bearing a post decisional remainder, sometimes expressed as regret or guilt.
- (5) Philosophically unacceptable or logically untenable.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The intention in this chapter is to elaborate on the research objectives briefly described previously (1.7), giving the reasoning behind them, the questions and the assumptions adopted, together with what it is hoped to achieve. There then follows a summary of the subsidiary aims contained within the six perspectives on dilemma, which were selected in order to provide as complete a picture of the subject as possible (within the constraints of such a study and the limits on time and finance).

3.1 Objectives, Questions and Assumptions.

"The first and main objective was to provide insights into our understanding of the experience of dilemma" (1.7.1). By this was meant being aware of the different connotations to the term and also appreciating what it is like to experience it. There were therefore two cardinal questions to ask:

3.1.1 The first was, what are the various strands of meaning which can be teased out of the word "dilemma"? In the section on definitions (1.1, 2.0) it was seen that, taking the philosophical perspective alone, there were those who regarded dilemma as a situation which, however it was resolved, would leave the agent with regrets; others saw it as meaning an irreconcilable conflict, which in turn led them to question whether such situations could "really" exist and to conclude that dilemmas (so called) could always be resolved rationally and satisfactorily. In a later chapter, on the "dirty hands" debate (6.0), it will be shown how yet other writers have regarded dilemmas as the clash between two moralities,

one applicable to public office and the other to private life.

It is clear, therefore, that dilemma is a multi faceted term, interpreted variously, with elements of urgent decision making, moral soul searching, practical problem solving and educational experience, amongst others. The most effective method of diagnosing that experience was judged to be by adopting a number of different perspectives, for example philosophical, psychological and political, each with its own questions and interests. This is further explained in chapter 4.0 on methodology, especially in relation to the "triangulation" method.

3.1.2 The second question within this objective was, what is it like to experience dilemma? This required an investigation amongst those students who were prepared to describe and discuss it. After very few discussions, it was apparent that dilemma was also understood by these agents in very different ways, which reinforced the same diverse and multi faceted characteristic found in the literature. The issue for one student was whether or not to leave her family, raising questions of income for living expenses and location near the college (interview 2); Another student was fretting about which A levels to study, primarily a case of careers advice and self knowledge (interview 3); another was torn between breaking with former friends and forming new ones, a personal cost either way with old loyalties being strained by new circumstances (interview 15); another wanted to break a promise to her mother but felt guilty about it (interview 10). Clearly these issues could not be encompassed or adequately investigated by a mono disciplinary approach. Thus again, it was considered to be more effective to use a number of different perspectives.

3.1.3 The second research objective was "to establish the case for including examples of dilemma more methodically in educational programmes". To do this, it was first necessary to ask what opportunities already existed in the post 16 curriculum. For this purpose the curriculum was understood in the widest sense to include programmes of study, general educational experience, examination syllabuses and also the hidden curriculum.

The two assumptions being made here were that such predicaments are embedded in our culture (see chapter 9.0) and occur very commonly (2.1); also that education should in some way prepare for this and that much could be learned from reflecting upon the experience of dilemma. This objective implies that we establish the importance in adult thinking of coping with such phenomena, the common acceptance of dilemmas in the work place, whether professional, white collar or manual.

3.1.4 An earlier study gave some encouragement to the assumption that dilemmas existed in specific disciplines or domains (Miller 1990). They required different skills. For example, an instantaneous decision between options whilst playing football is clearly not relying on the same skill as a measured selection of the best translation, or a resolution of a difficulty in craft or design. All, however, shared the basic characteristic of being a situation in which one of two evenly balanced decisions had to be taken, each leaving a costly remainder, regardless of which choice was made. This earlier study provided some evidence that dilemmas can be incorporated directly into educational programmes for post 16 students. But why should it be important to do so? The evidence, discussed in 8.0, indicates that predicaments of this kind are so intrinsic to adult cognition that any educational system purporting to "prepare" for adult responsibilities should take dilemma seriously, and

rather more so than appears to be the case at present.

3.1.5 In the USA especially, much work has been done on critical thinking, on problem solving, creative thinking and lateral thinking (see chapters 8 and 10) but none of these is precisely what is meant by "dilemma". Thinking logically, discovering the correct solution, thinking divergently, however valuable as skills, is not the same as learning to "recognise dilemma". It is rare to discover programmes which encourage the idea that two or more solutions can sometimes be equally valid and entitled to consideration, or that students should be prepared for the consequence that many decisions they take will involve living with regret (or worse).

Some of the best educational materials available are those prepared for the "enrichment" courses for "gifted pupils". However, the assumption taken in this thesis has been that such materials are best regarded as examples of normal good teaching; they should therefore be available for all pupils and not reserved solely for "Gifted and Talented" programmes or special needs purposes. This argument is developed further in chapter 10.

3.1.6 The third objective was "to assist counsellors, tutors and others whose work puts them in daily contact with young adults". The use to which an increased understanding of dilemma will be put in schools and colleges will depend greatly on the opportunities which exist in those institutions for counselling, careers advice and individual tutorials. This in turn will reflect their organisation and mission. The question being asked here is how a better understanding of the concept and the experience of dilemma can provide guidelines and a framework for analysis

and diagnosis.

There are a number of assumptions being made here: one is a particular view of the tutor's role, which should, it is claimed, include the obligation to treat the personal, pastoral issues which trouble students, in addition to the academic; indeed it is assumed that, with this age group, no distinction between the pastoral and the academic can ultimately be drawn and the responsibility of tutors inevitably covers both spheres.

These, then, were the three research objectives adopted. A fair summary would be: to look at the way dilemma has been understood by theoreticians, for example by moral and political philosophers, by psychologists and dramatists, as well as by those who can describe their own experiences; in this way a greater understanding of this phenomenon should be achieved in order to support the work of counsellors and others and to be of some practical assistance especially to those involved in the education of 16 - 19 year old students.

3.2 Early Stages in the Research

A considerable distance has been travelled since starting out on this research and a significant shift in objectives and method has taken place. At first the interest centred on the relation between dilemma thinking and (a) academic ability and (b) maturation. The questions which were important at that time were: was it the case that very able students were better at recognizing alternatives (RD1) than average ability students, but no better at acknowledging their validity (RD2)? Did higher scores at RD2 correlate with better results at public examinations, and if so, what was the implication of this? Is it possible that older or

more mature subjects were more relativistic in their thinking than younger? Were there gender differences in attitude towards dilemma? Was RD domain specific in the sense that students would prove better at it in their chosen A levels than in the general dilemmas put to them in interviews, or in their personal lives?

3.2.1 In the earlier study (Miller 1990), five hypotheses had previously been devised and an attempt made to operationalise the research (p48-56). It was soon apparent that the methodological problems were immense: in the first place, there was the definition of "gifted" or very able; even when this was overcome in an educationally acceptable way, there was the notorious question of identification. What criteria other than intelligence could be relied upon? Hardly any easier was the concept of maturation as applied to our subject; were there "stages" in cognitive or moral development (as proposed by Piaget and Kohlberg, for example)? Did they occur consecutively, or cumulatively? Was it possible to advance (in, say, RD) and then to regress? In the end, the difficulties encountered proved insuperable, although much that was useful was learned in the process.

3.2.2 At first it was hoped to take some of these objectives further in the current research, but such were the operational difficulties and the planning of appropriate fieldwork that it became clear that a radical revision of these objectives was required. If the goal was to understand more about judgment and dilemma, what need was there to make such huge assumptions? This research therefore made no attempt to reach quantifiable conclusions or to establish the kind of hypotheses previously considered.

3.2.3 Another assumption that should be made clear is that this was not a study in "grounded theory"; no assumption has been made that a "core" meaning, common to all dilemmas, would be found. In fact it was soon clear that, from such a multiplicity of examples and experiences, it was unlikely that one could distill an "essence" of the concept of dilemma. Indeed, as one listened to the descriptions of quandaries and perplexities which fell within the preliminary definition, the opposite seemed to be the case. Common sense suggested that there was a plurality of experiences rather than a single category, a cluster of different types, some irresolvable, some resolvable with remainder, some with preferred solutions, some with no clear escape from the perplexity, some raising moral issues, others not.

3.2.4 It was hoped that this research would provide a typology of dilemma with different levels, perhaps even a hierarchy, but the assumption at this stage was that no categories would be found that could be imposed upon other people's experiences or override their description of them. The argument of this thesis is that it is one thing to seek agreement by persuasion (for instance, that a particular cause of perplexity is better described as a practical and solvable problem than a dilemma); it is quite another to insist that an agent could have reached a clear solution by more careful analysis and the adoption of a recognized standard (utility for example). The first is to seek consistency in language, in the use of coding, words and images; the second is to attempt to alter a person's value system and reveals a disrespect for the agent's own choice of language.

3.2.5 One assumption which might have been adopted, but was rejected, is that we could decide *a priori* on a particular definition of dilemma, thus giving it an "objective" meaning unaltered by differing human perceptions

or constructs of it; it was clear, however, that on the contrary, the recognition of dilemma (RD) was "subjective" in the sense that it was a relationship between the agent and the situation. If this was correct, a study of dilemma would be either a concern for the correct definition (as in much of classical ethical debate, especially from a deontic point of view) or else it would be a consideration of the perceived experience of the subject. The first would be a subject considered by moral philosophers whilst the second would be addressed by psychologists and sociologists.

This however, would have placed the study in a "subjective" versus "objective" polarity and assumed that such a distinction could be consistently maintained. On the contrary, in this study an important assumption is that no such division would be helpful, even if possible; if an agent considers an experience to be dilemmatic, it is not appropriate, at least not in every case, to assume some definitional error and try to persuade the agent that he/she is mistaken. The cause of the disagreement may lie not in faulty coding but in the different value systems held by interviewer and agent.

3.3 A Summary of Intentions, Questions and Assumptions

Turning now to the perspectives themselves, it was soon apparent that each would inevitably possess its own interests, assumptions and questions; the following is a summary:

3.3.1 The interest in the chapter on moral philosophy (5) lies in clarifying the concept of dilemma. The main question was, what types of dilemma can usefully be distinguished? Much would depend on the

confidence that could be placed on the definition. Bearing in mind the practical application of the research, it was also asked, which of the meanings given provides the most appropriate definition, for example the one adopted by Williams (1973) or by Mill (1910). How closely does the theoretical debate accord with the phenomenology of the experience?

One assumption was that it would be helpful for tutors and counsellors to be aware of the different philosophical standpoints in this debate. Certain ethical codes, if adopted by the agent would either disperse the dilemma or exacerbate it (an obvious example would be the different attitudes towards war that might be taken by Buddhist or Moslem adherents). It would therefore be important for counsellors to be aware of the kind of tradition which had the most influence upon the agent. If possible, a typology would be suggested to aid analysis.

3.3.2 The intention in chapter 6, on political ethics, was to consider the application of a moral code to posts of public office. Colleges and schools would normally have such positions within their own structure (student president, council member, society secretary, team captain, prefect and such like). The question is, should students learn to acknowledge two moralities, the one permitting actions which the other might condemn? One for public posts and the other for private lives? Should students be accustomed to considering two, possibly conflicting, codes? Or is it more appropriate for them to practise regarding such situations as two examples within the same overarching moral system?

3.3.3 The interest in the section on phenomenology (chapter 7) lay primarily in the experiences of students themselves. Fifteen interviews were recorded and followed up. The overall question was the straightforward one, what was it like to experience a dilemma? Within

this a number of specific points were investigated in order to try and elicit information on such matters as: what was the context? How much pressure was there to reach a decision? What coping strategies were used? Did students distinguish dilemmas from ordinary problems? Were there any second thoughts, regrets or feelings of guilt? Had anything been learnt which might be of help in another similar situation? Was the expressed dilemma a cover for other deeper problems? Was there support for the typology derived from the interviews, and was this helpful when analysing the evidence?.

It was difficult sometimes to avoid concluding that the student was mistaken, that he or she had been over scrupulous, worrying unnecessarily, or that another solution had been overlooked. It was, however, crucial to this study to repress any instinct to "correct" the interviewees and simply to record their descriptions as given. The presumption was that they all deserved respect, at least initially.

3.3.4 In chapter 8, on the psychological perspective, there are a number of studies which shed light on the process of decision making and on other aspects of what young people experience when they face perplexing situations. This is a large and potentially hazardous area, especially since no specialist knowledge was claimed; it was important to limit one's interest to those theories most likely to be fruitful regarding the three main research objectives.

The foremost questions here were, what decision making or coping strategies might one expect to observe? What signs are there of post formal operational thought or of relativistic approaches? Are there any signs of development in moral awareness, or of cognitive dissonance? Did

psychological theory assist the understanding of dilemma thinking? Would it support the case for educational materials being available? Would it assist tutors and counsellors in understanding their clients?

3.3.5 In the section on the perspective from social psychology (chapter 9), it is argued that much can usefully be learnt from the approach of the Loughborough Discourse and Rhetoric Group, who make it clear that their interest lies not in the process of resolving dilemmas, the agonized mental state of the decision maker, but the need to experience dilemma and to develop the ability to argue, to think and debate:

Our concern is not with decision-making as such, but with the general preconditions of decision-making. In addition, the focus is upon social preconditions, as revealed in common sense or in ideology. As a consequence, attention is directed not to the individual thinker as such, but to those aspects of socially shared beliefs which give rise to the dilemmatic thinking of individuals. (Billig 1988 p8)

Students tend to be reluctant to admit to problems (Louizos 1994) and to describe situations essentially from a common sense standpoint. Therefore the question asked in this chapter is whether there is any relevance in this new analysis, cutting across the normal boundaries of sociology and social psychology; it also draws heavily on a modern interpretation of classical rhetoric. One assumption was that the existence of contradictory strands within common sense, as seen for instance, in the apparently antithetical advice of many proverbs (Billig 1988 p16), is indeed evidence for the universal nature of dilemma, as least within a liberal society. It was considered that argumentation and skill in debate is but one side of the case for including the deliberate awareness of conflict as part of any person's education and development.

3.3.6 Throughout this research it was apparent that conflict, especially moral conflict, abounds in dramatic literature from the classics to the

modern novel. It was only possible to include a few examples: Abraham, Agamemnon, Antigone and Orestes reveal agonising choices between conflicting duties and moral standpoints; similar hard choices confront the heroines in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Shaw's *Major Barbara*, Styron's *Sophie's Choice*. It may be disputed whether they are all "genuine" dilemmas but it can hardly be denied that these stories reflect emotions which are universally recognisable.

The assumption is that these examples provide valid evidence of the existence of dilemma. The subject matter of drama is the substance of human life and it must surely assist tutors in their work to listen to what Nussbaum has called "lived, practical reason" (1986 p5); to be aware of the complexities of dilemmas, the subtleties of response, the nature of guilt and remorse; to appreciate the variety of situations containing unfamiliar social conventions and to assess the case for and against a pluralist and relativist morality.

3.3.7 The section on the educational perspective, chapter 10, considers the dilemmas that occur in different academic disciplines. These are mostly non-moral (but see chapter 5 below). It was asked whether RD was a skill which was specific to different subjects and courses; whether a student might not be sensitive to dilemma in, say, the study of History but seemingly slow to recognise it in Physics. Was there anything to be said for the argument that the very able student will be more aware of conflict situations and better at handling them? A number of disciplines were investigated to see what opportunities existed or could be created to develop this awareness both in formal classroom situations and in the less overt curriculum of schools and colleges.

The main assumption was that, since part of the purpose of education was the development of a person's character, and the preparation for the exigencies and perplexities of adult life, there are many benefits to be derived from the experience of dilemma (see Nussbaum 1985 p260f).

This concludes the Research Objectives, with the summary of questions raised and assumptions made within each of the six perspectives selected. The next section considers those methods which were considered the most appropriate to this study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter an explanation will be given for the change from a quantitative to a qualitative approach, parallel to the change which took place in research objectives. This is followed by a description of the multi perspective methods and triangulation techniques, chosen as being most appropriate to this study; there is then a digression on Phenomenology, outlining its development and philosophy, and the chapter ends with a brief summary of some elements of Personal Construct Theory as used in the analysis of the interviews.

4.1 Why the Change ?

If the objectives had remained as was once proposed, an experimental approach would have been essential. It was originally the intention to explore further some of the questions raised in an earlier informal study (Miller 1990). As explained in 3.2, it was hoped that it might be possible to show that, whereas "very able" students (VA) might be better than average ability students at *perceiving* the alternatives in a dilemmatic situation (RD1), they would not be significantly better at *acknowledging* them (RD2). Amongst the other objectives, it was also hoped to show that RD together with ability would prove to be a better predictor of good A level results than ability on its own; that RD tends to be a context specific skill rather than a generalised one (ie students would be found to reveal a greater ability at RD in their A levels than in the general dilemmas put to them in their interviews); also, that ability at RD could be taught and improved with practice.

It was clear that any attempt to establish these kinds of hypotheses would require some form of measurement. An attempt was therefore made to identify a stratified random sample of "very able" students and a control group of "average ability" students. However, as explained earlier (1.6, 3.2.1), the operational and other difficulties proved insuperable. Quite apart from the notorious problems of defining ability, professional ethics would debar a researcher from deliberately denying to one group of students a form of teaching which it was believed would be beneficial to them; there were also practical problems of coding and scoring ability at RD; then the A levels themselves proved to be a shifting target, constantly developing, with some requiring more dilemma type judgments than others; this meant that evidence of success or failure could turn out to be a circular proof (being good at RD meaning no more than showing ability at those A Level examinations which were already requiring RD).

Finally, insufficient attention had been given to the concept of dilemma itself; there was little consideration of previous theories and virtually no flexibility permitted in the working definition as the study progressed, so that exposure to the actual experience of students made little or no difference to the understanding of dilemma; indeed, investigating the experience as such was not a particularly important part of the original plan. It was taken for granted that everyone would understand both the concept and the experience so that all that was needed was a test of outcomes such as the impact of ability at RD on students' academic and personal lives.

4.1.2 It was therefore decided to shift the focus of the study and it is now the intention to find out more about the experience itself; the recurrence within the present objectives of words like "interpret",

"investigate", "discover", "illuminate", "understand", indicate a different approach altogether. These are the hallmarks of a naturalistic or qualitative enquiry, in which it is important before all else to listen to, observe and record the phenomenon lest we assume that we already understand it and have only to test it against our propositions.

Moreover, as Cronbach (1975) argued, human behaviour cannot satisfactorily be reduced to laws; researchers would obtain more effective results if they concentrated on "interpretation in context" rather than on generalisation (p116). Similarly, in respect of nursing research, which has a number of interesting parallels (in the study of pain and isolation for example) Cohen (1987) has written that therapists should begin "to see the patient as he (*sic*) really is, knowing him in his own reality" rather than "seeing merely a projection of our own theories about him" (p33).

4.2 Qualitative versus Quantitative Enquiries

It soon became apparent that the change in approach would have far reaching effects; Guba (1978 pp11-18) has listed fourteen characteristics by which a naturalistic enquiry can be contrasted with a conventional or scientific enquiry. Those most relevant to this study include:

Philosophical base - "the naturalistic investigator is a phenomenologist while the conventional inquirer is a logical positivist."

Purpose - "the conventional inquirer deals with variables and their relations, his (*sic*) purpose is thus essentially that of verification" (p11).

Stance - "the conventional inquirer takes a structured, focussed, singular stance, while the naturalistic inquirer tends to be open-minded, exploratory, and complex in his position."

Style - "the basic style of the conventional inquirer is intervention. He manipulates the situation....the basic style of the naturalistic inquirer is selection.... He is less a stage manager than a member of the audience. He watches the entire play and then selects from it those aspects which he considers critical for his purposes" (p14).

Reality manifold - "the naturalistic inquirer is likely to take a much more flexible view of the nature of reality... much of the reality with which the naturalistic inquirer must deal exists only in the minds of individual people and depends heavily on their separate perceptions" (p15).

Value structure - "the naturalistic inquirer recognizes that his own values are very much part of his inquiry and that he needs to be as explicit about them as he can" (p16).

Methods - "the conventional inquirer strives for objectivity in the sense of inter-subjective agreement... The naturalistic inquirer, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the belief in a multiple reality places little store in that objectivity and strives instead for confirmability, ie agreement among a variety of information sources" (p18).

In order to comply with these points, the underlying assumptions and values in this research are described as frankly as possible. It was also interesting to see the extent to which the students' reported experiences agreed with the attitudes of the staff (10.3) and supported the philosophical standpoint adopted (5B).

4.3 Implications of the Qualitative Approach

Some of the implications for this study were immediately clear. In the first place, it seemed a matter of common sense, without even considering methodological theory, that, if we are genuinely trying to learn from descriptions of experiences, we have to be flexible enough to adapt our ideas as we listen. As Parlett and Hamilton (1981) wrote there is a need to allow changes in our forms of evaluation as the study proceeds. "In practice, objectives are commonly reordered, redefined, abandoned or forgotten" (p14).

4.3.1 Another implication is that one should, as far as possible, set aside the preconceptions that will tend to distort one's sense of discovery and willingness to adapt; one should let the investigation take effect on one's developing understanding. The alternative would be to deny the need for new insights, or fresh conclusions, by proceeding down a predetermined path. This may be desirable, even essential in a physical science; human perceptions, reactions and behaviour, however, are less susceptible to categorisation, there is always the element of surprise, providing data that does not readily fit into prior formulations.

4.3.2 A common criticism raised at this point is that the results of such an approach will yield no valid conclusions, are too subjective. It might be asked, if it is not the intention of this thesis to provide the basis for generalisation, to establish the probable validity of hypotheses, what claim can be made for it being reliable? How authentic can any research be without predicted outcomes, repeatable experiments and external validity?

4.3.3 A number of answers can be offered. First, we have selected as the object of our study a particular aspect of human experience (dilemma); it is not possible to repeat in a controlled environment, or in identical circumstances any two dilemma experiences. Neither the parameters nor the variables can be adequately controlled. This should be no surprise; it would be the same if we were to investigate, say, the experience of pain, or phobia, or disorientation. No two migraines are quite the same; no two experiences of drowning are identical, the dizziness felt by one person on a high rise roof top, the terror for another of crossing a minefield, or whatever situation it might be that could be guaranteed to generate the symptoms of fear, cannot be precisely replicated; similarly, it is

not possible to reproduce exactly those experiences which habitually cause confusion to a person, whether it is being faced by a mathematical problem or having to find one's way in the dark. It is not feasible (some would add, not even in theory) to isolate all the possible independent variables in order to control such human experiments.

Does this limitation, common to most human enquiry, mean that we cannot in any way research such experiences as pain, phobia, disorientation or dilemma? Clearly not. It is simply that other, more appropriate safeguards must be sought against formulating untestable theories or making unchallengeable statements. Guba (1978) has listed a number of potential causes of distortions: the researchers presence at the site, the involvement of field workers with their subjects, bias on the part of the field workers or their subjects, the manner in which the data gathering techniques are employed. He comments that, whereas various tactics which may be employed will not "finally establish the intrinsic adequacy of study findings to an outside observer, ... keeping these caveats in mind during the course of a study will undoubtedly be helpful in assuring the overall adequacy of the inquiry when it is put to a more definitive test" (p63). Guba himself recommends especially "triangulation", cross examination and persistent observation.

4.4 Triangulation

Triangulation has been defined by Cohen and Manion (1980) as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour." They explain that in "its original and literal sense, triangulation is a technique of physical measurement" used by maritime navigators, military strategists and surveyors. In the social sciences, however, by analogy:

Triangular techniques attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. (1980 p208)

More specifically as regards this study, Denzin (1970) extends this view of triangulation to include the multi method kind which he terms "methodological triangulation". He then describes six types, one of which has particular relevance for this study, namely theoretical triangulation, which draws upon alternative or competing theories in preference to utilising one viewpoint alone.

In this research into dilemma, it is claimed that the aim of triangulation has been achieved by selecting six different perspectives, each of which (especially that of moral philosophy) includes a number of different standpoints, to enrich our understanding of the phenomena and to reinforce the conclusions finally offered.

4.5 Illuminative Evaluation

Illuminative Evaluation uses a similar approach, viewing the object of research from different perspectives. This allows for cross checking one's conclusions, which would otherwise seem subjective, tentative and invalid. Parlett and Hamilton (1981) describe Illuminative Evaluation as "not a standard methodological package but a general research strategy... At the outset, the researcher is concerned to familiarize himself (*sic*) thoroughly with the day-to-day reality of the settings he is studying" (we may think of these as the dilemma situations).

In this he is similar to social anthropologists or to natural historians. Like them he makes no attempt to manipulate, control, or eliminate situational variables but takes as given the complex scene

he encounters. His chief task is to unravel it; isolate its significant features. (p17)

As a technique, Illuminative Evaluation grew out of a dissatisfaction with more traditional methods, which tended to require that test scores and performance data were used, with tightly defined objectives structured in advance. The authors criticize this approach for being an "agricultural-botany paradigm" (p11).

The method has been found particularly appropriate where there are complex goals, difficult to define. Its emphasis is on investigating and interpreting, using the experience of participants. The study of dilemma has features in common with this. Not all the questions can be defined tightly in advance. It is important therefore to be able to use a variety of approaches in order to build up what is a complex area of experience. For these reasons, Illuminative Evaluation has been one of the main theories underpinning the use of different perspectives in this study.

4.6 Phenomenology

The generic name most often given to the family of ideas within the kind of qualitative approach we have been discussing, is Phenomenology, an elusive term to describe, easy to misunderstand and clumsy to articulate. Spiegelberg (1965), the historian of Phenomenology, remarks: "The fact is that until about 1910 the word was practically everyone's for the asking. Even now the only protection for the at times all too fashionable term is its ponderousness and tongue twisting ugliness" (p3). He adds that Hartmann, an early phenomenologist, was even asked by his publisher to omit the name on the grounds that "there are people who can be scared by a title which gives them trouble even in pronouncing it" (p15).

It is necessary to digress somewhat in order to describe what is meant by the word and how it is relevant to the study of dilemma. The usage of the word itself is not of much help in its definition. Derived from the Greek *φαινομενα* (appearances) its first occurrence as a technical, philosophical term is probably in 1764 by Lambert, for whom it was a theory of illusion; Spiegelberg claims that this probably inspired Kant when he made his distinction between phenomena (the appearance of things) and noumena (things in themselves). This undoubtedly formed part of his critique of human knowledge but it bears little relation to the way the word is currently used. Hegel also gave a central place to "phenomenology" in his philosophy of consciousness, which seems more promising. However, his concern was mainly ontological; for Hegel (1977), appearances are stages in the realization of the ultimate ideal consciousness. This too was a very different usage (although it must be said that the French school of existential phenomenologists have accepted both Hegel and Kant as early members of the movement).

4.6.1 It was Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), widely accepted as the founder of Phenomenology, who gave the word the distinctive meaning which marked the genesis of a new movement. His aim was "to establish a rigorously scientific philosophy, which could provide a firm basis for all other sciences" (Misiak and Sexton 1973 p6). In order to achieve this, he established an approach to investigation which has become the distinctive phenomenological method.

Phenomenology arose as a critical reaction to the view known as "scientism" and prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century, that philosophy is reducible to a factual science. Husserl particularly

attacked psychologism, which is the idea that the rules of logic and mathematics can be reduced to psychological generalisations about the way in which people actually think (Husserl 1964 p.x). He was equally hostile to "biologism" and "anthropologism". He argued that any theory that reduces logic to psychology is viciously circular..... "We cannot reason in psychology without presupposing some rule of logic or other; in fact, we cannot reason at all, in any subject matter, unless we use the laws of logic. Or, to say the same thing in still another way, we cannot derive any rule of logic without assuming the rules of logic" (1964 p.xi).

Husserl criticised this kind of scientific reductionism which, in addition to being circular, in his opinion, dismisses the value of any data which cannot be quantified (predominantly data about human behaviour) on the grounds of being subjective. Phenomenology develops a method which first and foremost respects the data of interpreted experience. This method:

Focuses on the data (or phenomena) of consciousness in order to clarify their role in the process of meaning-construction, and, as well, to set them aside - or to "bracket" them - in order to arrive at a more adequate (if still necessarily incomplete) knowledge of reality. (Spinelli 1989 p3)

4.6.2 At this point and before going further, we should be particularly careful not to misunderstand the relation between "phenomena" (or appearances) and reality. Both in philosophy and in everyday use, "appearances" are thought of as being in contrast with reality, which is beyond the phenomena. Not so with phenomenology. Its descriptions of phenomena "are not of what is distinct from the real, but simply of how one experiences things" (Hammond 1991 p2).

We should also take care not to think of "experience" in phenomenology as

an inner, private world of consciousness, to be contrasted with an outer world of objects, a Cartesian duality of mind and body. Phenomenologists would reject this dichotomy; for them, "experience" is always experience of something (see on "intentionality" below), and should not be distinguished from it. Conversely, they would argue that we cannot think sensibly of any so-called outer world of objects independent of consciousness.

4.6.3 Are there any core concepts to Phenomenology, a body of beliefs or a philosophy to which all self proclaimed phenomenologists would subscribe? Most writers either deny this possibility or evade the question, settling rather for a historical survey of the different types of phenomenologists (Cohen 1987, Spiegelberg 1965). Spinelli distinguishes between the transcendental or the existential "branches" (1989 p.xi); Cohen describes different "phases", namely the Preparatory, the German and the French (1987 p32).

This is an attractive solution. Spiegelberg (1965) says that there is some truth in the view that "all there is to phenomenology is its history as expressed in the multifarious and fluid ideas of sundry phenomenologists." As a consequence, he gives up the search for the "invariants of the different versions, ignoring the variables" in his two volume history of the movement preferring to conclude that "at the present stage its most characteristic core is its method" (1965 p655).

For the same reason, Spiegelberg considers that phenomenology should not be regarded as a "school", which he describes as "a label which has been imposed .. only from the outside and is certainly not at all called for in view of the actual structure of the group" (1965 p1); he prefers to

use the word "movement" in order to indicate that the ideas are not static but in constant development. Similarly Spinelli writes:

It is more helpful and accurate to consider phenomenology not strictly as a school or doctrine possessing a set body of agreed-upon tenets, but rather as a general approach which encompasses a variety of doctrines whose common focus is directed toward the investigation of our experience of the world. (1989 p3)

This view is supported by the definition in the Encyclopaedia

Britannica:

Phenomenology is mainly used as the name for a philosophical movement the primary objective of which is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions. (1974 14 p210)

Hammond (1991), on the other hand, believes that "there do exist common denominators", as do many other commentators (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 1969, Spiegelberg 1976 and Oiler 1982), although each tends to provide a different list. Four characteristics or fundamental issues, which are widely accepted as the philosophical stance shared by members of the movement, can be identified and will now be described: descriptions of reality, reduction and bracketing or *epoche*, intuiting the essences, and intentionality.

4.6.4 Descriptions of reality. It is often said that Phenomenology is a way of describing rather than explaining (Merleau-Ponty 1969 p14, Spinelli 1989 p17). By this is meant that it respects the data as reported and interpreted. "Zu den Sachen selbst [to the things themselves]" is the goal, the aim being to find the true nature of reality (Husserl 1931 p103). As Oiler (1981) puts it "the goal of describing is to communicate, to guide the listener by giving distinctive guideposts to the phenomenon. A successful description directs the listener to his (*sic*) own experience

of the phenomenon" (p180).

Nevertheless, the data (phenomena) are always an interpreted reality, a fact which, it is claimed, should be acknowledged in our statements about it. Moreover, it is important to realise that this reality is unique to each person. Spinelli gives the example of visiting a gallery to see a particular painting. "You might even say something like: "This is the painting that I've been meaning to see for years, but have seen only in textbooks, and now I can see the real thing" (1989 p8). What happens to the painting, he asks, when you walk away? Does it continue to exist as it did when you perceived it? Or is that particular perceived painting no longer in existence?" This is reminiscent of the epistemological debates of the eighteenth century, well captured by the two nonsense limericks:

There once was a man who said, "God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there's no one about in the Quad."

"Dear, Sir, Your astonishment's odd
I am always about in the Quad;
And that's why this tree
Will continue to be
Since observed by Yours faithfully, God" (Letts 1973 p50).

Returning to Spinelli's example, phenomenologists on the one hand believe that there is some kind of 'raw' matter which is the stimulus for our perceptions of the painting and that this remains. On the other hand, the painting you perceived (or in fact the painting anyone perceives) can never be perceived again in exactly the same way. Our experience of the world is always made up of an interaction between the raw matter and our mental faculties. We always experience this interaction between the two. Nevertheless, "each of us adds a number of variables derived from our individual life experiences" (Spinelli 1989 p9). Furthermore, the next

time we returned to the gallery our experience would not be a replica of the first visit; it could not be so because we would inevitably be bringing to it a fresh set of circumstances. In this way, the descriptions of reality, it would be claimed, are always interpretations, which are both unique and constantly liable to change.

4.6.5 Developing this concept further, Merleau-Ponty (1969) adds another characteristic of phenomenology, the attitude to the "world". This is a complex concept. In one sense the world is already there before we perceive it as raw data, as lived experience. But in another it is something we create by reflection. In Merleau-Ponty's phrase, "The world is not what I think, but what I live through. I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it; it is inexhaustible" (1969 p26). And elsewhere, "The world is what we perceive" (p24f). To put it another way, men and women are in the world and only in the world do they know themselves.

4.6.6 **Reduction, bracketing and epoche.** Phenomenological reduction is a way of combatting the reductionism of science, and is used to "bracket out" the question of whether or not something "exists" in order to concentrate on the question of its meaning. We are asked to put aside issues of interpretation or existence in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon itself, to obtain a pure and uncontaminated intuition. Bracketing does not eliminate assumptions but rather brings them into view. Husserl also used the Greek term *epoche* to set aside our preconceptions and assumptions, in other words, to bracket out as far as possible all bias and prejudice.

It is, of course, impossible to be totally free of all bias but it is

feasible, claims Oiler (1982 p179), to control it. She gives as examples a nurse asking a patient, "Tell me what you mean by the worst thing that's ever happened to you?", or, in an argument, saying, "On the other hand..." This research has attempted to do this both in the interviews with students and in the use of alternative standpoints on dilemma.

There are many other ways of trying to eliminate bias, all to some extent defective. We can ask, "What is meant by" a word or phrase (in this case, "dilemma"). We can bring our assumptions into the open or question what presuppositions are being made in any argument. Researchers should first examine themselves, to try and discover their own beliefs, commitments and prejudices. Whatever is done, however imperfectly and even though some bias will inevitably remain, will enhance the immediate experience.

If by bracketing (or *epoche*) is meant peeling away one by one the layers of interpretation, it was important to avoid asking the students leading questions, to try and dismiss from one's mind any preconceptions about the nature of dilemma in the interests of understanding the phenomenon itself. Where this was unrealistic the assumptions (or at least the conscious assumptions) were brought into the open and admitted.

4.6.7 Intuiting the essences. The next stage was called by Husserl (1964) *eidetic* reduction, which is intended to enable the transition from particular facts to general essences. In this way the phenomenologist aims to reconstruct an ultimate reality for himself (though not all accepted this later transcendent stage in Husserl's thinking).

The phenomenologist grasps meaning through intuition. This has often led to the accusation that phenomenology is founded upon hunch and

"subjective" opinion; it is possible, however, to compare views with the consensus, to reach a judgment which is consciously based upon a given culture or social norm. It is on grounds such as these that we regard the mentally ill, the criminally insane, the hypochondriac as outside the norm; a phenomenologist, however, would always avoid speaking of a "correct" or "incorrect" view of those conditions, but would rather base any proposed intervention upon a publicly acknowledged mental framework or shared reality. This is what would be required if we sought the ultimate meaning of dilemma.

As Oiler (1981) put it, intuiting is "looking at the experience with wide-open eyes, with knowledge, facts, theories held at bay; looking at the experience with astonishment. Concentrating...becoming absorbed in the phenomenon without being possessed by it ... As descriptions are compared and contrasted, recurring elements are noticed. This allows identification of the ingredients of the phenomenon and the way they relate to each other" (p178f). For example, it was found that each interview contained a number of implicit meanings, which it was not always possible to draw out. Intuiting the sense and significance of the language used was an inevitable part of the interpretation.

The phenomenologist is normally in search of a "reduced", pure datum, unvarnished by preconceived assumptions, the essence of the object under consideration, be this an object such as a chair, an abstraction such as beauty or a sentiment like guilt. With respect to the experience of dilemma, it should be emphasised that no attempt was made in this study to discover an essence, or core meaning, to the exclusion of all else (as would have been the case had Grounded Theory been employed, for example). Rather, the aim was to find a way of categorising the variety of

individual experiences of dilemma which were being described.

4.6.8 Intentionality. This concept, which Husserl owed primarily to Franz Brentano (1838-1917), is the assertion that everything we consider to be psychological refers to some object. There is no mental activity which does not have an object towards which it is directed; there is no such thing as thinking, without thinking about something, no pure feeling which is not feeling *something*.

In this way the phenomenologist unites subject and object, rejecting any attempt to divide them. For the purpose of this study, we should avoid the idea that dilemma is simply in the mind of the agent and is not also an object "out there". The only way we can "get at" the experience or the concept of dilemma is, according to the phenomenologist, through the interpretations people give to their thoughts and feelings about it.

4.6.9 In conclusion, rather than to describe phenomenology as a philosophy, as if it possessed a set of shared beliefs, it is better to present it as an approach to research, with philosophical implications and techniques of application. Many summaries have been offered, suitable for different purposes (see Knaack 1984). However, as Omery (1983) warns, "One must not and cannot develop a set of steps, but rather must proceed as the direction of the experience indicates without the restrictions such a structure would impose" (p54).

4.7 Applying the Method

The approach at the outset is crucial. Spiegelberg (1976) says that phenomenological enquiry begins in silence and Merleau-Ponty advocates an

attitude of wonder, peace and respect in front of the evidence, before the researcher can expect to be illuminated:

The attitude of the phenomenologist, therefore, is not the attitude of the technician, with a bag of tools and methods, anxious to repair a poorly operating machine. Nor is it the attitude of the social planner, who has at his control the methods for straightening out the problems of social existence. Rather it is an attitude of wonder, of quiet inquisitive respect as one attempts to meet the world, to open a dialogue, to put himself in a position where the world will disclose itself to him in all its mystery and complexity. (Bettis 1969 p12)

4.7.1 As was remarked earlier, there are many common points between nursing and education. Nursing "embraces a holistic approach to patient care. The individual is valued...the nursing profession advocates the individual as author of his (*sic*) own world, definer of his own reality" (Oiler 1981 p178). In the same way a tutor attempts to establish a one to one relationship with students and to treat each person holistically and as an individual. Qualitative approaches are seen as a supplement to other, scientific methods of enquiry. The latter serve best the nurse's aim to predict and control, while the former is most effective in serving the nurse's goal to understand experience.

4.7.2 Oiler follows this by listing six techniques, intended to aid description (taken from Paterson and Zderad 1976). For example, the researcher is advised imaginatively to vary the phenomenon, identify its central characteristics, explain through negation (contrasting it with other similar ideas), explaining through analogy, and classifying. An attempt has been made to incorporate each of these techniques in this research by the careful choice of questions to ask in interviews, the manner in which they were asked, by the variety of definitions considered, by bringing assumptions into the open and by the different perspectives and analysis offered.

4.8 Personal Construct Theory

Within the many applications of phenomenology, none is more important or relevant to this study than Kelly's Personal Construct Theory (PCT), which was especially useful in analysing the student interviews (chapter 7). It is not intended to go into this theory in any great detail but, briefly, Kelly describes his philosophical position as "constructive alternativism", which he contrasts with the positivist standpoint which he calls "accumulative fragmentalism" whereby truth is collected piece by piece. He elaborates this in these terms:

Whatever nature may be, or howsoever the quest for truth will turn out in the end, the events we face today are subject to as great a variety of constructions as our wits will enable us to contrive. This is not to say that one construction is as good as any other, nor is it to deny that at some infinite point in time human vision will behold reality out to the utmost reaches of existence. But it does remind us that all our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration, and it does broadly suggest that even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we were inventive enough to construe them differently. (1970 p1)

The basic postulate of PCT is that "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he (*sic*) anticipates events". From this Kelly claimed that there are eleven corollaries which may be "loosely inferred" from this. The four most interesting from the point of view of this study, were found to be the following:

- (2) *The Individuality Corollary*. "Persons differ from each other in their construction of events" (Kelly 1970 p1). As this implies, a dilemma for one person is not necessarily going to be the same for someone else and it was obviously important not to impose a rigid definition of dilemma upon the student. The letter of invitation used

the phrases "difficult decisions" where "the alternatives are very hard". As was to be expected, students interpreted this in various ways, some allowing for problems which clearly could be resolved with or without cost, others for irresolvable and costly problems.

- (4) *The Dichotomy Corollary*. "A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs" (p12). By this Kelly meant that a construct is the "basic contrast between two groups", that is to say, constructs have two poles, an emergent pole and a contrasting pole. All constructs have contrasts built into them and being able to articulate an awareness of the contrasting pole is often the only way to understand the emergent pole itself. Where it is a case of conflicting values which give rise to the dilemma, it is often best to see them as pairs of opposites. Applying this to the interpretation of the interviews, it was important, in order to understand the ideas being expressed, to discover if possible the opposite pole.
- (7) *The Experience Corollary*. "A person's construction system varies as he successively construes the replications of events" (p17). This means that a person is constantly altering the construct system within certain (also self constructed) limits. If students were aware of this possibility they could be liberated from the constraints which are often imprisoning them in their dilemmas.
- (9) *The Fragmentation Corollary*. "A person may successively employ a variety of construction sub systems which are inferentially incompatible with each other" (p20). An understanding of this can often be of great help to a tutor seeking a "rational" explanation

for an apparently inconsistent set of opinions or conflicting values.

Beyond these corollaries there are other notions of a more specific and limited application such as anxiety, guilt, hostility, decision making, creativity. It is assumed in this study that dilemma may also be placed and effectively interpreted within this frame of thought see 8.7).

4.8.1 To any person facing what appears to be a dilemma, the PCT approach is invaluable both as a source of support and a means of interpretation. Kelly puts it like this:

Events do not tell us what to do, nor do they carry their meanings engraved on their backs for us to discover. For better or worse we ourselves create the only meanings they will ever convey during our lifetime. The facts of life may even be brutal, but they are nonetheless innocent of any evil intent and we can scarcely accuse them of taking sides. (1970 p3)

This kind of analysis is acutely pertinent to the experience of dilemma for it is through their dilemmas that students reveal the structure that they have erected. To understand that they themselves "create the only meanings they will ever convey" and that therefore they can just as easily recreate them, can also be a most liberating realisation.

In such ways, PCT has proved particularly useful in analysing the interviews (chapter 7). Although the most commonly used tool of analysis is probably the Repertory Grid, it has not been used in this study; on the other hand, it has been found useful to approach the analysis of the interviews through Kelly's teaching that all constructs should be seen in a bipolar relationship, that is to say a construct is often best understood by grasping its opposite. It was also instructive to note the degree of commonality shared by the students' constructs as well as their

"individuality". This and other tenets of PCT are introduced and applied in the chapters on student interviews.

This completes the digression, necessarily brief, into Phenomenology and Personal Construct Theory. It is now time to turn to the six perspectives themselves and the differing forms of interpretation and understanding which each offers to the experience of dilemma.

CHAPTER FIVE

MORAL PHILOSOPHY: ARE MORAL DILEMMAS GENUINE?

The debate about conflict between moral duties has been called "the most intriguing problem of moral philosophy" (Raphael 1974 p12). It has its roots in classical thought but recently has been revived amongst philosophers, one of whom, writing about his fellow contenders in the debate, regards it as a sharp test of "the comprehensiveness and penetration of their thought about morality; superficiality is perhaps more quickly revealed by what is said about this problem than in any other way" (Hare 1981 p26).

The philosophical perspective is concerned with analysing the concept of dilemma and defining as clearly as possible the nature of moral conflict. The aim of this chapter, therefore, will be to examine some of the major arguments for and against the existence of genuine dilemmas in order to apply this to the practical issues of teaching and counselling. The assumption is that some understanding of moral philosophy is necessary to help tutors to appreciate what students mean when describing their predicaments; taken together with other perspectives, it should be possible to clarify their experiences by approaching them more holistically.

It may seem strange that anyone should question whether or not moral dilemmas genuinely exist, but it has been one of the most influential and pervasive traditions in our philosophical culture to regard the idea of dilemma as in some way incoherent and incompatible with moral reasoning.

On the one hand, a phenomenologist would be disposed to begin by

accepting that dilemmas exist whenever they are seriously claimed to exist; whichever use of the word the student adopts should, at least at the outset, be respected as the description of an experience. The interviewer may be prepared to clarify confusions but not to question the attitude itself.

On the other hand, rationalist philosophers would tend to deny the existence of genuine moral dilemmas (with the notable exception of Brennan 1977). They are more disposed to stand back and look upon any such claim as if they were correcting a malapropism perhaps, or a misspelling; they perceive it as a kind of a logical inconsistency, an error in computation. They might well sympathise with a person agonising between two alternatives, but, however understandable this may be, they will be more inclined to consider this a question of confusion. *Prima facie* conflict of duties may be common, but genuine moral dilemmas simply do not exist; a crooked argument, after all, can always be clarified by straight thinking.

It is important to stress that opponents of genuine dilemmas do not deny that painful moral decisions have sometimes to be made or that serious perplexities are at the root of practical living. It is readily admitted that we are not able to avoid conflict situations, hard choices from time to time (e.g. Mill [1910] speaks of "knotty points", Conee [1982] of "competing considerations"). Some of these can be discounted, they would claim. Practical conflicts such as which of two promises to keep, which of two persons to select are indeed daily occurrences but such perplexities should not be regarded as moral dilemmas. They are just evidence that life can sometimes be tough. On closer inspection, they will turn out to be simply examples of misplaced emotion, semantic

confusion or subjective delusion. It would be better to cease using the term "dilemma" and regard such predicaments as solvable, though painful problems. Students should be taught how to live with marginal decisions, relative judgments and the resulting painful regrets.

In summary, the case for dilemmas will be found to rest on a respect for reported experience (it could be called a phenomenological approach). The case against, on the other hand, is based on a rational, cognitive approach to moral problems, placing reason above the experience of the agent. Perhaps he or she is too young, too uneducated, blind, confused, illogical, uninformed, emotionally involved or simply inexperienced to see the solution. As Hare (1981) put it:

It will not do to say "there just are situations in which, whatever you do, you will be doing what you ought not, i.e., doing wrong". There are, it is true, some people who like there to be what they call "tragic situations"; the world would be less enjoyable without them, for the rest of us: we could have much less fun writing and reading novels and watching films, in which such situations are a much sought after ingredient. In such a conflict between intuitions, it is time to call in reason. (p31)

A THE CASE AGAINST THE EXISTENCE OF GENUINE DILEMMAS

5A 1 A Summary of the Arguments

Let us then "call in reason" and consider some of the arguments against the existence of genuine moral dilemmas. Conee (1982) states the case thus:

Moral dilemmas are of no special assistance in accounting for moral sentiments or in promoting good behavior. And ... their existence would confound us with the prospect of impermissible obligations. The reasonable conclusion is that they are impossible. (p97)

The arguments, which are amplified in the sections which follow, can conveniently be grouped under five headings:

5A 1.1 Prioritism. Here it is claimed that conflicting obligations can almost always be ranked in order of priority, and where they are of equal importance, they cancel out. For instance, in Plato's example, whether or not to return a weapon to a potential killer, the choice is clear: saving life has priority over promise keeping. On the other hand, saving two children from fire, or keeping two promises, when in each case only one is possible, and there is nothing to choose between them - these are not moral but practical problems, since there can be no moral requirement to carry out simultaneously two incompatible actions. Guilt, therefore, is an inappropriate reaction, however understandable (see 5A 5).

5A 1.2 Monism. This is the claim that there is only one source of moral authority, (e.g. divine law) or one ultimate principle (e.g. utility) which supersedes all other principles, either in the sense that they can be derived rationally from it, or, in a prioritist version of the argument, these alternative principles, though logically independent, can be compared with one another and intuitively seen to be inferior. The fact that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac was in itself sufficient justification of what would otherwise be an abhorrent act. Alternatively, in the case whether or not to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a careful examination of the consequences will, it is claimed, reveal which course would have the greater utility and benefit to mankind,

5A 1.3 Deontic Logic. The logical application of deontic principles, it is said, requires that there can only be one all-things-considered prescription for action. To believe in the existence of genuine dilemmas

is to believe that if a person really ought to do *A* (for example remain loyal to his country) and he really ought to do *B* (say, never tell a lie), then, he really ought to do both these things. And, since "ought implies can", what is being asserted is that he really *can* do both these things. This, however, is what has been denied. To believe in dilemmas, therefore, is to believe in a logical absurdity. A wayside pulpit, quoted in Hare (1981), puts it succinctly: "If you have conflicting duties, one of them isn't your duty" (p25).

5A 1.4 Remainders. As regards the argument from remainders, the feelings of regret or guilt, which are evidence, some suggest, of the reality of the conflicts, the rationalist may regard these as common reactions to taking a difficult decision, but by themselves they are insufficient evidence for what is being claimed. Feeling regret does not prove that something is regrettable; feeling remorse does not establish guilt (see below 5A 2.1 on Foot and Conee, also Donegan 1984).

5A 1.5 Particularism. This is the view that *a priori* moral principles do not exist at all, or at least none that are of any help in deciding particular cases, and therefore there are none to conflict. All one can do is decide what seems best in the particular circumstances. The illustration selected is from Sartre (1948), for whom principles are irrelevant or confusing in settling in advance individual cases; an obligation is created only at the existential moment of decision, not beforehand. These and other arguments against the existence of genuine dilemmas can now be looked at in greater.

5A 2 Prioritism - The Ranking of Diverse Obligations

Socrates signalled a crucial change in the classical world view in which the gods could place opposing duties on human beings. He considered Euthyphro's dilemma (whether to respect his father or to prosecute him for killing his servant). Here apparently there was a clear case of conflicting obligations; yet the rational approach to take was to decide which duty takes precedence over the other. If two obligations conflict, at most only one can be binding. This leads Socrates to challenge the prevalent belief that the gods could impose conflicting duties, that tragic conflict can indeed shadow and ensnare a human life. He therefore advises Euthyphro to obey only those obligations which have unanimous backing from the gods (Plato *Euthyphro* 8E).

Many critics following the rational tradition introduced by Socrates have little patience with the world view of an Aeschylean Chorus; they regard such an appeal to our emotions as irrational, primitive and a mistaken guide for modern man. Thus a rationalist philosopher today will argue that an innocent alternative is always available.

5A 2.1 Another method of ranking diverse and conflicting obligations is given by Aristotle who recommended the use of practical wisdom in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Every virtue, he considered, was a mean between two extremes, each of which was a vice. Generosity is a mean between profligacy and stinginess; pride, between vainglory and humility; courage, between recklessness and cowardice. (truthfulness, seen as the mean between boastfulness and false modesty, does not fit so easily into the scheme, but this is not our concern). The Golden Mean is thus the underlying principle of all the virtues (see especially 1109a25-b15).

Aristotle considered all the virtues to be interdependent and rationally consistent with one another. The Golden Mean, therefore, becomes the priority principle for all the other virtues. It was, for example, impossible for someone to have one of the virtues but lack another because "the possession of the single virtue of prudence will carry with it the possession of them all" (1144a25). This implies a rational consistency amongst all virtues, which would preclude the possibility of ultimate conflict between them. At a practical level there may be room for argument but not at the level of "eternal facts". This is how he put the case:

Do people deliberate about all issues - i.e. is everything an object of deliberation? - or are there some things that do not admit of it? ... surely nobody deliberates about eternal facts, such as the order of the universe or the incommensurability of the diagonal with the side of a square; nor about eternal regular processes....What we deliberate about is practical measures that lie in our power....

We deliberate not about ends but about means. A doctor does not deliberate whether to cure his patient, nor a speaker whether to persuade his audience, nor a statesman whether to produce law and order, nor does anyone else deliberate about the end at which he is aiming. They first set some end before themselves, and then proceed to consider how and by what means it can be attained. If it appears that it can be attained by several means, they further consider by which it can be attained best and most easily. (1112b5-26)

From this it would seem that Aristotle permitted the deliberation of practical issues, i.e. dilemmas of method, but even these can be rationally resolved by a consideration of what "can be attained best and most easily", namely the ultimate principle of prudence. Elsewhere, he also considered the case of a sea captain (1110a 4ff) who was forced to jettison his cargo in bad weather in order to save his ship, the lives of his crew and himself. Although there is little doubt in his mind what he has to do, he nevertheless might regret the outcome for he is attached to the cargo. This, however, would be illogical. Prudence provides the

solution to his apparent dilemma ("any reasonable person will do it").

5A 3 Monism and the Single Principle Argument

The second line against the reality of dilemma is the single principle or monist argument. To illustrate this, examples may be found amongst the monotheistic faiths, such as Judaism, Islam or Christianity. In these religions, the world was created by God who ordered the laws of nature and whose essence includes both ultimate goodness and rational consistency. God created the laws for his creatures to perceive and obey. God is thus identified as the source of all moral law; conflict in the latter would imply confusion in the former. Therefore, genuine dilemmas cannot exist.

Few theologians, other than perhaps the eighteenth century Deists, nourished the rational attitude more fervently than St Thomas Aquinas. In his doctrine of Natural Law, he argued that it was possible for human beings, exercising natural reason alone, to discover certain truths about God (for example his existence, his will) as well as the immortality of the soul. What room is there here for dilemma? Moral conflict, the view that a person can be required to obey two conflicting laws, would imply that God's laws could be inconsistent, and that therefore God himself could tolerate incoherence. This means that when people claim to experience dilemmas it can only be a sign of human failing. This might be the result of spiritual ignorance, an uninstructed conscience or a life caught up in worldly compromises, like the seed in Jesus' parable of the Sower (Matthew 13) that fell amongst thorns which rose up and choked it. But, in ultimate reality the moral law can have no imperfection. God's law has always been understood in both the Jewish and Christian tradition

as perfect, pure and changeless (Psalm 119.89, 142).

5A 3.1 Kant, deeply influenced by his mother, who died when he was fourteen, was schooled in the German Evangelical tradition but emphasised the rational perspective. He held that the one true religion comprises nothing but laws and principles (1960 p156) and since it is of the essence of a principle that it can never conflict with another moral principle, it is no surprise to find that Kant declared roundly that "a conflict of duties and obligations is inconceivable" (1964 p24).

The major premise in Kant's argument is that every action falls into one of three categories: it is either morally necessary, morally impossible or morally indifferent (i.e. permissible). These categories exhaust all the possibilities. Thus, it is illogical to suppose that an action could be both necessary and impossible (see 2.8). Furthermore, moral rules are unconditional imperatives, that is to say universal binding duties. If, therefore, a rule declares an action *A* to be necessary, it cannot consistently be the case that another rule could declare action *B*, which conflicts with *A*, to be necessary.

On the other hand Kant acknowledged that our intuitive feeling is that moral conflicts do in practice arise daily. He explained this by his distinction between perfect and imperfect duties (1964 p48). Although there has been considerable discussion of this distinction, it seems that perfect duties cover all instances of specific kinds of action. There can be no latitude in deciding how to obey these duties. They cannot conflict. But imperfect duties are different, they do not cover specific instances but rather unspecific pursuits of ends (for example, the pursuit of happiness could conflict in individual cases with the

pursuit of honesty). This does not permit us to make exceptions but it does indicate that we can limit one maxim of duty by another (p48). These ends are the "grounds" of duty. When therefore it appears that we are faced with a dilemma of conflicting duties, one of them is not our genuine perfect duty. When the weaker "ground" of duty is compared with the "perfect" duty" it retires from the field; it ceases to be binding (1964 p24).

5A 3.2 Another single principle or monist argument is Utilitarianism, for example as developed by Mill (1910). Although proceeding from very different premises, Mill arrived at a similar conclusion to that of Kant, namely the acceptance of practical conflicts in daily life, but the denial of genuine dilemmas.

Mill made two fundamental claims. The first is that there can only be one standard of value. "If there were several ultimate principles of conduct," he wrote, "the same conduct might be approved by one of those principles and condemned by another; and there would be needed some more general principle, as umpire between them" (1974 p951). Mill's claim, therefore, was that there had to be a single principle "with which all other rules of conduct were required to be consistent, and from which, by ultimate consequence, they could all be deduced" (p951). The second argument defined that principle as the standard of utility.

There are many varieties of utilitarians and it is not the purpose of this chapter to provide a survey; tutors may, however, commonly find amongst their colleagues and their students the general position held that goodness consists in maximising happiness and actions should be judged by their results. Assessment of the consequences, direct or

indirect, is the root principle of utilitarianism. Despite variations in the interpretation of utility, (as happiness or goodness) it is agreed that an action is right if and only if the consequences have greater utility than the consequences of possible alternative actions.

From this standpoint, conflicting moral obligations are resolvable by appeal to the single principle of utility. Although Mill does not comment on the rejected alternative or whether it persists as a form of sentiment, it is clear that for him there can be no ultimate clash of principles; the one absolute principle of utility holds sway over all other subsidiary principles.

There exists no moral system under which there do not arise unequivocal cases of conflicting obligation. These are the real difficulties, the knotty points both in the theory of ethics, and in the conscientious guidance of personal conduct.. (but) .. If utility is the ultimate source of moral obligations, utility may be invoked to decide between them when their demands are incompatible. (Mill 1910 p23f)

5A 3.3 In order to explain why dilemmas appear so convincingly in daily life, Hare introduced a distinction between two levels of moral thinking. This was originally found, he argued, in Plato's distinction between knowledge and right opinion and from which he justifies different classes of human beings, each with their own appropriate education. It can also be seen in Aristotle's distinction between practical and intellectual wisdom. Hare called the two levels of thinking, the intuitive and the critical:

Those who say, roundly, that there can just be irresolvable conflicts of duties are always those who have confined their thinking about morality to the intuitive level. At this level the conflicts are indeed irresolvable; but at the critical level there is a requirement that we resolve the conflict, unless we are to confess that our thinking has been incomplete. We are not thinking critically if we just say "there is a conflict of duties; I ought to do A, and I ought to do B, and I can't do both". But at the intuitive level it is perfectly permissible to say this. (1981 p26)

Hare thus accounted for *prima facie* dilemmas but only at the expense of granting them any intellectual respect. Those capable of critical thought, like Plato's guardians, can resolve the apparent dilemmas which so trouble the intellectually inferior. In practice, in the counselling situation for example, it would be counter-productive to question any student who claimed to be in a serious quandary; it is equally doubtful whether, in philosophical debate, it is productive to suggest that the opposition is deficient in reasoning powers.

5A 3.4 A rather different approach to *prima facie* cases of conflict is provided by Ross, a writer in the tradition of British intuitionists. He distinguished between two senses of duty, *prima facie* duty and duty *sans phrase*. The latter are actual duties, absolute, possessing a "total-resultant attribute", that is to say one which belongs to an act in virtue of "its whole nature" (1931 p28). Only *prima facie* duties, according to Ross can conflict; he listed seven categories of *prima facie* duties: fidelity, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self improvement, and non maleficence. Each has a self evident authority, that is to say it has independent validity and is not deduced from any prior ethical principle (p41). When a conflict arises, therefore, we cannot refer to a higher principle to settle the issue; we must resort to our own individual judgement to decide which of the alternative obligations has the greatest "stringency". As Ross described it (p42), quoting Aristotle, "the decision rests with perception" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1109b23). This means that with *prima facie* duties there is a resolution available (namely intuition) and that there are no real conflicts between actual duties. As with Hare, therefore, genuine dilemmas do not exist.

5A 4 The Argument from the Principles of Deontic Logic

Another argument recently advanced against the existence of genuine dilemmas, which should be considered (see also a reply 5B 15), is derived from the logical principles of moral discourse. It is claimed that dilemmas are inconsistent with two fundamental premises of deontic logic. According to the first, if someone ought to do one thing and ought to do another, then that person ought to do *both* those things. Bernard Williams (quoted in Gowans 1987 p130). called this the principle of agglomeration. According to the second, if someone ought to do something, then that person *can* do that thing (the "ought implies can" argument is attributed to Kant [1964 p37]). But if, as is claimed by the upholders of genuine dilemmas, S ought to do A, and S ought to do B, then by the first principle S ought to do *both* A and B, and by the second principle, S *can* do A and B, which is clearly impossible otherwise S would not consider it a dilemma in the first place. Therefore moral dilemmas are logically inconsistent.

Donegan (1980) Applied this logic to a case recently put forward by Marcus (1980). A doctor is faced with a genuine dilemma, Marcus claimed, when the single principle of life saving is of no help in choosing which of two identical twins to save, given that he can only save one. To this Donegan replied:

Where the lives of identical twins are in jeopardy and I can save one but only one, every serious rationalist moral system lays down that, whatever I do, I must save one of them. By postulating that the situation is symmetrical, Marcus herself implies that there are no grounds, moral or nonmoral, for saving either as opposed to the other. Why, then, does she not see that, as a practical question, "Which am I to save?" has no rational answer except "It does not matter," and as a moral question none except "There is no moral question"?

Certainly there is no moral conflict: from the fact that I have a duty to save either *a* or *b*, it does not follow that I have a duty to save *a* and *b*. Can it be seriously held that a fireman, who has rescued as many as he possibly could of a group trapped in a burning building, should blame himself for the deaths of those left behind, whose lives could have been saved only if he had not rescued some of those he did? (1984 p308)

5A 5 The Argument from Remainders and Misplaced Guilt

It follows, therefore, from the above arguments that, if feelings of guilt follow, however understandable, they cannot be regarded as rational. It will, however, be shown (5B 12) that Williams and others argue from the existence of remainders, that the reality of genuine dilemmas can be deduced. The interesting aspect of this line of argument is that, if correct, it establishes that even resolvable dilemmas are genuine. The case made against it is that no amount of feeling, guilt or regret, can possibly provide evidence for the reality of genuine dilemmas. Dilemmas, if they exist, may result in guilt or regret, but the existence of neither guilt nor regret establishes the validity of dilemma. It is impermissible to use post decisional feelings as a justification for the substantial existence of dilemma. As Foot (1983) expressed it:

The form of this argument is surely strange... It is impossible to move from the existence of the feeling to the truth of the proposition conceptually connected with it, or even to the subject's acceptance of the proposition. (1983 p382)

Conee (1982) similarly argued that it may be reasonable to feel regret in those cases where there are harmful results, but such regret does not substantiate moral dilemmas:

Feeling guilty is *subjectively* appropriate when the belief that one has failed which prompts the feeling fits one's moral principles. If your convictions include that every debt morally must be repaid, it is appropriate to your morality for you to feel guilty about defaulting. When someone does what is morally best while neglecting

something his morality requires, his feeling guilty is therefore appropriate only because it is called for by morality as he sees it. It does not fit the facts. This sort of appropriate guilt does not imply that a moral mistake has been made. (p89)

This would mean, as Williams (1973) put it, that those who believe that only dilemma free moralities exist must hold that the only post decisional feelings which are appropriate are "relief (at escaping mistake), or self-congratulation (for having got the right answer), or possibly self-criticism (for having so nearly been misled)" (p175f).

5A 5.1 In the classroom or science laboratory, teachers will be familiar with the situation where students are allowed to make their own errors, watching them as they wander down blind alleys, set out on unproductive experiments, see problems where there are none (and vice versa). Indeed there will often be sound pedagogical reasons for leaving them to follow their judgments, however mistaken, and to learn from the experience. In a similar way, counsellors will have observed clients worrying about problems that seem trivial from the standpoint of the interviewer; just as priests meet overscrupulous penitents in the confessional, reproaching themselves with feelings of sinfulness, counsellors hear expressions of guilt which they personally would regard as mistaken; if protestations of innocence do not by themselves deceive the wary tutor, why should apprehensions of guilt be any more persuasive?

The questions asked by the rational observer are: does not the individual conscience require tutoring? Should not these subjective judgments be corrected and clients counselled out of their imagined predicaments? Would it not be preferable for them to have their apparent dilemmas resolved in the light of wiser advice? More important, could one not generalise from such instances and conclude that every experience of

apparent dilemma is a similar example of confusion, an understandable emotion but a case of defective reasoning, blindness or mistaken definition? Arguments against this position are considered later (5B 12).

5A 6 The Argument from Particularism

The final type of argument considered here, which may be called particularism, is taken from the famous example provided by Sartre (1948). In *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, a young man must choose between his patriotic commitment to the French Resistance and his duty to care for his aging mother (p35). Sartre argued that ethical principles and systems are inadequate guides for action. We should therefore discard them altogether and improvise our own choices of action, without regret or remorse. It is in the making of the decision that the ethical obligation is created, but only for that person and that situation. Prior to that moment, only a practical predicament exists, but no conflict of moral obligations and therefore no genuine dilemma (p48). In 5B 2, however, the possibility is considered that even a particular decision might rest upon two intuitive moral signals, thus giving rise to an existential conflict.

5A 6.1 In summary, each of the arguments against dilemmas contains a rejection of the actual (phenomenological) situation, implying in some sense that it is not a real state of affairs. A typical position is that of Conee (1982): "There is no fact of moral life that cannot be accounted for at least as well without moral dilemmas, and their possibility would cast a shroud of impenetrable obscurity over the concept of moral obligation" (p87). Counsellors and tutors would, therefore, need to be clear that in espousing these standpoints, they would be implying a

failure of perception on behalf of their clients, who should be guided to use the power of human reason to see through the confusion and to develop the will to make the correct decision.

Those who followed these lines would therefore find it hard not to direct students, to admonish the self confident, to interrupt the thoughtless, to direct the aimless. If a dilemma is really perceived as the result of youthful inexperience or confused thinking, counsellors would have an obligation not to leave clients in their ignorance for longer than could be justified by the advantage to their educational or maturational development.

This concludes the review of the case against the existence of "genuine dilemmas". The replies to them, and other counter arguments, must now be considered.

CHAPTER FIVE

B. THE CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF "GENUINE" DILEMMAS

5B 1 A Shift in World View

Gowans (1987) has summarised three kinds of argument in the recent debate to support the case for the existence of "genuine" dilemmas: "the argument from moral sentiment, the argument from a plurality of values, and the argument from single-value conflicts" (p14). Each of these will be examined in this section.

First, it is worth pointing out that the case in favour of the existence of "genuine" dilemmas entails a comprehensive shift in our perspective. It denotes a new temper of mind, challenges us to think differently about the premises of our moral philosophy and invites us to ask fresh questions about accepted definitions.

For example, the distinction between a moral and a non-moral conflict is less clear-cut, definitions are viewed as open textured rather than closed and complete, the different meanings of "ought" are distinguished and the universal claims of moral judgements are seen to depend more upon similarity of circumstances than upon identical rules. These are not arbitrary shifts in opinion but an intrinsic part of the new standpoint which can be shown to be related to recent changes in the philosophy of science, to a phenomenological perspective, to the naturalistic paradigm of enquiry and to qualitative methods of research. Each of these, like the acceptance of "genuine" moral dilemmas, starts with a respect for what people say; they involve listening to the evidence, observing the phenomenon itself without the preconceptions that filter and assess the

data before it is seriously considered. The whole, in short, is tantamount to adopting a different world view, one which invites the observer to welcome diversity and give due respect to the validity of subjective judgment.

5B 2 No *A Priori* Assumptions

It was shown above (5A 6) that Sartre's form of particularism can be said to have removed the ground on which genuine dilemmas stand. For him, ethical principles are created only at the point of decision, by each individual in each particular circumstance; therefore, there is no clash of principle for that individual and it can be said that there is no dilemma.

Two counter arguments can be put forward. In the first place, if we focus on the whole process of decision, with its possible pain and subsequent remorse, Sartre (1948) makes it possible to reinstate the situation, seen in its entirety, as dilemmatic. Secondly, by emphasising the point of decision, he actually supports the case for dilemma. There is no reason why two moral intuitions might not be experienced simultaneously, thus causing conflict to that individual. In the respect he accords to each person's judgment, he can find no place for an ethical philosophy of a *priori* values and this eliminates the possibility of a conflict of principles. There is no reason, however, why the moment of existential decision might not be dilemmatic. There was common ground here, he thought, with aesthetic values:

Does anyone reproach an artist when he paints a picture for not following rules established *a priori*?....As everyone knows, there is no predefined picture for him to make; the artist applies himself to the composition of a picture, and the picture that ought to be made.

is precisely that which he will have made.....It is the same upon the plane of morality....in both we have to do with creation and invention. We cannot decide *a priori* what it is that should be done. (1948 p49)

We may quarrel with the claim that no rules are followed by artists; the Russian Orthodox Church, for example, had the strictest conventions about painting ikons and the Academie Francaise expected their canons to be followed by the salon painters. The phenomenological point, however, is well made, namely that obligations cannot be prejudged *a priori*. Dilemmas are a natural experience and it is not possible to remove them by rational presupposition alone.

5B 3 Examples from Classical Literature

The phenomenologist will not be surprised that dramatic literature, plays and novels deal readily and frequently with individual dilemmas. The very messiness, the apparent incoherence, is the stuff of life and does not render it any the less "real" or objective; therefore dramatists have no difficulty in showing us dilemmas. In classical tragedy the existence of conflicting obligations is clearly seen, particularly in situations where, through fate or force of circumstance, good people cannot avoid evil actions because no guilt-free alternatives are open to them. Hegel (1975) considered that the "general reason for the necessity of these conflicts" lay in the fact that:

The substance of ethical life, as a concrete unity, is an ensemble of *different* relations and powers which only in a situation of inactivity, like that of the blessed gods, accomplish the work of the spirit in the enjoyment of an undisturbed life... The original essence of tragedy consists then in the fact that within such a conflict each of the opposed sides, if taken by itself, has *justification*; while each can establish the true and positive content of its own aim and character only by denying and infringing the equally justified power of the other. (1196)

For example, Sophocles' *Antigone* deals with conflicting duties, the familial and the civic; for Antigone, the choice lay between her family (and religious) duty to bury her brother Polyneices and her civic duty to obey Creon. Creon had declared the burial illegal because Polyneices was a traitor to his city and honouring him would threaten law and order, while at the same time taunt those who had remained loyal. We can also note that Creon had his own dilemma and role conflict between his obligation as uncle and duty as king.

Aeschylus in the *Agamemnon* considered the clash between paternal and military claims; Agamemnon is caught between his human feelings as a father for his daughter Iphigenia and his duties as a commander to his fellow countrymen to achieve military success. He is pulled in two directions by his divided sense of duty. Either way, Agamemnon cannot avoid doing wrong.

What can I say?
Disaster follows if I disobey;
Surely yet worse disaster if I yield
And slaughter my own child, my home's delight,
In her young innocence, and stain my hand
With blasphemous unnatural cruelty,
Bathed in the blood I fathered! Either way,
Ruin! (Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 206 - 13)

Other famous examples include: Brutus, in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, who defends his murder of Caesar by saying that it was "not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more" (Act 3 Scene 2); Nora, in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, is torn between duties to her husband and "another duty, just as sacred ... My duty to myself" (Act 3 Scene 2 see above 2.3.2). Each of these dramatic situations is taking seriously the human experience. They do not necessarily expect a clear or tidy solution but reveal the phenomenology of dilemma at its most complex and heartfelt.

In Aeschylus and Sophocles, the sympathy of the audience is elicited by the Chorus on the grounds that, whatever they decide, the dramatic characters cannot escape some responsibility for the outcome; their hands are not entirely clean, remorse and reparations are expected from them. Sometimes, as in the case of Oedipus, there are deeds too dark to be overlooked, even when performed by good people deciding for the best; even when forced by necessity, they are ensnared by a fate which decrees that, however scrupulously the path of virtue is followed, a terrible crime will be performed and a penalty is demanded. The Chorus will cry out for it in the name of justice.

As the audience would have known well, the prevailing Greek moral code demanded that, when the gods required conflicting duties and evil resulted, human beings should both make suitable reparation and adopt an appropriate attitude. The fact that their snare was determined by the gods no more absolved them from guilt than belief in predestination exonerates a Calvinist sinner. They are required to make amends, to adopt an appropriately humble stance. Clarity of thought, even when coupled with bravery in resolve, is not acceptable to the gods when accompanied by superficiality, glibness, or hubris. The Chorus, speaking as the conscience of us all, must remind Agamemnon of his proper attitude (*Agamemnon* 160-184). Nussbaum (1985) concluded her discussion of Agamemnon's dilemma:

Aeschylus then shows us not so much a "solution" to the "problem of practical conflict" as the richness and depth of the problem itself. (This achievement is closely connected with his poetic resources, which put the scene vividly before us, show us debate about it, and evoke in us responses important to its assessment). He has then, done the first thing that is needed to be done in order to challenge theoretical solutions to the problem.

But if we recognize what he has put before us, we must recognize,

too, that the solutions do not really solve the problem. They simply underdescribe or misdescribe it. They fail to observe things that are here to be seen: the force of the losing claim, the demand of good character for remorse and acknowledgment. We suspect that to advance toward a more decisive solution we would have to omit or revise these features of the description of the problem. (1985 p266)

5B 4 Pluralism and Diversity

The theoretical underpinning of this position is pluralism, or the belief in the diversity of moral obligations. The moral prohibitions that people acquire, in various ways, are not instances of "one or ... a very few injunctions, they are irreducibly plural" (Hampshire, 1983 p20). This view is held by such philosophers as Ross, Davidson, Nagel, Williams, Berlin, and Gaut. Pluralists have little difficulty in accepting the likelihood, even the probability of there being conflicting obligations. Variety in nature is to be expected, as Hampshire (1983) explained:

The capacity to think scatters a range of differences and conflicts before us: different languages, different ways of life, different specializations of aim within a way of life, different conventions and styles also within a shared way of life, different prohibitions. A balanced life is a particular moral ideal to which there reasonably can be, and have been, alternatives acceptable to thoughtful men at different times and places.....

My claim is that morality has its sources in conflict, in the divided soul and between contrary claims, and that there is no rational path that leads from these conflicts to harmony and to an assured solution, and to the normal and natural conclusion.
(p151f)

The theory that the capacity to think implies conflict and choice will be taken up later (chapter 9) and in Billig's argument (1988) that the ability to debate and nurture common sense depends upon the existence of contradiction in society. It represents well the pluralist standpoint that there is a class of moral dilemmas in which there is a conflict of two fundamental principles (See also Gaut in 2.4 above). They are irresolvable because, being derived from a plurality of sources, they are

incommensurable.

5B 4.1 Another way of describing a fundamental conflict in reality is the Yin Yang theory of the universe which Confucianists and Taoists have adopted. Originally formulated by Tsou Yen in the fourth century, the Yin and Yang are sometimes seen as night and day, darkness and light and symbolised in the circle divided into two pear shaped halves. In some explanations, the Yin is the female, passive and negative force, and the Yang is the male, active and positive force. They interact, permeate the whole universe as a conflict of opposites, a kind of eternal dilemmatic reality. Taoism is the belief that these conflicting opposites can be reconciled and transcended by Tao. This results, in practice, in the aim of letting things be; humility, non-interference are the best attitudes, and all efforts to intervene, whether by commercial competition, governments, war or political manifestos, are self defeating and impertinent.

5B 4.2 A rather different view is held by the Parsis, whose religion, Zoroastrianism, teaches that two great spiritual forces, good and evil, exist in eternity. God did not create, or permit evil, as in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. There is a permanent cosmic battle, in which humans must play their part and this conflict is a contemporary fact of life, as if one lived within a perpetual dilemmatic reality.

5B 4.3 Bradley (1927) argued that a collision of duties in particular cases was common. As he wrote, "every act can be taken to involve such collision" (p156). "The morality of one time is not that of another time" (p189). He thus disagreed with Kant that lying was always wrong. Sometimes there are "duties above truth speaking, and many offences

against morality which are worse, though they may be less painful, than a lie" (p63). The ultimate good for every human being is "self-realization", which can take place in several ways, for example by fulfilling one's social role and the duties imposed by it. The conflict of duties that occurs as a result cannot be resolved by discursive reasoning or "reflective deduction" in order to arrive at a practical conclusion. Moral judgment is a matter of "intuition" or as he puts it: "To the question, How am I to know what is right?", the answer must be, By the *αἰσθησις* of the *φρόνιμος* [By the perception of the man of reason]; and the *φρόνιμος* is the man who has identified his will with the oral spirit of the community and judges accordingly" (p194).

The British intuitionists also stressed moral diversity but by no means all of them would support the case for genuine dilemmas. As pointed out above (5A 3.2), Ross held that the conflicts are only *prima facie* not fundamental. Price (1969), however, claimed that there are six different "heads" of virtue, each of them "self-evident" and despite there being the "same eternal reason" behind all of them, "they can lead us in contrary ways". At such times, we may "be rendered entirely incapable of determining what we ought to choose" (p186).

5B 4.4 It can be seen that pluralism has two characteristics: a belief in a diversity of first principles, which may conflict and make contrary demands in particular cases; and second, an absence of any explicit method to resolve them. There are "no priority rules, for weighing these principles against one another: we are simply to strike a balance by intuition, by what seems to us most nearly right" (Rawls 1971 p34).

Diversity does not, of course, of itself entail conflict, although it

makes it more likely. In theory there could be a priority principle that enabled one to rank the different obligations, or even a permanent hierarchy of principles (such as duty to God, to one's country, family and self). Most pluralists, however, believe that no permanent priority principle exists at all. "Decisions about what to do must appeal to considerations about what is reasonable in the particular case, what is here best on balance, and require a sensitivity to aspects of the situation that resist codification" (Gaut 1985 p18, cp Sartre 1948 p35 and see also 5B 9). Gaut called this process of reasoning "generative reflection" which she distinguished from "reflective equilibrium" - which, she argued:

Merely adjusts intuitions to principles - since it involves an additional empirical claim about the conditions of generation, and can undermine some of our intuitions in a more radical way than is open to reflective equilibrium. (p29)

5B 5 Incommensurability

Pluralism has many implications for dilemma which one should bear in mind. The first is the notion of incommensurability. If principles have different origins, it is difficult to compare one against another because there is no obvious standard to which to appeal (which is why Mill [1974] argued that logically we should need another "umpire" to decide between them; the pluralist would say that, however convenient it might be to have an "umpire", life is just not like that). But being incommensurable does not mean we are reduced to inarticulate silence. It is still possible to provide reasons for one's decisions in a particular case. In theory we could not compare life saving with loyalty, honesty with promise keeping. In practice, however, (as argued in 2.4) there is normally little difficulty because other relevant factors assist us.

Sinnott Armstrong calls these cases of "limited incomparability" (1985 p321f). The fact that one cannot rank certain kinds of moral requirements (usually extreme instances) does not imply that one can never rank specific cases. A particular moral duty to one's family can be stronger than some moral duties to one's country.

5B 5.1 Recently, discussions on medical ethics have centred on "four principles plus scope" put forward by Beauchamp and Childress (1989). These are purported to be "a simple, accessible, and culturally neutral approach to thinking about ethical issues in health care" (Gillon 1994 p184). The principles are beneficence (the obligation to provide benefits and to balance benefits against risks); non-maleficence (the obligation to avoid causing harm); respect for autonomy (the obligation to respect the decision making capacities of autonomous people); and justice (the obligation of fairness in the distribution of benefits and risks). A similar list of *prima facie* duties was given by Ross and Price (see 5B 4.2) It is admitted that there is no set of ordered rules, no help if the principles should clash, but that we should "consider these in each case before coming to our own answer using our preferred moral theory or other approach to choose between these principles when they conflict" (Gillon 1994 p184).

In the correspondence generated by these arguments (*British Medical Journal* 309 p1159-1160), several writers revealed some of the dilemmas that can emerge when these incommensurable principles conflict. For example, to practise beneficence and non-maleficence we need empirical evidence to assess the probabilities of harm and benefits. This is normally obtained by randomised controlled trials. Patients, however, who participate in randomised trials would to some extent lose their autonomy

unless they gave their consent. Yet, it is not often possible for them to be fully informed and it would seem that in those cases the principle of autonomy conflicted with the principle of beneficence.

The principle of scope offers another dilemma. The question arises whether those who do not participate should perhaps lose their right to treatment when refusing to assist the society that confers that right. Gillon replied to the first problem that full consent is not necessary, and, to the second, that such refusers should nevertheless always fall within the scope of deserving medical care. In this way, it can be seen that resolving a conflict between incommensurable principles requires us to refer the matter (as Mill pointed out [1974 p951]) to another "umpire", perhaps the common sense of the agent. The fact of being incommensurable does not, as the debate shows, make resolution impossible, each person must use his or her own personally adopted standard to resolve the dilemma.

5B 6 Irresolvable Dilemmas

Incommensurable dilemmas such those we have been considering, are often described as "irresolvable". But what might this mean? To resolve a dilemma may mean to *eliminate* the alternatives by proving that one of them has less force. After all, even choosing the lesser evil, assuming that one indisputably exists, is an absolute moral requirement; it is the "right" thing to do and solves the dilemma. Again, by resolution we could mean avoiding the choice altogether by *procrastination*; this is hardly a satisfactory solution, but inaction is not an uncommon response to a difficult decision. Then, again, resolution could also mean that the alternative obligations were *reconciled* in some way, which is what Hegel

required of tragedy (see 9.2.2).

5B 6.1 There is a rather different example of "resolution" in the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which Krishna reveals the dilemma of taking action in this world: whatever one does, there are consequences (either in this or in another life). If one performs good actions, this produces good results; if one performs evil acts, this produces bad results. The ultimate effect of either outcome is bondage to the future, the inevitability of rewards or punishments, for which one is doomed to be reborn. The only resolution of the dilemma, says Krishna, is to give up the fruits of action, and to relinquish false desires (1977 p93).

5B 6.2 Another meaning of resolution emerges if we take the view, as did Williams (1973) that moral preferences are more like desires than beliefs; the rejected alternative does not then disappear or cease to apply for it will often continue to be felt in the form of regret or guilt. For example, if we take job A rather than job B because of such factors as the effect on our family, the prospect of a house move, a new environment, we might still be left with second thoughts about job B. Resolution in such cases will mean learning to live with compromise and, if the decision affects someone else, a broken promise for example, resolution may require making amends, apologizing or trying to put things right.

5B 7 Two Meanings of "Ought"

Let us look at some other related questions which are implied by pluralism. Clashes between different "ought" statements are not necessarily conflicting recommendations for action. We have first to be

clear what we mean by "ought". If it is an all-things-considered prescription to act in a particular way (see 2.9), it would be inconsistent to believe that there could be two such final "oughts". An example would be the orthodox Roman Catholic ban on contraception which applies equally to Christian, Moslem, Hindu or atheist. This is an absolute command, regardless of individual opinion or differences in circumstance.

Alternatively, "ought" may be a duty to do one thing if at all possible, an obligation with a built in *ceteris paribus* clause or, in other words, allowing for exceptions. Gowans (1987) described this distinction as between "ought" and "must" and considered it as a way of avoiding the inconsistency which, according to the principles of deontic logic, would otherwise exist:

Thus, I will suppose that ought-prescriptions may conflict without inconsistency, but that must-prescriptions may not conflict; and I will suppose that the deontic principles govern only the latter. A must-prescription declares what is morally best and hence what, from the moral point of view, must be done. (Gowans 1987 p26)

Foot (1983) also makes a distinction between types of obligation, arguing that there are two senses of "ought". The first type expresses a moral "ought" that can conflict with other moral "oughts". Clearly this would result in a dilemma. The second type, however, expresses "the thing that is *best* morally speaking". Foot holds that it cannot be the case that a person both ought and ought not to do something in this second sense of 'ought' (p383f). One meaning expresses what is best morally speaking; clearly this cannot conflict with any other obligation without inconsistency. The other, however, expresses an action that ought to be done, other things being equal, or from the perspective of one among many moral values, a view congenial to pluralists. Such "oughts" can conflict,

for they are not forbidden by the rules of deontic logic.

5B 8 Epistemological Implications

Another related issue is the meaning of "reality" in respect of moral obligation. Does it represent a belief in an objective set of criteria, as most rationalists would claim, universalizable, provable by an observable state of affairs about the world? A pluralist would argue that the "reality" of moral values is the belief in a rationale for making a decision, a consistent procedure for reaching a conclusion, which applies to anyone else finding themselves in the same set of circumstances.

Brennan (1977), defending the cognitive stance, argued that it is not possible in the case of defining "right" and "wrong", to have an exhaustive list of criteria, as some rationalists tend to require, so that people know in advance what we mean. He gave as an example the word "unsafe"; no experienced mountain climber will have memorised a list of "unsafe" criteria because he must regularly be meeting unprecedented situations. It is the same, he argued, with moral terms. We do not travel with a handy check list of morally neutral facts to guide us.

Nevertheless, just as a judge uses a wealth of "knowledge" to decide the relevance or otherwise of precedents, so also we are not forced to abandon a consistent, reasonable approach to deciding moral questions. Rather, it means that definitions are always open textured.

What the example from Brennan shows is that not all supporters of dilemma abandon the claim to cognitive, real or consistent descriptions of dilemma. What they do all have in common is the refusal to decide *a priori* against the possibility of holding consistent beliefs in dilemma.

5B 9 Situation Ethics

Another implication of pluralism is that one must consider each circumstance carefully and be prepared to adapt to it. This has sometimes been called "situation ethics". A typical statement, from a Christian standpoint, can be taken from Fletcher (1966):

There are various names for this approach: situationism, contextualism, occasionalism, circumstantialism, even actualism. These labels indicate, of course, that the core of the ethic they describe is a healthy and primary awareness that "circumstances alter cases" - i.e. that in actual problems of conscience the situational variables are to be weighed as heavily as the normative or "general" constants.....The situational factors are so primary that we may even say "circumstances alter rules and principles" ...

This is the temper of situation ethics. It is empirical, fact-minded, data conscious, inquiring. It is antimoralistic as well as antilegalistic, for it is sensitive to variety and complexity. It is neither simplistic nor perfectionist. It is "casuistry" (case-based) in a constructive and non-pejorative sense of the word... It works with two guidelines from Paul: "The written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (II Corinthians 3.6) and, "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Galatians 5.14)...

Christian situation ethics is not a system or program of living according to a code, but an effort to relate love to a world of relativities through a casuistry obedient to love. It is the strategy of love. This strategy denies that there are, as Sophocles thought, any unwritten immutable laws of heaven. (p29f)

A similar position was adopted by Bonhoeffer (1955) when he asked what is meant by "telling the truth" and what does it demand of us? He began by making a distinction:

The truthfulness of a child towards his parents is essentially different from that of the parents towards their child...consequently, in the matter of truthfulness, the parents' claim on the child is different from the child's claim on the parents....From this it emerges already that "telling the truth" means something different according to the particular situation in which one stands. Account must be taken of one's relationships at each particular time. (p326)

5B 10 Pluralism Summarised

No better summary of the pluralist point of view and its implications has been given than by Gaut (1993). She called the belief in independent and diverse moral principles a "return to a common sense morality" and used a powerful image to reinforce her point:

From the pluralist's perspective, those philosophers who account for morality in prioritist terms, appealing to one underlying conception of the morally right, are like those urban planners who demolish the messily arranged structures of an old city that has evolved over centuries in order to place neat, ordered, planned tower-blocks in their place. The result in the moral case is likely to be the same as in the urban case: the area becomes uninhabitable. I have urged instead a steady programme of home-improvements, with the occasional demolition of a habitation when its foundations prove untrustworthy. I take it that this approach to ethics is only a return to common-sense: common sense morality. (p37)

Common sense morality is one form of pluralism. It has a set of principles which fix one's *prima facie* duties (such as to keep promises, not to harm others, not to tell lies, etc.) These are universal in the sense that they apply in all cases which are identical in their non-moral properties. As Gaut explains: "To establish which principle is the more pressing in a particular context one uses, ... highly context-dependent reasoning and judgement... Having established which of the two conflicting duties is required in the circumstances, the duty is rendered absolute" (p19). What is required is a "reflectively improved version of common sense morality" (p33).

5B 11 The Single Value Argument

Another case for the existence of genuine dilemmas, which is sometimes put forward, is the single value argument. Here it is asserted by some (eg Marcus 1980) that a single principle obligation can give rise to an

irresolvable conflict. For example, a doctor may not know which of two equally deserving patients he should treat (other things also being equal). A fireman may not be able to rescue more than one person from a blazing building. In *Sophie's Choice* the mother did not know which of her two children to offer to the camp guard. It is alleged that in each of these cases, the single principle (of life saving) gives no guidance which course of action to follow. A similar situation allegedly arises in the case of two clashing promises.

As pointed out in 5A 4 a number of replies can be offered to this. In the first place, the conflicting promises may be due to the error of the agent, in which case the conflict is avoidable. Secondly, it may be argued that a promise always has built into it the condition that it will be fulfillable in all reasonable circumstances. The promise keeper would be excused if another eventuality beyond his control revealed he had double booked. His contracted obligation would be deemed to fall.

But the strongest argument is surely that no fireman, doctor or mother can be obliged to do more than save as many lives as they possibly can (see 5A 4); if, by definition, it is not possible to save more than one, it would be unreasonable to feel obliged to do more, however much you might wish you could do more. The single principle does not lead to a moral dilemma but to a practical problem. Guilt, therefore, is an inappropriate feeling. It is now necessary to consider the question of guilt and remainders in more detail.

5B 12 The Argument from Remainders

A very different line of argument to support the case for dilemmas, which

has already been referred to in 5B 6.2, was put forward by Williams (1973). In his view, leaving aside conflicts between a moral judgement and a non-moral desire, and the hypothetical possibility of holding two intrinsically inconsistent moral principles, Williams held that there are two basic forms of moral conflict. "One is that in which it seems that I ought to do each of two things, but I cannot do both. The other is that in which something which (it seems) I ought to do in respect of certain of its features also has other features in respect of which (it seems) I ought not to do it"; put concisely, the first is equivalent to: I ought to do *a* and I ought to do *b*, while the second is: I ought to do *c* and I ought not to do *c*.

Williams then went on to show that such moral conflicts are more like conflicts of desire than conflicts of ordinary factual belief. A rejected belief cannot substantially survive the point of decision that it was not true. But when we act on one of two desires, the rejected desire is not eliminated; "it may reappear, for instance, in the form of a *regret* for what was missed." This is a moral "remainder" and shows that even when we think that we have acted for the best, it would be a mistake to think that the rejected "ought must be totally rejected in the sense that one becomes convinced that it did not actually apply." Nussbaum, sympathetic to this approach, pointed out that what is foregone:

May sometimes be peripheral and sometimes more central to our conception of good living, sometimes what is foregone adversely affects only the agent himself; sometimes there is loss or damage to other people....sometimes the case may be self-contained, affecting little beyond itself; sometimes the choice...may bring with it far-reaching consequences for the rest of the agent's life and/or other affected lives. Finally, some such cases may be reparable: the agent may have future chances to undo what has been done or to pursue the omitted course; sometimes it is clear that there will be no such chance. (1985 p238)

This illustrates well the variety of situations which may occur leaving

us with a persistent "remainder"; clearly some of the sentiments felt will be those of regret, guilt or remorse. Agamemnon may have had no choice, given his post (see chapter 6), but the Chorus expected that, at the very least, he made some reparation and adopted a different attitude, just we might expect it from our politicians when driven to compromise (see 6.5 and 8). Others who support this type of argument include Marcus (1980), Fraassen (1973), Nussbaum (1985) and Statman (1990).

5B 13 Justified and Unjustified Feelings of Guilt

In 5A 5 the argument was considered that guilt feelings may be unjustified and, in any case, do not substantiate the existence of dilemma. Statman (1990), realising that guilt feelings can sometimes be misplaced, being the result of an over scrupulous conscience, considered the attempt to make a distinction between unjustified guilt feelings and justified guilt feelings. This, however, involves us in a vicious circle. As he put it:

It tries to establish the agent's guilt by the fact the agent feels justified guilt feelings. And how do we know that the feelings are justified? From the fact that he behaved wrongly and violated a (real) moral duty. But how do we know he behaved wrongly etc? From the fact he feels justified guilt feelings, and so we go round again. In other words, we could tell that guilt feelings are justified only if we already beg the question, and presuppose that the agent is guilty. (p198)

Nevertheless, his conclusion about the argument from sentiment, which this researcher finds convincing, was that even though one of the options which the agent faces is better (or less evil), all things considered, than the other (for example, a person might only be able to prevent a nuclear war and save millions of innocent lives by cheating, violating promises, betraying family and friends etc), "it would be very

artificial to deny" that this is a case of a moral dilemma. Hence, some dilemmas are real, he claimed, even when they are resolvable. There may be a better thing to do (namely to prevent the terrible war) but it would be "ad hoc and begging the question" (p198) to deny that it was a moral dilemma. Nussbaum (1985) put the case well:

We have, then, a wide spectrum of cases in which there is something like a conflict of desires.... We want ultimately to ask whether among these cases there are some in which not just contentment but also ethical goodness itself is affected; whether there is sometimes not just the loss of something desired but also actual blameworthy wrong-doing - and, therefore, occasion not only for regret but also for an emotion more like remorse. (p237)

5B 13.1 Greenspan (1983) distinguished two kinds of conflict: there are dilemmas of "exclusive requirement", where the doctor, fireman, mother, etc, are directed positively towards doing something they ought to do, namely saving a life, even though there is no moral ground for choosing which life; and there are dilemmas of "exhaustive prohibition", where the agent is faced with a set of negative options all of which are impermissible. This was the case with Sophie. Whatever she chose it was forbidden. Sophie was faced with negative choices, claimed Greenspan, so that she was prohibited from doing anything, and, by the same single principle of life saving, from doing nothing. In cases of dilemmas of "exhaustive prohibition" it may be appropriate to feel guilty (p123).

The difficulty about this argument is surely that the distinction is unreal. If we judge moral choices by their results then to that extent both Sophie, with her negative set of options ("exhaustive prohibitions"), and the fireman with his positive set of options ("exclusive requirements") are each faced with the same outcome, making a selection which leaves one person to die. If guilt is appropriate in the one case, it is also in the other.

5B 13.2 Slote (1985) put the case that even the utilitarian can find a place for justified guilt. He asks us to imagine "an impersonally benevolent person who has devoted his (*sic*) life to helping people, but who learns that he has contracted a particularly virulent form of plague" (p164). Whatever he does, wherever he moves, he will infect people. There is no way of isolating him. Slote asked, "What will the conscientious person with utilitarian motivation feel about his actions if he learns that he has such a disease?" He concluded that such a person is likely to feel not only regret for infecting people, but also guilt about "what he has done (and cannot stop doing)." This, claimed Slote, illustrates a utilitarian moral dilemma.

5B 13.3 Fraassen (1973) argued that guilt cannot easily be removed from the rejected obligation because it would make the doctrine of "Original Sin" incoherent. In the Old Testament, guilt is applied to several descendants of those Israelites who worshipped idols, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34.7). Similarly in modern times, many Germans are assumed to be guilty for the crimes of their predecessors. But is this convincing? "Original Sin" is a doctrine about the human condition, when faced with the perfection of God; it applies to everyone; it is not a doctrine about guilt for actual sins committed, still less is it an assertion about what people actually feel, a statement about human sentiments.

5B 14 Guilt and Regret

A more fruitful approach, it would seem, is to distinguish between guilt and regret. Even if none of the above agents have any reason to feel

guilt it would be natural for them to feel bad about not being able to do more, to save more; they might even feel guilty at the moment of explaining their choice to, say, a relative of the person who had died. What is justifiable, and surely unnatural to deny, is the feeling of regret. Agamemnon, Abraham or Sophie might be well advised to give up blaming themselves; they did what they had to do in the circumstances; guilt is not applicable. But it is reasonable for them to feel regret, even if they acted for the best in the circumstances. Thus it is not the case, as Marcus supposes, that-"you are damned if you do and damned if you don't"; that would indeed mean that the gods were irrational. But regret about being caught in such a web of circumstances, possibly some to which one contributed, is both natural and reasonable. Trigg (1971) stated the difference between guilt, or remorse, and regret as follows:

To feel guilt or remorse one must think one has done something which is blameworthy at least in one's own eyes. It does seem odd to say that we feel guilty about being faced with a moral dilemma or that we feel remorse about having done something we regard as wrong when the only alternative was something viewed as a lot worse. It is not that we are being irrational. "Guilt" and "remorse" are inappropriate concepts to introduce here. If I do not blame myself I cannot be feeling remorse.....Unlike remorse, regret can clearly be about events for which I am not responsible, even though I care about them. (p48f)

5B 15 A Counter Argument to Traditional Deontic Logic

There remains the problem of deontic logic. Are there rules that forbid the coincidence of two conflicting and genuine obligations? As pointed out in the previous chapter (5A 4), in the rationalist tradition it is held that the combination of the principle "ought implies can" (2.8) together with the principle of agglomeration, (if you ought to do *a* and ought to do *b*, you have an obligation to do both *a* and *b*), renders genuine dilemma inconceivable. A number of recent philosophers have challenged this. Williams relinquished agglomeration (1973) and Lemmon

(1965) argued against "ought implies can", but Gowans (1987) considered these moves to be mistaken; deontic principles stand or fall together, and as they rest on a single assumption his preference is to attack that premise.

The premise in question is that deontic modalities of obligation, prohibition, and permission and alethic modalities of necessity, impossibility, and possibility are analagous to one another. If ought expresses moral necessity, as Kant believed, then it indeed follows that moral dilemmas are impossible. Gowans, however, questioned why we should assume that the principles of deontic logic can be treated like the principles of propositional logic? Obligation and logical necessity are entirely different systems.

Nevertheless, to make the case that moral prescriptions never express necessity is difficult, because often it is clearly the case that an obligation is felt to apply come what may, whatever the circumstances. If, however, one considers that there are two kinds of moral prescription as did Foot (1983) and Gowans (1987, see 5B 7 above), then it opens the way to accepting genuine dilemmas. There are "oughts" which can never clash because they describe what one must do (in Gowans' preferred terminology "a must-prescription declares what is morally best and hence what, from the moral point of view, must be done"); there are also, however, "oughts" which may clash without being incoherent:

An ought prescription declares, from the perspective of one among many moral values, that an action ought to be done. Hence, 'S ought to do A' is always an abbreviation of 'from the perspective of such-and-such value, S ought to do A'. (1987 p26)

A similar conclusion is reached by Searle: the belief that "I have an

obligation to do A" cannot consistently be held with the belief that "I ought, *other things being equal* do B". On the other hand there is no inconsistency between believing that one has an obligation to do A and the statement that, nevertheless, "I ought, *all things considered* to do B" (1978 p87).

5B 16 A Typology of Dilemmas

From the foregoing discussion of the arguments in favour of the reality of moral dilemmas, it is possible to classify dilemmas into recognizable types from the phenomenological standpoint and then to cross check the classification against data derived from the interviews with students. If one divides dilemmas first into two broad categories, those that are resolvable (A) and those that are irresolvable (B) and then distinguish between those with no remainder (1), those with a residue of regret (2) and finally those more serious dilemmas which leave a feeling of remorse or guilt (3), the following classification can be put forward before further perspectives are considered:

- A1. Dilemmas which can be resolved without regrets or second thoughts. Nevertheless, the experience is still remembered as a poignant one, causing some personal concern and urgency, thus distinguishing it from a "problem" (see interview 3).
- A2. Dilemmas which can be resolved, but only by leaving sentiments of post decisional regret or anguish about the rejected alternative(s), (see interview 5).
- A3. Dilemmas which can be resolved but only by leaving a remainder of justified post decisional guilt or remorse (see interview 15).

- B1. Dilemmas which appear from the agent's perspective to be irresolvable. Nevertheless, when the choice of action has been decided, although there are no regrets or guilt feelings, the memory of the experience is still a poignant one, causing some personal concern and urgency (see interview 8).
- B2. Dilemmas which are irresolvable. Nevertheless, when the choice of action has been decided, the agent is left with a sense of post decisional regret (see interview 1).
- B3. Dilemmas which are irresolvable. Nevertheless, when the choice of action has been decided, the agent is left with a sense of (unjustified) guilt (see interview 2).

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL ETHICS: PUBLIC MORALITY AND THE "DIRTY HANDS" PROBLEM

Ethical philosophy can be applied to most areas of human activity and one of the most interesting to educators and the concern of this chapter is whether the moral obligations that a person acknowledges in posts of public responsibility conflict with those that the same person accepts in private life.

Does the general who knowingly orders the attack on a village with innocent civilians in it, on the pretext that it also contains guerillas, act according to a different set of precepts from those he would normally follow as a private citizen? Are politicians who obtain office by means of a shady deal with an influential pressure group they would normally detest, or who exercise their newly acquired power by compromising the principles for which they stood before winning it, obeying a different moral code? Or are they rather applying the same moral code to a new and more complex situation, adapting the commitments which they would normally acknowledge with more subtlety, complexity and permissible exceptions than would be acceptable in their private lives?

This conflict between public and private morality is sometimes called the "dirty hands" problem, after Sartre's play of that name (1955), or the "Machiavellian problem", after the advice given to those seeking high office by Machiavelli in *The Prince* (Chapter XV).

Essentially this issue is whether public morality can be considered to differ in some way from private morality, and although usually thought of as a political dilemma, it clearly applies with equal force to military

leaders, to those in business management or people in any post of responsibility. The purpose of this chapter is to consider first the variety of situations in which the problem can arise; second, to ask if there is any justification in considering that public life is somehow different from private, then to look at some differing approaches to the question and finally to ask what schools and colleges might be expected to do to prepare students for posts of responsibility and a life which will require them to face many compromises.

6.1 The "Dirty Hands" Problem

The problem of the contradictions which may arise between public and private ethical standpoints is by no means new; it was essentially the Agamemnon predicament; it was faced by early Christian theologians considering whether it was right to bear arms in a just cause, such as Tertullian, Augustine and Basil the Great, and it was studied particularly by Machiavelli. Nevertheless, it has been given a new twist in recent years in the debate about the rules of war; the potential for mass destruction in modern nuclear warfare has challenged the very notion of there being any such thing as a "just war", and modern investigative journalism has brought into the light of public scrutiny the compromises occurring in modern power politics. Moreover, TV technology now means that the public enters more immediately into the debates surrounding notorious events such as the My Lai massacre or Watergate.

One of the main political compromises faced by the early church, to take the first of these examples, was whether Christians could with a clear conscience fight in the Roman army. If so, could they kill without incurring guilt? The two poles of the argument, which might be named the

absolutist and the expedient, presented relatively clear positions: either Christians ought to remain pacifist and refuse to enlist even at the point of death (Tertullian's position) or they were justified in obeying the commands of the State ("Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" 1 Peter 2:13), in which case, however regrettable the consequences, no guilt was incurred.

6.1.1 At one extreme stood Tertullian, who can be seen as an early Christian example of the uncompromising absolutist. He rejected the worldly (i.e. Roman) attitude towards war. "It is absolutely forbidden to repay evil with evil" (*On Patience* 8). "How will a Christian go to war, nay, how will he serve even in peace without a sword, which the Lord has taken away?" (*On Idolatry* XIX).

Augustine adopted a compromise position; he did not consider it wrong to kill if the cause was just, although it was the kind of thing that might make a soldier melancholy and sad:

It is the wrong doing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars; and this wrongdoing even though it gave rise to no war, would still be a matter of grief to man because it is man's wrongdoing...

Let everyone, then, who thinks with pain on all these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is misery. And if anyone either endures or thinks of them without mental pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself happy because he has lost human feeling (*City of God* XIX 7).

It was right, therefore, to feel melancholy at being compromised by worldly standards; good men should always deprecate war. Guilt, however, was not appropriate. We might parallel this argument with modern versions of expediency; utilitarians find no place for feelings of guilt if the action is justified in terms of its outcome, although even misplaced

guilt may still have its benefits (see Slote 1985 pl64). In none of these cases do we have a dilemma as such and therefore no problem of "dirty hands". Good men and women can either avoid war altogether and pay the penalty that the state exacts, or they can participate with a clear conscience, with regrets probably, with doubts even, but not with a justified sense of guilt.

Basil the Great, however, takes a more serious view, a position midway between Tertullian's outright rejection and Augustine's compromise. Regret becomes uncleanliness, or impurity which, although it may be distinguished from justified guilt, is closely allied to it and may indicate the origin of the "dirty hands" concept.

Homicide in war is not reckoned by our fathers as homicide; I presume from their wish to make concession to men fighting on behalf of chastity and true religion. Perhaps, however, it is well to counsel that those whose hands are not clean only abstain from communion for three years. (*Letter CLXXXVIII*, 13)

6.1.1 In recent years, Gelder (1989) has drawn attention to two "dilemmas of deterrence", the credibility dilemma and the usability dilemma. Although Gelder saw these as two closely related questions, they can be better described as one, a dilemma with two horns: loss of credibility and likelihood of use. Briefly, the more extreme our threats to use nuclear retaliation, and therefore the more likely to lead to all out nuclear war, the less credible it will be that rational people would carry them out, and deterrence fails. If, however, we moderate the threats in order to make them more credible, they may then become insufficient to counter the possibility of aggression.

Nuclear deterrence cannot be effective unless its threats are credible, and yet the very process of making those threats credible increases the risk of nuclear war, directly undermining the original purpose. Nuclear deterrence appears to be either incredible or self-

defeating; either way, it fails to prevent nuclear conflict. (p159)

This has led to a debate (see, for example, Schonsheck 1991) in which different escapes from the horns of the dilemma are argued. It would be difficult to decide whether this is a moral or a non-moral dilemma. What is clear, however, is that it illustrates typically the different principles that come into play when defining a credible defence policy for a country and the impossibility of keeping one's hands pure.

6.1.2 The starkest presentation of the case for compromise and expediency is to be found in Sartre's *Dirty Hands* (1955). In it, Hugo, an idealist, intellectual revolutionary (an absolutist) believes he ought to assassinate the leader of his party, Hoederer, for betraying the revolutionary principles for reasons of opportunism. Hoederer's reply has become much quoted:

How you cling to your purity, young man! How afraid you are to soil your hands! All right, stay pure! What good will it do? Why did you join us? Purity is an idea for a yogi or a monk. You intellectuals and bourgeois anarchists use it as a pretext for doing nothing. To do nothing, to remain motionless, arms at your sides, wearing kid gloves. Well, I have dirty hands. Right up to the elbows. I've plunged them in filth and blood. But what do you hope? Do you think you can govern innocently? (1955 p224)

Here we find neither the absolutist, rejection of compromise, as desired by the unworldly Hugo, nor the uncomplicated, clear conscience adoption of the "filth and blood", as might be argued by the act utilitarian. Keeping one's hands clean is not an option in Hoederer's eyes. His position is that of the leader who knows only too well that it is not possible to "govern innocently". His political dilemma is a real one.

6.1.3 Machiavelli also presented a deliberate approach to compromise and expediency. The Prince must learn how not to be good if he will survive:

There is such a difference between how men live and how they ought to live that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his destruction rather than his preservation, because any man who under all conditions insists on making it his business to be good will surely be destroyed among so many who are not good. Hence a prince, in order to hold his position, must acquire the power to be not good, and understand when to use it and when not to use it, in accord with necessity. (*The Prince* chapter XV)

Machiavelli was not making a case for placing politics in an autonomous realm, beyond the claims of ordinary morality. He was judging the good prince, "among so many who are not good" by the same code which he himself respected. Elsewhere he approved of the Florentines who have a higher regard for their "*patria* than for their souls". In both cases, it is a question of the prior claim of high office; his point is that there are situations in which the good leader must override his personal intuitions about moral obligations in the interests of the state for which he has accepted responsibility.

6.1.4 Similarly, Walzer (1973) is clear that we are dealing with a problem *within* the moral code, a question of the grounds and limits of compromise. For him, the moral politician is a tragic hero. He (*sic*) does not shrug off the dilemma as if it were of no consequence, for he is a man of scruple (which is probably why we voted for him). But neither can he adopt the absolutist line and stay pure, for either he would have failed to obtain power in the first place, or he would have lost it in the struggle with "so many who are not good". If he couldn't stand the heat he should have stayed out of the kitchen. What he has is a genuine dilemma, the problem of "dirty hands".

If he is the good man I am imagining him to be, he will feel guilty, that is, he will believe himself to be guilty. That is what it means to have dirty hands.....Here is the moral politician: it is by his dirty hands that we know him. If he were a moral man and nothing else, his hands would not be dirty; if he were a politician and nothing else, he would pretend that they were clean. (1973 p166 ff)

6.1.5 There are many other applications of this problem. Benn (1983) described the issues from the point of view of the liberal conscience, as the conflict between the 'personal' and the 'political'; in this the liberal has a conflict between two principles which he acknowledges. On the one hand, the obligation to be tolerant, a tradition born out of the wars of religion and persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which has taught him advantages of respecting the individual conscience, the "Inner Light"-and the right to individual belief. The integrity of the individual demands such respect; it is also a prudent policy, for the sake of social peace. It was on these grounds that the U.K. Report of the committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution (the Wolfenden Report) declared in 1957 that "there must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business" (Cmd 247 para 61).

On the other hand, liberals understand morality to be a rational process, open to public scrutiny and justified by appeal to the commonly accepted criteria of good reasoning. They therefore have difficulty in accepting "gut feelings" or private intuitions. Morality is not a question of personal taste, like baroque music or avocado pears, it is public in the sense that Wittgenstein claimed a language must be public: "the principles, the reasons for saying that you have got it right or wrong, must be open to anyone" (Benn 1983 p156). On similar grounds to these, Lord Devlin rejected the distinctions made in the Wolfenden Report: "I do not think one can talk sensibly of a public and private morality" (1965 p16).

The question for the liberal, argued Benn, is whether to congratulate

one's leaders for making tough decisions in the jungle world of power politics, or to expect some signs of appreciation of the tension between a morality of principles and one of utilitarian expediency. His own conclusion seems to support the "dirty hands" concept and the belief that political dilemmas genuinely exist. In answer to Hoederer's question, he does not believe that it is possible to govern innocently and that "a feeling of loss, for some liberals, is inescapable" (p159).

6.2 Is There a Distinctive Public Morality?

Let us now look a little closer at the claim that the public sphere is so special that a different morality applies to it; and for the purposes of this study this is taken to include any post of public responsibility, from student president to college governor, from site manager to project director, petty officer to ship's captain. Several reasons can be put forward to justify the distinction between a public and a private morality. First, there is the popular view that politicians are different from (and worse than) private citizens.

Walzer (1973) has drawn a distinction on three grounds between politicians and "other entrepreneurs in an open society, who hustle, lie, intrigue, wear masks, smile and are villains" (p162). The first reason they are regarded as worse than ourselves, he claimed, is because the politician acts on our behalf, he (*sic*) "hustles, lies, and intrigues *for us* - or so he claims". As it happens, he cannot serve us without also serving himself, for success brings him the power and glory which he so desires, "the greatest rewards that men can win from their fellows". But he will argue that if he did not hustle and lie there would be many others prepared to.

Secondly, a politician is considered worse than the rest of us, he claimed, because he exercises power over us. "The successful politician becomes the visible architect of our restraint. He taxes us, licenses us, forbids and permits us, directs us to this or that distant goal - all for our greater good (p165).

Thirdly, the politician uses his power against us. "The men who act for us and in our name are often killers, or seem to become killers too quickly and too easily" (p164). For these reasons, therefore, politicians are arguably distinct from ordinary citizens and are commonly regarded as such. In which case they can be expected to follow a different code of behaviour.

6.2.1 More generally, with regard to other posts of responsibility, it can be argued that it is no longer the individual's moral code that is relevant. Each one is in office by virtue of election, appointment or nomination and, as such, personal morality is not particularly important; what counts are the multifarious codes of the constituency or the moral standards of the appointing authority. You should therefore seek a consensus, a mandate or delegated duty. However much you wish to be "your own man", you are not. You are under authority and, even though this involves ducking and diving, wheeling and dealing, making the best of the situation, this is what you are put there to do and to imagine otherwise is a selfish indulgence.

By the same token, the moral intuitions appropriate to individuals in their private capacity may be quite inappropriate in their public role. Benn quotes with approval Cecil's observation that "No one has a right to be unselfish with other people's interests" and that the morality which

requires an individual to sacrifice his or her interests to others is inappropriate to the action of a state (p162).

6.2.2 When one considers the apparent public outrage in the USA at the lies told during the Watergate affair, or those that forced the resignations in this country over the Spycatcher issue, it is clear that lying to save one's own skin in government is regarded as a very different matter to the grand fabrications of state. As Benn stated it:

The grim necessities of the contest for power will excuse a lie for the country's sake. To lie for the government's survival can be acceptable, if embarrassing, to its supporters. To lie for personal advantage alone is not acceptable and not to be excused merely by an appeal to the Hobbesian rules of the political game. (p166)

6.2.3 Then there is the "buck stops here" argument. All those in positions of authority are to some extent isolated. However hard they consult, seek advice, attempt to find the will of the people, this will elude them. They are often expected to take the very decision that no one else will take; it may be to sack a trouble maker, to take a stand against an aggressor or to threaten those who use violence. At the point of decision, it is quite likely that their followers or advisers will look to their own reputations and speak with a forked tongue. They may be criticised and opposed right up to the point of decision; then, if it appears successful, they can expect to be told that this was what they were expected to do all along; if unsuccessful, they will be expected to take the blame, even resign. Such things go with the job.

6.2.4 Another distinguishing facet is the seduction of power. Those who obtain high office will not readily relinquish it; politicians can do no good unless they obtain power themselves, and this is unlikely unless they use the necessary means, including making compromises, wheeling and

dealing. The struggle to get re elected, or re-appointed may require many such accommodations, face saving formulae, U-turns and the like. Popular acclaim is fickle and to strive overmuch for the appearance of consistency will be regarded by the public as a conceit of far less importance, in the majority of cases, than to undertake dubious backstage manoeuvres in order to retain power.

6.2.5 Another approach is to distinguish between the different forms of reasoning that are employed in political and private spheres respectively. Lucas (1966), for instance, argued that political reasoning is dialectical, it balances opposing interests; the questions are never prejudged and the issues rarely settled or closed. This means that both sides in a dispute can always return to them, perhaps years afterwards, when new circumstances apply, when there are new actors on the stage, and new constraints to limit our choices. Oakeshott (1965) expressed the matter slightly differently; when we come to a political argument, he wrote, we bring a whole array of beliefs, traditions, feelings and prejudices. This means there is no body of norms and principles which can provide tidy solutions or references to guide our decisions. We can, of course, call on our beliefs and traditions, but not in the sense of a *vade mecum* of ready principles. We learn from these only by living them out in practice and in what are by definition new situations. Our decisions are based upon what is likely to provide the most acceptable compromise between competing goals.

6.2.6 Many would argue that the distinction between a public and a private morality rests on the fact that politics is a jungle world, where the devil takes the hindmost and the refinements of moral principle are a luxury by comparison with the survival of the fittest. Thus Benn argued

that those who are the agents of the state "are licensed to set aside moral principles for the sake of good outcomes (or more usually, to avoid bad ones), and that the reason for this is that they are the champions and trustees of the public in a jungle world" (p167).

6.2.7 There is, therefore, a case for seeing a difference in the role, and a difference in the perception by the public of that role. But it is very doubtful if any of these arguments establish the case that politics (or the military life, or management) is beyond the reach of moral considerations. Accountability makes for greater complexity in ethical issues, less predictability and raises other constraints. All these are arguments for compromise and adaptation of the code, but not for the autonomy of public morality; still less are they for taking politics and other spheres of responsibility out of the moral realm altogether.

Morality applies to all human actions; the distinctions, therefore, if they indeed exist, are within morality. It is clear that a more complex set of considerations applies to posts of public responsibility. There will be a need to obtain publicly desired goals by the best means possible, including compromises. In such circumstances, men will argue about the difference between fighting dirty and fighting clean, between acceptable dealing and unscrupulous actions, between motives of self interest or personal advantage and the public interest. The politician will not be respected for feathering his own nest, taking back handers or saving his own skin at the expense of the common weal. But in the end Niebuhr's words seem the most applicable:

Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises. (1963 p4)

6.3 What is the Appropriate Response to "Dirty Hands"?

How should one come to terms with one's "dirty hands"? What kind of response is desirable from someone whose decisions of office have become tainted by compromise? Attitudes are likely to range from, "I've not given it much thought, since it was the most reasonable thing to do in the circumstances", through, "I regret what I did, but could do no other", to, "I feel very bad about it, and cannot shake off the sense of guilt". These inevitably reflect a variety of ethical standpoints.

6.3.1 Some preliminary points should be made first. For example, it is useful to distinguish those attitudes taken *before* the action from those adopted after it. The decision itself, together with its consequences, can significantly alter this attitude; it was true of those involved in the Manhattan experiment, developing the nuclear bomb, and it is a well established phenomenon that those who decide that an abortion is the best solution to an unwanted pregnancy may sometimes subsequently regret it.

6.3.2 Then, it is important to concentrate on the reasons given for a person's decisions, rather than simply on its results. For example, an absolutist, or qualified absolutist like Nagel, will regard some actions as definitively prohibited whatever the situation. Nagel (1971), considering war and massacre, gave as examples the use of flamethrowers or napalm, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and firing on trucks carrying food. Accepting that warfare cannot be romanticised, his hope was nevertheless that "when nations conflict they might rise to the level of limited barbarity that typically characterizes violent conflict between individuals, rather than wallowing in the moral pit where they

appear to have settled" (1971 p142).

The same outcomes, however, may equally be deplored by a person with a very different ethical outlook. Brandt (1971) argued that the rules adopted by the U.S. Manual of Warfare also forbids certain actions (pillage, killing the enemy when they have laid down their arms, or putting prisoners to death because their presence retards his movements).

The decision, therefore, where one exists, will be found not in the outcome but in the reasons justifying the decision, the arguments put forward and the motives articulated.

6.3.3 Another pre decisional characteristic, put forward by Nagel (1971), is that absolutists are more likely to seek ways of retaining direct personal interaction than those relying on expediency of outcome. He suggested that one ought to justify to the victim what is being done to him, a scenario which would sometimes border on the ludicrous:

If one abandons a person in the course of rescuing several others from a fire or a sinking ship, one *could* say to him " You understand, I have to leave you to save the others". Similarly, if one subjects an unwilling child to a painful surgical procedure, one can say to him, "If you could understand, you would realize that I am doing this to help you." One could *even* say, as one bayonets an enemy soldier, "It's either you or me." But one cannot really say while torturing a prisoner, "You understand, I have to pull out your fingernails because it is absolutely essential that we have the names of your confederates"; nor can one say to the victims of Hiroshima, "You understand, we have to incinerate you to provide the Japanese government with an incentive to surrender." (1971 p137)

This seems pretty far fetched and more like a case of moral cowardice, a rationalization for doing something in an extreme case that one's absolutist principles actually forbid. If one does decide on torture or blanket bombing, one should of course have an adequate reason for it. The decision may still be wrong, and there may be a real dilemma; but no

amount of "direct interpersonal response to the people one deals with" (p136) will make it any more acceptable, reduce the amount of guilt, or, one suspects, make it any easier to live with the decision.

6.3.4 The Articles of the Hague and Genevan Conventions were agreed on all sides; and prior to the subsequent wars it was accepted that aggression should be directed solely at a specific hostile target. But this did not survive the test of one side breaking the agreement. Thus the allied raids on Hamburg or Dresden were justified at the time as reprisals for German bombing eg. Coventry and Amsterdam. Civilians, in this respect will be thought of as impermissible targets.

Alternatively, the law of double effect, whereby indirect results are excusable, has often been quoted. If the undesirable outcome was perceived as an indirect side effect, it was not condemned. This, however, is too vulnerable to the charge of hypocrisy. During the Vietnam War, the American public were not convinced by the argument that their troops were right to raid a village because they suspected that guerillas were hiding there, nor that they should be excused the killing of hundreds of women and children on the grounds that it was an unfortunate side effect, that killing innocents was not their deliberate goal. There was therefore a public outcry. In this way, popular morality, or common sense, can be a check on the casuistry of government spokesmen.

6.4 Post Decisional Attitudes

When we consider what attitudes are appropriate *after* acquiring "dirty hands", everything depends on the person's attitude to guilt. Clearly, if the utilitarian ethic is espoused, however much there might be a

lingering unease or regret, or sympathy for those adversely affected, there will not be any sense of genuine guilt; actions were taken for the best. Similarly, the Machiavellian hero had no serious second thoughts and felt no remorse; he had learned how not to be good and had rejected any idea of personal goodness, in favour of the rewards of power and glory. "A Machiavellian hero has no inwardness", claimed Walzer. We therefore do not know for certain what his feelings were. We can only guess that his attitude is likely to be one of basking in glory.

Walzer found all this very unsatisfactory; "We want a record of his anguish", he wrote. He turned next to the approach taken by Weber in his essay *Politics as a Vocation* (1948). In this, the good man (*sic*) with dirty hands is still a hero, but a tragic hero, one who does indeed feel the anguish of his decision; one who is no stranger to remorse. But his is a godless career, for the world is an evil place and it is simply not possible both to do good in the world and to save one's soul. The politicians therefore must accept the price of their vocation; by doing bad in order to do good they lose their souls. This seems like an argument to shoot politicians who have dirty hands and then jump into a vat of boiling oil.

How satisfactory is this dualist attitude to the life we lead and individualist account of guilt? We are asked to imagine a man who lies, compromises, sends people to their death, perhaps, but does it all with a heavy, unrelieved heart. He has lost his soul and it cannot be regained. He suffers the inward penalty of individual guilt. But as Walzer says, "We don't want to be ruled by men (*sic*) who have lost their souls a politician with dirty hands needs a soul, and it is best for us all if he has some hope of personal salvation, however that is conceived... He

commits a determinate crime, and he must pay a determinate penalty" (p178).

6.4.1 This seems a very unconvincing presentation of the Protestant conscience, if that is what is intended. Some Protestants would certainly see the world as an evil place in which the goodness of the Creation has been eradicated by the evil of the Fall. And some might believe that no guilt free dealings are possible within such a world. But most would surely not accept that the "sin" acquired by a secular life cannot be cleansed and was beyond forgiveness? Surely redemption is not foregone by the person who accepts deliberately the political vocation and as such has acquired dirty hands? It is never too late to obtain forgiveness.

6.4.2 Nevertheless, it is the notion of paying a specific penalty that made Walzer prefer the attitude in Camus' *The Just Assassins* (1958). These men are terrorists in nineteenth century Russia; they are heroes who willingly consent to being criminals and to pay the price. There is, therefore, in Camus' eyes no reason to condemn them. They are innocent criminals, "just assassins", because they are willing to die for their actions (p215).

Walzer preferred Camus' approach because it indicates a punishment or penance that fits the crime. Sartre's hero Hoederer makes no reference to the moral code by which he has acquired "dirty hands". When he asks the question "Do you think you can govern innocently?" he clearly believes that the answer is "No"; but no further analysis is given. The attitudes of Machiavelli's hero, like his actions, are determined solely by prudential considerations, Weber's tragic and suffering hero is punished only to the extent that as an individual he is capable of suffering. Only

Camus' *Just Assassins* pay the penalty that society requires. "On the scaffold they wash their hands clean and, unlike the suffering servant, they die happy" (p178). This therefore is Walzer's preferred attitude when in the "moral blind alley" which he describes (but see Brandt [1971] who disagrees).

6.5 The Relevance to Education

There are three areas in which schools and colleges can consider the "dirty hands" problem and prepare their students for posts of responsibility. The first is by their internal structures; the time honoured practice of creating prefects is by no means the only, or even the best method of training for leadership. It suffers from lack of time for conscious reflection and the fact that prefects lead younger pupils rather than their peers. But other methods such as societies, sports leaders, student councils, social and community activities also provide opportunities for leadership and for decisions with potential costs and difficulty.

Secondly, there has to be time for discussion and consideration of specific issues. This may be within the time allocated to sports, the student council or the various societies, but more likely it will be within structured time such as a tutor or form period, or a general study course.

Thirdly, it is vital that there are supportive materials, resources and guidance for tutors to consider the price of leadership and the cost and negative effects of particular decisions. This too is the place for a consideration of how best each individual can learn to handle, or live

with, the marginal decision, the costly policy or the action with regrettable consequences.

6.5.1 In the world of public responsibility, we have hard choices to make, based upon our "reflectively improved version of common sense morality" (Gaut 1993 p33). We can either shrug off our moral compromises and decide that in the jungle all is fair, for it is a cold world separated from the human atmosphere of ethical obligations. Or, we can try to purge our guilt in a variety of ways. What is hard to accept is the notion that the world of public affairs brings a different set of moral obligations into play. For example, it is not convincing to argue that, because the business world has profit making and accountability to its shareholders as its main objectives, it is therefore a self indulgent luxury to find room for private morality. Accountability raises another constraint but does not define a new sphere of activity, and shareholders, like voters, cannot be assumed to to be swayed only by amoral considerations.

Whatever moral code is chosen, it applies to all human activity, and variations in behaviour, if they exist, are the result of decisions taken within the one moral sphere. The politician will not be respected for closing his eyes to the private ethics of his constituents, on the grounds that they are from a different world. In the end it seems inescapable that reflective common sense in context is our only recourse. Education is one, major influence in the development of such a common sense morality.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PHENOMENOLOGY: THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME 16 - 19 YEAR OLD STUDENTS

The third perspective consists of an enquiry into the experience of dilemma by some 16 to 19 year old students at one Sixth Form College. It forms one of two pieces of fieldwork in this research (the other being an enquiry amongst sixty Heads of Department in post sixteen colleges, see chapter 10) and adopts the general approach favoured by phenomenologists (see above 4.6). In analysing the interviews, this perspective employs some of the insights of Personal Construct Theory as part of the "triangulation" method used in this research. The chapter describes the selection and interviewing of the sample of students, giving the context, the assumptions behind the semi structured pattern of questions; this is followed by a summary of fifteen case studies, four of which are expanded and analysed in greater detail.

7.1 Arranging the Interviews

In preparation for the interviews, a number of guidelines on interviewing techniques were found useful (e.g. Nisbet and Entwistle 1970, Johnson 1977, Cohen and Manion 1980). The aim was to test some of the theoretical perspectives whilst discovering what students themselves considered to be dilemmas and how they coped with them.

A computerised random selection of 25 students was made from a total population of 400 in their first year of A levels (1991/2). This was repeated in the following year (1992/3). An invitation was sent to each student asking if they would be prepared to help with some research into

"the way students take difficult decisions and the way they resolve problems where the alternatives make the choices very hard" (Appendix 1.1). They were invited to a short interview (about 20 minutes) in their lunchtime and asked if they would describe in confidence any such situation that might have occurred recently. They were assured that their name would be kept confidential and that nothing said would be traced back to them. They would be asked to agree or amend the transcript afterwards. No other pressure was brought to bear in any way, and no reminders were sent out.

The response was much as expected; in the first year 12 responses were received, 3 declining to discuss their dilemmas and 9 consenting to be interviewed. In the second year, 15 responded, 2 declining and 13 consenting. This gave a total of 22 students for whom interviews were arranged.

7.1.1 In chapter four, Phenomenology was described as a movement or approach to research, rather than a school of thought with agreed tenets (see 4.6.3). "The most characteristic core is its method," wrote Spiegelberg (1965 p655), and he gives a number of "positive steps" which mark this method. Although there is much disagreement as to which are essential, most commentators accept: *bracketing*, *intuiting*, *analysing* and *describing* and *intentionality* (see 4.6.3-9). These steps formed the basic approach to the interviewing procedure and interpretation in this part of the research.

It would have been artificial to pretend that no preconceptions existed, or that all interests and assumptions could be "bracketed" out. There had been many years' interest in the problem, considerable reading and

research had preceded the exercise and the research questions outlined in chapter two had been devised prior to the interviews.

7.1.2 More specifically, the assumptions and interests can best be gauged by the following 10 questions which were kept in mind during the interviews:

- (1) What were the student's main constructs (emergent and implicit)?
- (2) Were there any regrets, guilt or second thoughts?
- (3) Was it a "resolvable" or "irresolvable" dilemma, regardless of whether or not any decision was taken?
- (4) Were alternative choices considered?
- (5) Were stress conditions present (e.g. deadlines, social or moral pressures)?
- (6) Was it an isolated or shared decision? Was advice sought?
- (7) Was the student a victim of circumstances, bad luck?
- (8) Was the immediate and articulated dilemma a cover for another problem?
- (9) Was the dilemma perceived as a moral issue?
- (10) Would it be possible to categorise the dilemma as one of the six types described above (5B.16)?

It was essential in interpreting the answers to see the point of view of the student and the same questions can be seen from two perspectives, that of the observer and that of the interviewee (see 10.6.3). A semi structured interview plan was devised (Appendix 1.2) and all interviews were taped and transcribed; fifteen of these are now summarised below as being particularly helpful in illuminating the dilemmas experienced by students. The remaining cases added nothing further of substance to the

observations nor contradicted any findings.

7.1.3 The interviews supported the typology proposed in 5B 16, reinforcing and illustrating each category of dilemma, namely those that were resolvable (A) and those that were irresolvable (B); each could then be further divided into those with no second thoughts, though leaving a poignant memory (1), those with a residue of regret (2) and finally, those more serious dilemmas leaving behind a remainder of guilt or remorse (3). As follows:

- A1. Dilemmas which can be resolved without regrets or second thoughts. Nevertheless, the experience is still remembered as a poignant one, causing some personal concern and urgency, thus distinguishing it from a "problem" (see interview 3).
- A2. Dilemmas which can be resolved, but only by leaving sentiments of post decisional regret or anguish about the rejected alternative(s), (see interview 5).
- A3. Dilemmas which can be resolved but only by leaving a remainder of justified post decisional guilt or remorse (see interview 15).
- B1. Dilemmas which appear from the agent's perspective to be irresolvable. Nevertheless, when the choice of action has been decided, although there are no regrets or guilt feelings, the memory of the experience is still a poignant one, causing some personal concern and urgency (see interview 8).
- B2. Dilemmas which are irresolvable. Nevertheless, when the choice of action has been decided, the agent is left with a sense of post decisional regret (see interview 1).

B3. Dilemmas which are irresolvable. Nevertheless, when the choice of action has been decided, the agent is left with a sense of (unjustified) guilt (see interview 2).

7.2 Summary of Student Interviews

7.2.1 Move house with parents or live with Gran?

T's parents had a small business which went into liquidation a few months before. They lost their jobs and their house. T felt "all his security had gone, like we didn't have any money and we've always been quite comfortable." T wanted to stay at college which would mean living on his own with his grandmother. The choice was between that and moving away with his parents. He therefore felt the double bind of loyalty to his parents and desire to stay with his friends and finish his A level education. The decision to stay was eventually taken without advice. This was essentially an irresolvable dilemma with some regret as a remainder. (Type B2).

7.2.2 Leave home or stay?

F did not get on with her parents but thought that the blame lay partly with herself and felt guilty about this. She had moved out once before, to the YWCA, using her savings to do so; should she try again? She said that she had been made to feel a failure in education, had wasted the money spent on her schooling with little examination success to show for it. She would, however, miss her parents and continue to see herself as partly at fault. Her decision was taken without outside help but, in so

far as guilt and regret remained, the dilemma was irresolvable. (*Type B3*).

7.2.3 Drop Art AS or continue?

H considered that the work involved with Art AS was little short of an A Level; he was also studying English AS together with Media Studies and CDT at A level. The problem about dropping Art (and raising the English to A level) was that this would restrict his career choices. He did not consider that English and CDT would open as many opportunities for him. Also he knew that the Art teachers would be disappointed and perhaps feel let down. There would also be a great deal of work involved in catching up the English. *H* resolved his dilemma by "putting crosses against Art and plusses against the English." He did this with advice from parents and careers staff. There were no regrets. (*Type A1*).

7.2.4 Come to Sixth Form College or take a job?

D really thought when he was at school that he would go out and get a job, as his friends had done, in a local labouring firm (there was also a job at the Airport). The immediate money was attractive. He also didn't get on with his teachers and particularly the Headteacher who made fun of him. But then other friends had been to the College, and he considered the longer term benefits of being better qualified (even though "there are loads of self made millionaires which haven't got an education and stuff"). Eventually he chooses to come to College; it was his own decision, the dilemma was resolved and he has no regrets. (*Type A1*).

7.2.5 Enter Higher Education or take a job?

The main difficulty *A* sees is what to do after his A levels, go to university or go straight into a job. He had always been vague about any career plans. There was the attraction of immediate money; he also got the impression everyone was "trying to push me more into university." At the time of interview he was still undecided. But having talked to tutors careers staff and his parents, he eventually chose to take a year off and postpone the decision. The dilemma seemed to him resolvable but only with regrets. (*Type A2*).

7.2.6 Help friend with problems or not?

R had recently made friends with another student whose parents were going through a divorce (his father's second). The friend kept coming to him every day to ask what he should do. This had begun to annoy *R* whose work was being affected. Yet he did not wish to let his friend down. He discussed the problem with his parents who were clear that the friend needed professional help, but *R* did not think that they appreciated the "full details" of the problem. His dilemma was therefore the choice between the obligation to his friend and the obligation to himself. He took the decision to cease seeing his friend. There was no regret, the relief more than compensated him for the obligation he had refused. (*Type A1*).

7.2.7 Remain at College or return to former school?

When *E* came to college it took her a long time to make new friends. She had returned to her old school for a Speech Day and doubts about her

decision to leave began to trouble her. "I knew everyone I was speaking to and I really missed it and I thought Oh gosh, what have I done?" She thought she might go back but her parents persuaded her to wait a while. Meanwhile, she also paid another visit to the school and found things were not so good there as she had previously thought. So she waited, made more friends at college and became settled. The resolution therefore came more by procrastination than decision. She had clearly been strongly influenced by her parents. Now she had no regrets or second thoughts. (Type A1).

7.2.8 Stay inside tent or make a run for it?

This student recalled a camping incident when she was 13. She was in the tent with a girl friend the same age; it was about 11.0 pm when they became aware of someone outside who began pouring the embers from their fire over the canvas. Both were very scared and clung to one another. Should they make a run for it or not? They imagined the tent going up in flames but also worried about what sort of person might be waiting for them outside. The person eventually left, the threat was over and the situation was resolved by inaction rather than deliberate decision. In retrospect, she thought it might have been wiser to rush out of the tent, but she had no serious regrets or second thoughts about their response. The dilemma as such had been irresolvable but the outcome had left them with no second thoughts. (Type B1).

7.2.9 Take holiday in Florida or go with family?

Z habitually went on holiday with her parents each year. This year however she had an offer to go to Florida with a friend and her family.

She was keen to go but if the two dates did not clash (unlikely) this would mean she would have to go on both holidays as her parents would be unwilling to leave her at home on her own. On the other hand if the dates overlapped (probable) she would have to choose between her friend and her own family. There were other considerations: her sister would feel let down if left on her own with the parents. Z also did not really know how well she would get on with her friend in Florida. It turned out that the dates coincided and although her parents put her under some pressure she had decided on Florida. She received no real help in her decision to go, but had no serious second thoughts about it. An irresolvable dilemma with some elements of guilt as a remainder. (*Type B3*).

7.2.10 Keep Mum's secret or tell younger sister?

HC was the oldest daughter of seven (3 brothers and 3 sisters). She discovers from a chance remark by her Aunt that her mother was again pregnant. Although sworn to silence on the grounds that it was not her business, she took a different view; her mother had a history of having deep postnatal depressions, followed by increasing rejection of the child as it ceased to be a baby. HC remembered this very well from previous births, the most recent of which had affected her considerably during her GCSE year. This had caused some resentment. She therefore thought it was indeed her business, and wanted to talk to her sister about the situation. She considered that her mother should have discussed the matter, even asked her children, first. The dilemma was essentially one of opposing and incomparable duties: to herself and to her Aunt (beyond which was a duty to her Mother). She decided to tell her sister, a decision taken on her own. The dilemma was irresolvable, but she was not left with any regrets or guilt. In fact she described it as "quits in a

way." She would only have felt guilty "if she was an only child and had told a friend" (i.e. outside the family). (*Type B1*).

7.2.11 Make choice between college and school

B was faced with a standard student choice: his parents were in financial difficulties and he had to decide whether to stay at his private school, where, it seems, he was popular, well taught and participating fully in sport, or come to college, where he felt there would be more choice of subjects, greater freedom and a chance to mature. The choice was very evenly balanced but he had decided upon college and had no regrets. The decision was his own, reached without help, though he felt it would probably have been forced upon him anyway in time because of his parent's financial situation. This was therefore resolvable with no post decisional regrets. (*Type A1*).

7.2.12 Live with Mum or Dad after their divorce?

N used to get depressed when his parents first began arguing; that was four years ago, when he was eleven or twelve. He started to hate both of them, knowing they would eventually get divorced. He'd been asked by the Judge with whom he preferred to stay, but was reluctant to say, even though closer at the time to his mother, for fear of hurting his father. Either way, he felt that one of them was bound to be hurt. The real difficulty was facing his parents after making the choice. He had a sister, four years older, who had also elected to stay with her mother. There had been strong pressure from his Dad, causing him feelings of guilt. In fact, whenever he saw his father afterwards he felt sad about it. The only help came from grandparents, on his father's side, who gave

moral support, but left it to him to make the final decision. This dilemma was irresolvable, two opposing, single principle obligations, with considerable post decisional guilt. (Type B3).

7.2.13 Cover up for sister or tell the truth?

K had a younger sister who had lost her bus pass for the third time in as many days. Each time she had to go to her father for the money. On the last occasion she wanted to say it had expired and asked her sister to support her. K in fact fudged the issue when talking to her mother, admitting it was lost but not that their father had paid for it. In fact she could have lent the money herself, but chose not to. There were no real second thoughts, except that had she realized her mother would find out anyway, she would probably have told the truth. The dilemma was one of opposing and incomparable obligations, loyalty to her sister, and telling the truth. It was resolvable by compromise and with no regrets or guilt. (Type A1).

7.2.14 Study in Australia or in England?

M had to decide a year ago whether or not to move from Australia to England for her "sixth" form education. Her parents were prepared to uproot the family "from our whole way of life, all of our friends, our whole established routine to go somewhere new where we didn't know anyone." She was at first undecided then thought it would be good to broaden her horizons; her parents were keen to move but would have waited if she had preferred. She had to leave a "long time boyfriend." It was upsetting. She had cried a lot but in the end decided to come to England. There was no sense of guilt afterwards but plenty of regrets. Every

couple of days she realized what "a very different society" it was, but "the friends that I keep are my real friends, so I mean, as life goes on that was going to happen anyway." There were many people to whom she could turn for reassurance but she had decided this on her own. It was a resolvable dilemma but with regrets as a remainder. (*Type A2*).

7.2.15 *Keep up with old friends or not?*

AM is losing contact with the "really good friends" he had made at boarding school. His dilemma was whether or not to "leave them be." He rarely spoke to them now, they lived in different parts of England; in all he mentioned about 50 acquaintances, including 20 good friends, of whom he would like to keep up with about 5. Now he found his college friends occupying more and more of his time. "It seems like now that I don't need them. I am sort of casting them aside." He had decided (on his own) to mix his engagements and to divide his time. The dilemma was thus resolved by compromise but leaving a remainder of guilt. (*Type A3*).

7.3 Construct Analysis of Interviews

A more thorough analysis was then made of each interview, using the concept of bipolarity and other insights of PCT. This cast more light on the nature of dilemma and helped to understand the student better, so assisting the process of counselling. In the four examples which follow, the constructs are therefore divided into "emergent" and "implicit". The interpretations presented are directly derived from the words of the students which can be found in the transcripts (Appendix 2), and from indications given during the interview, such as manner, gestures, expression and other things said.

7.3.1 Interview 2. R922 (F). Leave home or stay?

F spoke in an agitated manner, volubly, quickly and very willingly. Her main concerns were the practical issues of getting away from home where she was unfairly blamed for performing poorly at school and college and undervalued:

Emergent Constructs	Implicit Constructs
(1) Not getting on with parents (1.15, 31, 43, 1. 133, 144)	<i>Mutual love and respect, fairness</i>
(2) <i>Made to feel failure (1.32, 129. 134))</i>	<i>Being encouraged, valued, justifying expense on education</i>
(3) <i>Feels misunderstood (1.93, 138)</i>	<i>Having similar values, about class and type of school</i>
(4) <i>Need for independence (1.77, 110)</i>	<i>Being tied to parental expectations, not being free to develop own ideas</i>
(5) Work not good enough (1.87, 130)	<i>Other valid views of success Achievements not in fact poor</i>
(6) Feels guilty (1.55, 69)	<i>No sense of involvement</i>
(7) Need for security (1.41, 64, 90, 116, 142)	<i>Ability to live alone, without affection of parents</i>
(8) Hopes family will get back together (1.41)	<i>Ability to accept break</i>
(9) Is concerned for family, others (1.66, 92)	<i>Being self centred</i>

7.3.2 Although F disclosed her main constructs as concerning practical issues, conflict at home, lack of money to escape, beneath these emerged other tensions. F needs independence, but she also still wants a sense of security; she is concerned for her parents and her siblings, but she is

also determined to care for herself.

She feels undervalued at home, yet is sure in herself that she is not doing so badly in her work. The constructs may therefore be grouped in such a way as to reveal that her dilemmas were experienced on several levels and between several opposing poles at the same time.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) Desire for freedom
Need to make her own decisions
Accepting the family break up | Need for security
Need to be advised
Hopes for family to get back again |
| (b) Sense of unfairness, not her fault | Feeling of dependence, involvement, guilt |
| (c) Made to feel a failure | Is not in fact performing badly |
| (d) Is seen as a poor investment | Justifying parental sacrifices and expense |
| (e) Concerned for others | Concerned for herself alone |

The interdependence of these constructs is such that the kaleidoscope may be jogged to form a new pattern. What is clear is that the major practical dilemma is by no means the only issue for *F* to resolve. Money, an alternative place to live, would not in themselves resolve the issues of growing maturity, freedom, leaving the security of home. Taking a decision to leave home may therefore be virtually irrelevant to resolving the real dilemma where this is the deeper personal conflict.

7.3.3 Interview 6. R931 (R). Help friend with problems or not?

R sat calmly throughout the interview and gave a factual, apparently uninvolved account. He talked readily, without pauses and without any signs of strain. His manner was cool and detached ("nothing really upsets

me much...I just let it happen" 1.123).

The main concerns which R revealed were the conflict between his duty to stand by his friend and his duty to himself. On the one hand his friend, isolated, friendless and neglected needed him and, despite irritation at being pestered about this problem, he had a sensitivity towards the general obligations of friendship. On the other hand, there was also a strong sense that he owed it to himself to give more to his A level work; it also came across clearly that he wanted the freedom "to mingle" and escape the claustrophobia and constraints of having a "best friend," an idea which he did not believe in. He several times repeated that he just wanted to get his friend "off his back." The emergent constructs are listed below with the implicit constructs, based as before upon other comments made and indications such as facial expressions and gestures. The references are to lines in the transcript:

Emergent Constructs	Implicit Constructs
(1) Sympathy with friend in trouble, neglected by parents, friendless, upset, future college in doubt (1.25, 27, 30, 35, 40,46, 53, 59)	"Get him off his back," freedom from need to show concern, irritation
(2) General obligations of friendship (1.32, 54, 117)	Duty to himself "I'm alright Jack."
(3) Unwillingness to hurt his friend (1.73, 57, 115)	Continuing to show concern
(4) Not keen on close friendships (1. 69, 159)	Unable to mingle, get on with own life

7.3.4 As in other interviews, there were different levels of dilemma, deeper concerns not fully admitted and a complex web of overlapping pressures. There was the pull of friendship and a sense of duty towards

his friend and unwillingness to hurt him by admitting that he was not in fact his "best friend." But there was also irritation at being bothered daily with this problem when he wanted to get on with his life, mingle, get on well with many people; his parents were not much help ("they didn't seem to really understand the full details").

He agreed that his friend needed professional help and that he was not the person to do it, but knew that this was not enough, what his friend actually wanted was friendship, someone to turn to when everyone else was neglecting him. In fact, he was on the point of leaving college. There was little altruism about *R*'s decision, which was mostly based upon self interest; he expressed some uneasiness but no sense of guilt, when he said, "I am always thinking 'I'm alright Jack' and, although it is not really right, I just think it is the best way - the only way you can get on." He had some fear of possible reprisal ("I was a bit scared because he was the sort of person who could get a bit crazy"), and a desire to be friendly with as many people as possible; there was also pressure of time and of A level work. In the end it seemed he was concerned basically for himself, being blamed for causing his friend's education to be affected, for which he had no regrets or guilt. *R* finally revealed that one thing he had learned was how to spot a problem of this kind, to back off and not get involved.

7.3.5 Interview 10. R.935 (HC). Keep Mum's secret or tell younger sister?

HC showed considerable emotion when recounting her story. Her words were vehemently expressed. She was eager to give her account, lent forward, did not welcome interruption, showed pent up feeling.

This was a dilemma which was ostensible solved without regret, leaving only some sharp personal memories, resentment really. HC even spoke of it as "sort of quits in a way" in sharing the secret of her mother's pregnancy with her younger sister. She had no doubts as to who was really to blame; it was her mother, who had "picked the most difficult time, it was a planned pregnancy as well and she didn't ask us what we thought about it." As before, the references are to lines in the transcript which provide evidence for the interpretations suggested:

Emergent Constructs	Implicit Constructs
(1) Bound by her promise of secrecy (1.20, 40, 80.)	<i>Free to speak at least to her sister</i>
(2) Feeling impact on her life, her A levels time and trouble (1.23, 36, 100)	<i>Freedom from family concerns, keeping up her social life</i>
(3) Anger and resentment at her mother's deliberate pregnancy (1.79, 92, 173)	<i>Keeping friends with mother, sharing family concerns</i>
(4) Need to talk about things, and to release anger, share frustration (1. 29. 91. 203)	<i>Bottling things up, facing problem on own</i>
(5) Worry and anxiety (1. 109, 135, 198)	<i>Living own life, without cares</i>

7.3.6 The *prima facie* dilemma was whether or not to share the knowledge of her mother's pregnancy with her sister (she had no doubt that going outside the family, for example had she been an only child, would have been wrong ("I would have felt very guilty about it"). But beneath this were other conflicts troubling her: the contrasting roles and obligations of mother, (eldest) daughter, sister, a "neutral person" outside the family, the father. There were ideas about what was fair and what the limits of family loyalty were in such an instance. How far did mutual dependency require that plans and "secrets" should be shared? An

external, "neutral" confidant(e) was necessary only when the family trust had been perceived as broken.

There were her own needs of growing maturity to be taken into consideration, the resentment that her mother had not "really trusted her," kept her in the dark. For example, it is not entirely clear what it was that caused her to feel so strongly that she should have been consulted first? Was it closeness to her mother and a feeling of betrayal? Or was it rather a desire to be treated now as an adult, given a say in the family planning? Or was it simply the reason given, the knowledge that she and her sister would, as before, bear the brunt of the work in bringing up the new child, and therefore deserved more consideration? Or, perhaps it was all three?

There were several things she claimed to have learned from the experience, for example the discovery that her anger needed release, preferably to "someone neutral who is not involved in any way, so that it will not get back to the person involved."

7.3.7 Interview 12. R937 (N). Live with Mum or Dad after divorce?

N spoke quietly, slowly and thoughtfully; he showed no rancour and seemed to have come to terms with the memory of what had happened. His parents had divorced four years previously when he was ten. At the time the dilemma had been how to answer the question put to him, for example by the judge in the case, which of his parents to live with. At the time he was clear that he preferred to live with his mother because he had a more personal relationship with her. But he was very aware of the distress this would cause his father. He was also sensitive to the way he was

being subtly manipulated by other members of the family, saying that it was only his own interests they had at heart. What was remarkable was the degree of sensitivity, at aged 10, even allowing for retrospective enhancement four years later, towards both his parents and their different needs. He had a considerable degree of self knowledge. He also knew that the question "Who do you want to live with?" required an answer, even though it was "not his decision really," and would be a factor in the judgment. The decision itself was clear enough and he would take the same again, but the problem had no obvious resolution; he particularly felt bad about having to look the affected parent in the face afterwards. He was left with a sense of (misplaced) guilt at causing hurt, at the loss of a proper father son relationship as a result. As before, the references are to lines in the transcript:

Emergent Constructs	Implicit Constructs
(1) Memory of upset, depression, even hate at parents divorce (1.28, 31)	<i>Remaining a family unit no upheaval, staying with sister</i>
(2) Reluctance to hurt either side, regret (1.16, 47, 113)	<i>Keeping a relationship without hurt or guilt</i>
(3) Awareness he was being manipulated (1.62, 68, 134)	<i>Being valued for his own sake</i>
(4) Knowledge of a different relationship with each parent (1.44, 80, 85)	<i>No need to distinguish Doing same things with each</i>
(5) Loss of a "father and son relationship" (1.177)	<i>Just like any two adult friends</i>

7.3.8 Beneath the straightforward dilemma of choice between parents to live with, lay other issues. Predominantly there was the strong sense of not wanting to hurt one side or the other. *N* even defines a dilemma in these terms ("a decision that is going to hurt someone in a way"). He also remembered wanting the best for both parents on the one hand but

also for himself on the other; he did not wish to leave his sister, lose the presents and fun he had with his father, the close personal bond with his mother. Then he was acutely aware of being the cause of his father's depression, wished to be able to cheer him up. The feeling of responsibility weighed heavily on him, even though he knew it was "not really his choice." He certainly had regrets, second thoughts and even (unjustified) guilt. "It was always in my subconscious that if I lived with my Dad it would be more fun" (this in spite of him being more strict).

Reflecting on the experience and what it might have taught him, he considered that he had learned how to be more "on the ball" with his decisions, more "precise," knowing he would need to be aware of all the the "pros and cons" before taking any quick decision.

7.4 Conclusions

(1) It was not surprising that the students, being self selected on the basis that they had a dilemma they were willing to describe, did not deny the existence of dilemmas. Nevertheless, it was interesting to see the readiness with which they described what they meant to them. Some stressed the serious, as opposed to trivial, aspect of the quandary:

Something that will make a big impact on your school life or further life (interview 6).

Something obviously for which there are two sides to decide from and something which has a major effect on either yourself or your future - at my age anyway (interview 11).

Several saw a dilemma as a choice between alternatives which might have a harmful effect on other people:

A decision before the actual event that was going to hurt someone in a way. (interview 12)

It is when you are worried about feeling guilty about making the wrong decision. How it will affect other people. (Interview 15)

Some thought of them as essentially moral questions:

You have to sort of spend a long time to try and decide whether you are making the right decision. Whether it is moral whether it agrees with your beliefs and, you know, morals generally. (Interview 13)

When you have to make a choice between something that you want to do and something that you don't want to do and you have to decide which is the right way to go. (Interview 10)

However, they also recognized that there are dilemmas which do not raise moral questions at all, although providing experiences of stress, worry, personal concern or urgency. These students experienced dilemmas at various levels and appreciated the distinction between "dilemma" and "problem", seeing only the former as involving them at a personal level.

(2) Most students wished to try and resolve the dilemmas on their own.

There was a tendency to regard them as the responsibility for each person; others could support, listen, counsel, but could not effectively decide. Students took advice, they often sought out friends, tutors, relatives to share the problem with. But there were no examples in which the burden, individual responsibility to reach a conclusion was not found. It was as if there was a need to "own" the resolution, certainly not to pass the responsibility on to anyone else.

(3) Enough evidence emerged from these interviews to reinforce the definition of dilemma that was developing during these studies, that each experience had a quality that could not be reproduced; these interviews, relatively few though they were, showed how each situation defied

categorisation; each was in its own way unique, unrepeatable, distinct as an experience. They thus supported the contention that there is an irreducible plurality of moral "oughts" and duties which students perceive, constituting a way of life that they aim at and an order of priority amongst obligations which they try to follow. This supports those arguments that refuse to classify the application of principles.

(4) Many showed awareness of the possibility of a post decisional remainder in the form of regret, or guilt:

It is one where you don't know which way to go, you don't want it to turn out wrong in the end, but you just think am I going to regret this? But I don't know how to explain it. (Interview 7)

(5) Often there were other pressures which added to the decision and the stress experienced; for example, lack of money, isolation, physical danger, examination work. These also have to be taken into account by counsellors, tutors or friends. The circumstances are often not of the students own making, some (as in a classical tragedy) being caught in a web beyond their control. The context is always a vital component of the dilemma and needs to be understood if help is to be provided.

(6) In most instances a positive view of the experience was taken by the student; something had been learned that was beneficial, even though there was a clear awareness that the experience would not and could not be precisely repeated. They would be more careful in future to consider all the circumstances of the case (interview 8), or take more time about the decision (12), or avoid getting into certain predicaments in the first place (6).

(7) There was a need to be observant and to note every gesture,

expression or indication when trying to uncover the deeper issues that nearly always exist beneath the stated dilemma. The very strength of the pull in the two directions is a measure of the involvement in something personal which may only emerge by careful observation, tactful questioning, sensitivity and listening to the silent signals. Counsellors would always find it worthwhile looking below the surface to the hidden issues, which may or may not be acknowledged, before drawing conclusions or categorising students' problems.

(8) To conclude from the data derived from these interviews, clearly no valid generalization could be made concerning the behaviour of all 16 - 19 year old A level students, let alone of all students in this age group. However, the aim of this fieldwork was a limited one, namely, to illustrate, as part of the triangulation process adopted in the research, what dilemmas some fairly typical A level students experienced and to discover, in so far as they were prepared to discuss it, how they viewed that experience in retrospect. With this objective in mind, a great deal of value was learned.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PSYCHOLOGY: DECISION MAKING AND POST FORMAL THINKING

Unlike the philosophical perspective, which is concerned mainly with meaning, consistency and rationale, or the sociological perspective, which looks at the social preconditions, psychology sheds light on dilemma by focusing more on the processes of thought, of decision making and of cognitive development; it is more interested in the personal perception of dilemma and the moral awareness that this presupposes, than in the social context or environmental circumstances. It is, therefore, from this perspective particularly that we can consider the question of *recognition*, how students come to accept dilemma, to acknowledge valid alternatives, rather than simply to be aware of them.

The scope of the psychological perspective on dilemma, however, is potentially vast and could well constitute a thesis on its own. It was therefore essential to be selective in this chapter about the issues considered and to choose only those psychological studies of most relevance to the study of dilemma. This was particularly the case as no claim was being made to any specialist knowledge of psychology, the aim being to assist tutors and counsellors in their work.

The students considered in this research are in late adolescence, a period with its own distinctive character (see 10.6) and close to that point of maturity in cognitive development that is characterised by Piaget's description of the stage of formal operations. This was, therefore, the natural starting point in understanding the processes of thought required to recognize or resolve dilemmas. The questions asked were: is post formal operational thought to be seen as the final stage of

cognitive development or is there another "stage", or further development in adult reasoning? Do we know how students make moral judgments?

In chapter 5B it was indicated that there are certain assumptions behind the recognition of dilemma which relate to the concepts of reality and knowledge. It is assumed that when alternative solutions are recognized, it is not a matter of choosing between black and white, right and wrong but rather that several alternatives may have validity. This in turn implies that ethical conclusions are not absolutes to be discovered by correct thinking, and that therefore knowledge is not a fixed, unchanging entity, but rather it consists of certain pertinent elements which alter with changing circumstance. It is likely that this is an ability which will be developed by practical living, i.e. it is an aspect of mature thinking. It also has significant implications for moral education, where many would regard relativism and subjectivity as ideas which threaten traditional teaching and the need for absolute standards in behaviour. It was necessary therefore, to consider both these aspects, adult reasoning and the development of moral judgment.

This chapter also attempts to illuminate the concept of dilemma by considering some related, psychological studies. For example, since deciding between alternatives is often a painful process, it was important to look at some theories which deal with different kinds of conflict: decision making, avoidance strategies, post decisional reactions such as cognitive dissonance, and guilt about the outcome or the rejected alternative.

Finally, it was necessary to consider whether or not the recognition and resolution of dilemma represented a special type of thinking. A brief and

selective consideration is therefore given of such "types" as: problem solving, lateral, creative and critical thinking, which it has been useful to consult in this research.

It is quite common to see the terms "thinking", "problem solving" and "cognition" used interchangeably, based on the definition that "thinking is what happens when a person solves a problem" (Mayer 1977 p6). There are of course radically different theoretical approaches to the psychological understanding of "thinking". Two such opposing views are to define thinking either as an external, behavioural manifestation, subject to empirical observation, or as an internal cognitive process. Behaviourists do not find it helpful to consider thinking as an internal process without relating it to visible evidence. Cognitive theorists on the other hand, understand thinking to be an internal mechanism underlying behaviour but separable from it. Gilhooly (1982) used the term to refer to "a set of processes whereby people assemble, use and revise internal symbolic models" (p1). Others, like Mayer, adopt a compromise position, in which thinking is a cognitive activity inferred from observable behaviour, but nevertheless an internal process to be studied in terms of the cognitive system, its purpose being directed towards finding solutions or solving problems.

To anticipate somewhat, the conclusion drawn from these selected studies was that there are a number of indications that the recognition of dilemma (i.e. the acknowledgment of valid alternatives) has much in common with certain aspects of adult reasoning: the acceptance of genuinely conflicting obligations, the tolerance of ambiguity, openness to relativism, the influence of the specific situation and context. These are arguably the characteristics of mature thinking and the later phases

in cognitive and ethical development.

8.1 Formal Operational Thought

First, in order to consider whether or not dilemma acceptance is a characteristic of adult reasoning, it is necessary to digress briefly and consider Piaget's description of the stage of formal operations. This is the final stage in the sequence of cognitive development and must therefore represent his view of the nature of mature thinking.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development involved a clinical, detailed questioning of children in a number of problem situations. From his experiments he produced a descriptive analysis of the development of basic physical, logical, mathematical and moral concepts from birth to adolescence. His theory has been summarised by Child (1986 p145) as genetic (the higher processes evolve from biological mechanisms), maturational (in that they formed an invariant sequence through several clearly definable and related stages) and hierarchical (in that each stage must be experienced and passed through in a prescribed order before any subsequent stages of development are possible).

Each stage could be described in terms of the way the individual interacted with the environment (the knower and the known) so that both were mutually transformed. The final stage of formal operations, purported to develop during the years 11 to 16, revealed certain clear characteristics. Formal thinkers are capable of hypothetico-deductive thought, that is to say they can reason like scientists. They construct theories that can be tested by experimentation. Furthermore, formal thinkers are capable of reflecting on their own processes of thought

introspectively (thinking about thinking). That is to say they can theorize about mental operations (Inhelder and Piaget 1958).

8.2 Stages in Moral Development

In Chapters 5 and 6 the place of moral dilemmas in ethical philosophy was considered. The psychologist, however, is concerned with the development of moral judgment and Piaget's study, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932), has been the stimulus for most subsequent research in this field. Kohlberg, a prolific and influential writer (also a pupil of Piaget's) extended this theory and method (1966). He argued that young people progress sequentially through six stages of moral judgment. Kohlberg claimed that adult morality is characterized by the reasoned adoption of absolute principles.

Piaget believed that intellectual development consisted of a sequence of changes in cognitive structures, as a result of both internal and external pressures, these structures being set by the structure of the brain. He traced the development from heteronomous reasoning, in which the authority was the adult, to autonomous reasoning, in which the standards and rules were set and determined by the individuals themselves.

Kohlberg similarly believed that moral development occurred through an invariable sequence of stages; he described six steps (compared with Piaget's two basic stages), each with a separate type of moral reasoning, becoming more sophisticated with age. Each stage was quite different but, while Piaget believed moral maturity (autonomous reasoning) was achieved around the age of 12 for most people, Kohlberg's capacity for reasoning

in principles might be reached by some (though most would fail to do so) in the late teens. Unlike Piaget, Kohlberg believed that the stages normally spanned the whole of a person's life.

Kohlberg uses one method to establish his theory, the Moral Judgment Scale, a structured test consisting of nine hypothetical dilemmas. The interviewer presents each subject with one of the dilemmas and the person makes a judgment about it and then puts forward a justification for his or her choice. The kind of reasoning used is the basis on which one would know which stage of moral development the person had reached.

Although Kohlberg's theory of moral growth received much acclaim at the time, there were many critics (as there had been for Piaget's theory, and on similar grounds). Kurtines and Greif (1974), for example, pointed out that his research methods were flawed. It was rare, they said, that all nine dilemmas were presented, through shortage of time, so the tests and the scale were neither standardised, nor consistently applied. The number and content of the dilemmas varied across the research and as a consequence the results did not allow easily for generalizability. The effect of this was that each study employed a unique scale. "In the absence of evidence demonstrating that each dilemma taps the same cognitive dimension there is no basis for making comparisons among studies using the Moral Judgment Scale" (Kurtines and Greif 1974 p468).

Probably the most longlasting criticisms will prove to be those against the idea of there being structural "stages" in either moral or cognitive development, which are maturational and hierarchical. Common sense would seem to indicate that individuals operate at various levels at various times and in various domains, and that fixed age related stages do not

accurately reflect the years of human development.

8.2.1 Limitations in the various theories of formal operations have led a number of writers to consider adult reasoning and moral judgment as a further development. These characteristics are consistent with the ability to recognize dilemmas and as such are worth considering. For instance, Kramer (1983) summarised postformal thinkers as possessing first, an understanding of the relative non-absolute nature of knowledge. Knowledge and reality are viewed as temporarily true (or real) rather than universally fixed. Second, postformal thinkers accept contradiction as a basic aspect of reality (e.g. an individual might realize that a relationship with another person cannot be described in terms of love or hate alone, but by the simultaneous existence of these apparently contrasting emotions). Third, "postformal thinkers possess an ability to synthesize contradictory thoughts, emotions, and experiences into more coherent, all-encompassing wholes" (Rybash 1986 p38).

At present these studies are rather diverse and separate, identifying various styles of mature thinking, without as yet producing an overarching, integrating theory. It is necessary to be selective and the following critics of formal operational thought are representative of those who find a place for dilemma thinking.

8.2.2 Most writers on adult thinking acknowledge their indebtedness to Perry (1968) who studied the growth of epistemological thought during college years. He was one of the first to consider the place of relativism in mature thinking, describing his research as follows:

We trace a path from adolescence into adulthood. We map this journey from the accounts of college students... Could it be that in a

changing, pluralistic culture in which man's very knowledge and values are seen to be relative, the sequential challenges of this journey are essential steps in a person's maturation? We think so. (p. ix)

Perry described the evolution in students' interpretation of their lives as a progression through various "forms" which characterize the "structures which the students explicitly or implicitly impute to the world" (p1). He devised a measure (*A Checklist of Educational Views*) which was administered to a random sample of 313 freshmen in 1954. This was followed up by 98 taped interviews including 17 complete four-year records. The questions were open ended in the form, "Would you like to say what has stood out for you during the year?" Then, "Do any particular instances come to mind?" The development he observed is described in terms of nine positions through which the students are seen to pass. These he summarised as follows:

Position 1: The student sees the world in polar terms of we-right-good vs. other-wrong-bad. Right answers for everything exist in the Absolute, known to Authority... *Position 2:* The student perceives diversity of opinion and uncertainty, and accounts for them as unwarranted confusion... *Position 3:* The student accepts diversity and uncertainty as legitimate but still *temporary*.. *Position 4:* the Student perceives all knowledge and values (including authority's) as contextual and relativistic... *Position 6:* The student apprehends the necessity of orienting himself in a relativistic world through some form of personal Commitment.. *Position 7 :* The student makes an initial commitment in some area.. *Position 8:* The student experiences the implications of Commitment.. *Position 9:* The student experiences the affirmation of identity among multiple responsibilities and realizes Commitment as an ongoing, unfolding activity through which he expresses his life style. (p9f)

As far as the study of dilemma is concerned, *Positions 1* and *2* clearly represent an inability to "recognize" dilemma whilst the remaining *Positions* show an evolving accommodation to dilemma in a relativistic world. This interesting study in many ways paved the way for research into adult thinking.

8.2.3 Another study of adolescent moral judgment, supporting the hypothesis of postformal development and relevant to our understanding the ability to perceive dilemma is found in Kitchener and King (1981). They put forward a seven stage model of post adolescent reasoning. High school and college students were administered the Reflective Judgment Interview which consists of a set of four dilemmas in the sphere of current events (science, religion and history) and were assessed according to their understanding of reality and the way they justified their beliefs. The model outlines a sequence of increasingly complex methods whereby they might do this. As they see it, changes occur over age and over educational levels. The most advanced is called "Reflective Judgment." These changes can be seen in the way authority and evidence are used and the increasingly thoughtful examination and evaluation which people give to their experience.

8.3 Beyond Formal Operations

Another powerful critique of Piagetian developmental theory, which is directly applicable to the study of the recognition of dilemma, is contained in a collection of essays entitled *Beyond Formal Operations* by Commons, Richards and Armon (1984). This is a symposium of studies on cognitive development beyond Piaget's formal stage. The contributors question the idea that there is a fixed developmental endpoint of cognitive ability, reached in adolescence, a kind of plateau of ability after which there can only be a gradual decline. In contrast they argue that adult thinking has a sophistication which indicates a further development:

The model of formal operations is too limited to capture the richness of adolescent and adult thought. Kinds of thinking exist that do not show the logical structure of formal operations or of

lower stages. These kinds of thinking might develop parallel to formal operations and supplement them, being used in areas not amenable to the logic of propositions ... There is a great deal of developmental potential beyond formal operations. More sophisticated thinking can be found and described in models collectively labelled "postformal". These models aim at extending conceptions of cognitive development into adulthood. (1984 p xv)

8.3.1 Within this symposium, a number of concepts is developed to characterise adult reasoning, of which four are selected here. First, Koplowitz (1984) claimed that there are two postformal stages, a general system stage and a later unitary stage. He illustrated this by comparing two concepts of causality, arguing that the formal-operational concept of causality is a linear one. An event is conceived of as being the result of a previous event:

The linearity of the formal-operational concept of causality is .. revealed in questions commonly asked about events. "Who started it?" "Whose fault is it?" "How did it begin?" These questions imply a causal chain that has a beginning. (p273)

The general system concept of causality is cyclical. Its difference from the linear formal-operational concept may best be illustrated by means of an example; a formal operational man may feel that he drinks too much and the cause of his drinking is his wife's yelling at him; he may feel her yelling is caused by trouble in the family such as the cutting off of the electricity because the bill was not paid, or the family's being without transportation because he got into an automobile accident ... the wife may feel that she yells at the husband because she is distressed by trouble in the family caused by his drinking... Both husband and wife have linear concepts of causality and both have an answer to the question, "How does the problem start?" A family therapist, using general system concepts, will not see the problems as having a starting point, but will see the husband's and wife's problems as being mutually causative in a cyclical manner. (p278f)

8.3.2 Second, Benack (1984) used Perry's studies (1968) as the basis of an empirical investigation. She agreed with him that the turning point in cognitive growth occurs when students become aware of the existence of a diversity of opinions on any given topic.

Truth externally given is replaced by "truths" each relative to its context of evaluation ... a dualistic world view ceases to exist, except perhaps as a special case of a particular perspective within

a relativistic world. (p341)

The dualist sees peoples' experience as generally reflecting the nature of the external world. He or she typically perceives the experience to be identical with reality; not as "how I see things" but as "the way things are." ... With the rise of relativism comes the ability to recognize multiple subjective perspectives on common situations. The relativist is able to differentiate not only "my experience" from "your experience," but "my perspective" from "your perspective."... He or she sees no contradiction in multiple views of a situation, each having "validity" or "truth". (p345)

Benack then applied these ideas to empathy and the ability to be aware of the differences between people without being unduly troubled by them. Benack's hypothesis was that relativistic thought would be associated with higher levels of empathetic functioning. She used a counselling setting to test subjects with a semi structured interview, inviting them to make concrete moral judgments. Her tests indicated that relativists showed superiority in all dimensions of empathetic functioning.

8.3.3 Third, Sinnott (1984) also described adult thinking as relativistic. "Adults must use relativistic operations to organize their complete understanding of interpersonal and everyday reality adaptively" (p300). She considered intelligence to be a question of assimilating reality in order to survive. Two skills are needed: an understanding of interpersonal and social reality and a knowledge of how to apply abstract formal operations selectively. This requires what she called a "necessary subjectivity". Maturity, she argued, brings acceptance of the necessary subjectivity inherent in relativistic operations carried out on reality. This acceptance can be seen in "tolerance of others' beliefs and ways of life." Adolescents and young adults struggle to cope with the inconsistencies in the world by trying to force them into a "correct" formal system. The certainty of formal operations, if they are supplemented by the necessary subjectivity of relativistic operations, can "maximise use of conflicting information and minimize social

conflict" (p321).

Sinnott acknowledged that relativistic uncertainty is often distressing and individuals may respond with various coping strategies to minimize personal anxiety, probably at the cost of being able to adapt. "A middle aged adult with a family, a career, civic responsibilities, and a social life ... is faced with endless demands to "fit" the data of this social world by choosing a viable formal-operational system for interacting with each individual at an appropriate level" (p321). Sinnott suggested that, while relativistic operations may not be perfectly consistent with reality, they will provide the best possible match. However, they use mental energy and are stressful. Therefore, individuals resort to various strategies to cope. For example, they can develop a rigid social identity; they can retreat completely and interpret all the behaviours of other people in a simplistic way. Instead of dealing with a certain person as an individual, one may decide to treat that person as a member of a racial group to simplify the choices and judgments that have to be made. On the other hand, "Adults with postformal relativistic operations can act intelligently in complex, everyday situations that require several mutually contradictory systematic logical interpretations" (p304).

8.3.4 Fourth, Arlin (1975) is another who supported the theory that there is a further development beyond Piaget's formal operations and she speaks of a fifth stage with two steps: problem solving followed by problem finding. She regarded formal thinkers as primarily involved in the task of problem solving and postformal thinking as primarily geared to the task of problem finding: In 1984 she studied this in a group of young adult artists. All were given several measures of formal thinking and in

addition a problem finding task. She found that while all scored equally well in the formal thinking measures, those who were judged as producers of highly creative and original works of art scored significantly better on the measures of problem finding. She also found that less creative artists viewed their work as fixed, unalterable and complete. The more creative artists, however, saw their work as changeable and unfinished.

8.4 Adult Cognition and Ageing

Another group of writers, Rybash, Hoyer and Roodin (1986), considered a number of criticisms of Piaget's theory which, whilst supporting their case for "adult cognition and aging", are directly relevant to the recognition of dilemma.

First, formal operational thought emphasizes the power of logic in problem solving... logical, rational analysis to provide the one correct solution to a problem, regardless of the domain within which the problem is embedded....

Second, formal operational thinking places an overemphasis on possibility and abstraction, along with a corresponding underemphasis on the pragmatics of everyday life.., the formal reasoner may mistakenly assume that the goal of mature thought is to construct a set of purified, absolute principles that apply to problems-in-living. In late adolescence or adulthood, individuals become aware of this overemphasis on abstraction, absolutism, and logic. (p31-33)

Rybash et al considered that formal thinking was more suited to "closed system" problems in which a number of finite and knowable variables produce a specific and reliable outcome. Real life problems on the other hand were "open" in the sense that there were no clear boundaries between them and the context within which they occurred. If this is the case, formal thinkers might be expected to approach ethical and dilemmatic problems in an empirical and rational manner. They would tend to seek clear solutions and shrink from having to accept conflicting obligations.

They would prefer to solve problems rather than to find them (Arlin 1984) and would be ill equipped to understand the relativistic nature of reality and knowledge (Perry 1968, Sinnott 1984). All this would cause them to transform unsolvable dilemmas (or at least those with remainders) into solvable problems.

8.4.1 Rybash et al (1986) then put forward an Encapsulation Model which analysed age related changes in cognition. They described cognition as consisting of three interrelated dimensions, processing, knowing and thinking. These dimensions had previously been examined in relative isolation from each other by other psychologists interested in the study of adult cognitive development, and this was an attempt to draw them together into an integrated theory on adult reasoning.

Our Encapsulation Model integrates and extends the three dominant strands of adult cognition; processing, knowing, and thinking. Processing refers to the manner by which various mental abilities and psychological resources are used to process (ie intake) environmental information. Knowing refers to the manner by which information is represented, stored, accessed and used. Thinking refers to the manner by which individuals develop an understanding or a perspective on their knowledge. Specifically, we suggest that information control processes and fluid mental abilities become increasingly dedicated to and encapsulated within particular representations of knowledge (ie domains) throughout adult development. As general processes and abilities become encapsulated within the parameters of domain-ordered knowledge systems, extant knowledge becomes more differentiated, accessible usable and "expert" in nature. (p16)

This study would support the evidence found in the fieldwork with students (chapter 7), which suggests that the ability to recognize dilemma (RD), where it exists at all, is specific. In one subject area, students may be found to be observant, sensitive to the variety of possibilities and the circumstances present and ready to accept the validity of alternative standpoints. In another, however, they may be inclined to dualistic, absolutist and simplistic solutions.

8.5 Decision Making

It is common for writers to distinguish between pre-decisional stress and post-decisional conflict, or "dissonance (Festinger 1957). The questions usually of most interest to psychologists are, "What types of search, deliberation and selection procedure do they typically use?" (Janis and Mann 1977 p21). The question uppermost in the interviews with students was, "How do they make their decision when faced with apparently irreconcilable obligations?" Decision making has a considerable literature devoted to it from the behavioural sciences and it will not be appropriate to pursue it in great detail here but to outline the ideas most relevant to an understanding of the process of resolving a dilemma.

How do people choose among alternative courses of action? One of the most influential hypotheses was formulated by Simon (1976). Decision makers typically "satisfice" (rather than maximise) themselves, that is to say they look for a course of action that is good enough. People have a limited capability and tend to resort to simplification when dealing with complex decision problems. This applies "whenever the consumer, the president, or anyone else is looking only for a choice that offers some degree of *improvement* over the present state of affairs" (Janis and Mann 1977 p26).

8.5.1 Sometimes, a modification of this strategy is employed, using a simple moral precept as the sole rule; this is referred to as Quasi-satisficing; alternatively a multiple rule may be used, Elimination by Aspects, combining several simple decision rules. Then there can be

Incrementalism, or muddling through. Many people may consider they will be better off moving in small steps towards their chosen goal rather than in "giant strides... putting out fires, rather than selecting the superior course of action" (Janis and Mann 1977 p33). Etzioni (1967) puts forward a strategy which he calls Mixed Scanning (p294), which occupies a halfway position between the perfectionism of optimizing and the casualness of muddling through.

8.5.2 Janis and Mann considered the pre-decisional situation when people are faced with an oncoming disaster (such as a flood, earthquake or crash) and review the symptoms and sources of conflict. Conflict is likely to be intense where a person has to make an important decision at "the risk of suffering serious losses from whatever course of action he selects" (ie a dilemma). The most prominent signs will be "hesitation, vacillation, feelings of uncertainty, and signs of acute emotional stress whenever the decision comes within the focus of attention." This leads to such symptoms of stress as "feelings of apprehensiveness, a desire to escape from the distressing choice dilemma, and self-blame for having allowed oneself to get into a predicament where one is forced to choose between unsatisfactory alternatives ("Why did I let myself get into this box? Now I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't" p47). The stress is noticeably most acute at the initial stage of decision making. The example they give is of parachutists ratings of avoidance feelings, occurs well before they leave the ground, at the time of their *initial decision* to participate in the airplane jump... while on the flight, feelings of avoidance decrease, even though objectively the parachutists are closer to the danger situation." (p47). Other avoidance strategies can be used, from simple procrastination to more disguised types of "displacement activity" (see Lorenz 1966).

8.5.3 Having analysed the causes of pre-decisional stress, Janis and Mann put forward a conflict theory model of stress avoidance. The strategies adopted include: passing the buck ("defensive avoidance"), making snap judgment about the best thing to do ("hypervigilance" or simple panic) and, when there is sufficient time and the individual still hopes to be able to escape unharmed, a high quality decision is possible ("vigilance") typified by the way trained pilots will respond to an emergency. During what they referred to as the "hot cognitive processes" of decision making, there are five stages: (1) Appraising the Challenge (Are the risks serious if I don't change?), (2) Surveying Alternatives (Is this [salient] alternative an acceptable means for dealing with the challenge? Have I sufficiently surveyed the available alternatives?), (3) Weighing Alternatives (Which alternative is best?). (4) Deliberating about Commitment (Shall I implement the best alternative and allow others to know?) and (5) Adhering despite Negative Feedback (Are the risks serious if I *don't* change? Are the risks serious if I *do* change?) (p172).

Earlier (2.11, 5B 11) it was suggested that dilemmas could be resolved by a reasonable decision but nevertheless leave some kind of remainder in the form of regret for the rejected alternative, remorse or guilt feelings for the outcome. These post decisional attitudes, painful and undesirable as they are, hold interest for the psychologist. Can they be avoided? One theory which attempts to account for the apparently universal desire to eliminate the conflict between decision and afterthought and to return to a state of harmony is that of "cognitive dissonance".

8.6 Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive Dissonance was first elaborated by Festinger (1957 and revised 1964) to describe the situation where two elements, which exist in a person's cognition and which are "relevant to one another but do not for one reason or another fit together". They may be inconsistent or contradictory. Festinger gave the example of a person who is already in debt but nevertheless purchases a new car, or another who is afraid although knowing that only friends were in the vicinity. The presence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to reduce or eliminate the dissonance. "The strength of the pressure to reduce the dissonance is a function of the magnitude of the dissonance" (p18). And "It follows from this that the greater the conflict before the decision, the greater the dissonance afterward" (Festinger 1964 p5). Other examples are given of those prepared to continue smoking despite being aware of the consequences, or someone who buys car A despite knowing the superior advantages of car B. According to Brehm and Cohen, who stress the importance of commitment in the theory, the amount of dissonance will depend on the weight given to each element and the degree of commitment to the decision. Brehm and Cohen are concerned with the strategies adopted post decision to reduce the amount of dissonance, to live with the consequences as well as in the applications of the theory to social problems (1962 p267f).

8.6.1 By no means all theorists agree with the cognitive dissonance hypothesis and an alternative approach employing a conflict model was proposed by Janis and Mann (1977 and see 8.5.3). In this the interest focusses on "hot cognitive processes associated with feelings of regret, which come into play when post decisional conflict is so severe that stage 5 (Adherence) gives way to stage 1 (Challenge)" (p309). These

symptoms of conflict range from occasional second thoughts to regret, guilt, remorse or anguish; it will be clear that each of these is relevant to dilemma as defined in this study. The essential difference between the conflict theory proposed by Janis and Mann and Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance or Brehm's commitment lies in the importance given to the precise situation in which the decision was taken or the commitment given. The factors which determine whether or not there is an invariable and spontaneous regret following a decision will be situational, as they explain:

Our conflict model leads us to expect that the arousal of post-decisional regret and its duration depend upon the conditions under which a decision is made and the conditions that prevail after it is made... we predict that spontaneous regret after a binding commitment will predominantly occur under a rather unusual set of circumstances - namely, when the person believes himself to be fully committed but, because of a premature deadline, continues to vacillate because he is still in a hypervigilant state... Our model, by rejecting the assumption that postdecisional regret is always present but too subtle or too fleeting to be detected, emphasizes the necessity of searching for situational variables that may determine the intensity and persistence of regret. (p335)

In the student interviews (chapter 7) it was pointed out that most made their decision on their own; they may or may not have received some support, but rarely was the decision taken away from them. It has also been argued that dilemmas can be resolvable or irresolvable regardless of whether the decision is in fact taken, that is to say taking a decision may be the result of practical pressures, or out of despair, but the fact that it has been taken sheds little light on the nature of dilemma as such, although it has relevance to a study of the experience. Counsellors and tutors, however, would clearly benefit from being conversant with conflict theory in their work with students. Of even greater interest, however, is the nature of guilt (see also 5A 5, 5B 13, 6.4).

8.7 A Personal Construct Theory of Guilt

The usual definitions of guilt are likely to be either religious or legal; the first is based on the idea that certain actions alienate a person from his or her God, fall short of the requirements of the Church, or fail to come up to the standards and rules of one's religious group (be that a Buddhist monastery, a Catholic order, a Quaker cell or a Moslem group). This distancing from the core of one's belief creates responses we tend to call guilt. These cover misdemeanours or sinful acts. But there is also a more complex idea in Christianity, that of Original Sin, whereby "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3.23) and are guilty not because of any sins they have specifically committed but simply by virtue of being a member of the human race (see 5B 13). Legal guilt is more directly derived from the notion of punishment. Actions which are against the law will in many, perhaps in a majority, of cases (given a reasonable government and a law abiding populace) engender a feeling of guilt.

8.7.1 Kelly (1970), however, sought to develop a "truly psychological definition of *guilt*" (p26). He appeared critical of religious notions of guilt basing them (wrongly in this researcher's view) on the notion of punishment. For him "even the term 'repentance' which might better be taken to mean rethinking or reconstructing, as its etymology suggests, has come to stand for undertaking something irrelevantly unpleasant or punitive in compensation for disobedience, rather than doing something which will throw light on past mistakes." This, no doubt referring to abuses in the Catholic practice of confession, led Kelly to the conclusion:

A person who chronically resorts to this kind of penitence to bring

his guilt feelings back into comfortable equilibrium, or to write off his wrong-doing, ends up as a well-balanced sanctimonious psychopath. His only possible virtue is obedience...(p27)

He then goes on to draw up a PCT definition of guilt "the sense of having lost one's core role structure. A core structure is any one that is maintained as a basic referent of life itself" (except, presumably the sort that Kelly disapproves of as likely to produce "well balanced psychopaths"). A person has only to feel dislodged from such a role to suffer the inner torment most of us know so well.

To feel guilty is to sense that one has lost his grasp on the outlook of his fellow man, or has unwittingly played his part in a manner irrelevant to that outlook by following invalid guidelines... with this goes a feeling of alienation from God, or man, or from both. (p27f)

This, apart from his side swipe at a much abused but nevertheless frequently practised habit of confession, brings Kelly back to the point where his theory can include religious (though less comfortably legal) concepts of guilt. Other writers, especially theologians and sociologists, also recognize the central importance of the sense of guilt in a person's well being and equilibrium. Here is one example from the PCT tradition:

Guilt can be very damaging to an individual and if the precipitating event is serious enough can become quite debilitating psychologically. For any individual, what is serious may be vastly different, and even an apparently trivial issue to one person may be of such core role import to another as to produce a huge guilt reaction. Where the dislodgment is major the person may end up "consumed by guilt", still hanging on to their original perception of themselves, but unable to deal with the evidence that that is not how they actually behaved. A soldier fit and strong, going into battle, who then avoids a situation in which he might have been killed but has resulted in a mate being killed or injured, might be in such a position. He has always seen himself as one who would rush in regardless of personal safety, but when the crunch came, he discovered he did not with terrible consequences. (Dalton and Dunnett 1992 p59f)

8.7.2 Guilt can sometimes be implanted, perhaps by the persuasive words

of an evangelist, or it can be the result of an over scrupulous conscience, or simply an inappropriate reaction. Nevertheless, no tutor or counsellor, however much they might disagree with a particular instance of guilt faced by a student, should underestimate the debilitating effect of a highly developed sense of guilt. Our churches would be even emptier were it possible for guilt to be removed lightly.

The ability to act, to make decisions between alternatives, to resolve certain types of problem, is clearly wider than cognitive ability. The resolution of dilemma, the motivation to act decisively, opens up the possibility of a skill more akin to creativity; to be able to hold different alternatives in one's mind means being able to empathise with other points of view, to perceive relative truths. It will be useful now to look now at some ideas on problem solving and different types of thinking.

8.8 Problem Solving

Most definitions of "problem" are derived from the Gestalt psychologist Duncker (1945) for whom a problem arises when a person has a goal but does not know how this goal is to be reached. As Mayer (1977) stated it, there are three characteristics: the given state, the goals or desired terminal state, and the obstacles.

Such definitions are not particularly helpful in studying the experience of dilemma, being necessarily wide enough to cover problems ranging from geometry to chess and riddles (Mayer p5). What does appear to be agreed by most psychologists is that a task set by an experimenter is not necessarily a problem for a given individual. It may also vanish or be

dissolved if the person changes his or her goals (as would dilemma).

8.8.1 Studies of the influence on each individual of his or her past experience (e.g. of conflicting obligations) appear inconclusive because it may have either a negative or a positive effect. Whilst the "reapplication of very-specific, rigid, past habits can hinder productive problem solving, there is of course, complementary evidence that in some cases specific past experience may aid problem solving" (Mayer 1977 p81). The interviews with students similarly indicated that they were very unsure that they would be any better at resolving the next dilemma, even if it were similar, as a result of the experience they had just described. This might be either because the common elements in the two situations were not recognised (people do not invariably learn from experience) or because no two situations can ever be identical; there will always be variables which the subject might consider to be critical.

8.8.2 In this study, however, it has been stressed that "dilemma" is not to be confused with "problem". Two main distinctions have been drawn: first there is greater personal involvement in a dilemma than in a problem. This means that whereas the essential element of a problem, as with a puzzle or brainteaser, remains the same, relatively minor changes in a dilemmatic situation (e.g in age, time, terms of a promise, etc.) could transform the subjective experience itself.

Second, a problem which has been solved does not linger, there is no aftermath (except perhaps pride, relief or exhaustion at completing the task). Dilemmas on the other hand, when they are recalled, even when there are no second thoughts, no remainders of regret or guilt about the rejected alternative(s), conjure up the memory of personal involvement,

the commitment, the sense of fear perhaps, or stress, personal tension or urgency.

It would be interesting, therefore, to see more studies of dilemma based upon the individual's own description of their experience. Despite the insights to be derived from psychological studies of problem solving (or thinking) it has to be said that, in general, studies based upon prior learning (often with animal subjects), information processing or the nature of thinking, do not get us very far in our understanding of the recognition of dilemma.

8.9 Specific Cognitive Abilities and Types of Thinking

In the early days of this research it was thought that perhaps it might be possible to identify dilemma as a discrete form of thinking, a distinctive type of reasoning. Although this proved to be a cul de sac, a potentially fruitful line of enquiry, which it has not been possible to follow up in detail here, seemed to lie in a comparison between dilemma and different types of thinking, such as lateral, creative, critical thinking and so on.

Following Spearman's use of factor analysis (1904) there have been many attempts to isolate the various components of human abilities. For example, Guilford (1950, 1956) produced a model of the intellect with as many as 120 mental factors, of which he claimed to have identified about 80, including convergent and divergent thinking. The convergent thinker is recognised by an ability to handle problems requiring one correct solution obtainable from the data available. The divergent thinker, on the other hand is capable of addressing problems requiring the generation

of several equally acceptable solutions. Guilford attempted to distinguish between the styles of problem solving strategy adopted in closed and open ended problems, a skill clearly related to that which has been referred to here as recognising dilemma.

8.9.1 Other researchers (e.g. Getzels and Jackson, 1962) have subsequently attempted to confirm the independence of convergent and divergent intellectual operations. They argued, therefore, that intelligence is a broader ability than it was conventionally thought of by those who devised the early IQ tests and that a more systematic map of human abilities might be devised (this point is taken up later in chapter 10). Yet other work has been done on brainstorming (Parnes 1977), suggesting that if the mind is allowed to run free in attempting to solve a problem, especially in a group producing as many hypotheses as possible without bothering to evaluate them (think now evaluate later), far more good ideas, and hence possible resolutions, will be generated than by conventional, individual problem-solving techniques. Eysenck, on the other hand, preferred to see creativity as a personality trait and not a cognitive ability at all; as such, he would argue, it is of no relevance to a study of intelligence. A very different approach has been taken by de Bono (1970) who wrote:

Lateral thinking is closely related to insight, creativity and humour. All four processes have the same basis. But whereas insight, creativity and humour can only be prayed for, lateral thinking is a more deliberate process. It is as definite a way of using the mind as logical thinking - but a very different way. (p9)

Lateral thinking is often perverse, preferring the unexpected, illogical; it is provocative "in order to bring about repatterning", it welcomes the chance intrusions (p44f). The person who is prepared to acknowledge the validity of alternative viewpoints would very probably demonstrate some

of these characteristic ways of thinking as well.

8.9.2 It can be seen that little or no agreement has been reached by psychologists on the nature of creative thinking or how to measure it. One problem is the confusing variety of terms used synonymously: "originality", "intuition", "inventiveness", "imagination", "divergent thinking", "creativity", "giftedness" are just some the terms used by psychologists and it is by no means clear how, if at all, they differ in meaning. As Dennis Child (1986) put it:

The reasons for this difficulty of definition are not hard to find. Consider, for example, the question of aesthetic enterprises in art, music, sculpture or writing. What objective criterion can we use to evaluate the "amount" of creativity which has taken place in a work of art? Many would rightly say that it is a pointless question anyway because it depends too much upon value judgements within a cultural context. There is no sense in which we can arrive at a widely accepted judgement of creativeness since, in art, music or writing, one man's meat is another man's poison. For this reason, attention tends to have been directed to scientific discovery rather than to artistic creation in the study of creative thinking. There may well be a common thread running through the fabric of our artistic and scientific creativity, but at present we have no idea what it might be In the present state of research the safest conclusion is that divergent thinking is partially dependent on intelligence and partially a function of other personality characteristic. (p230)

8.9.3 Alternatively, the study of critical thinking might be thought to be more promising in our search for light on the ability to recognise dilemma. But, again, there are many interpretations of this ability (Bruner 1964, Feuerstein 1980 and Sternberg 1985). Three traditions in particular have been concerned to identify what is meant by the term: the philosophical, the educational and the psychological. Sternberg (1986) following the latter defined it as "the mental processes, strategies, and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts" (p1). This hardly takes us beyond the

study of thinking itself.

On the assumption that critical thinking is an analytic skill and therefore at the highest level according to Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956), many programmes have been planned in the United States to help identify and advance the education of the gifted and talented (see chapter 10). Sternberg (1986) admitted some of the weaknesses:

We have some good ideas both about how to test it and how to train it. At the same time, we need to recognize some of the limitations on our present understanding. First, we have a much better understanding of analytical (critical) thinking than we do of synthetic creative thinking.... creative thinking seems to be much more resistant to analysis. Yet, the most important contributions of thinking to the world and its cultures are probably in the synthetic domain rather than in the analytic one. (p27)

8.9.4 To conclude this digression on cognitive abilities and types and styles of thinking, it should be emphasized that no case is being made in this study for dilemma thinking being thought of as a distinct type. However many similarities that may emerge between different responses to dilemma, they are covered by the studies on adult thinking already described. There may indeed be similarities but these are insufficient to establish RD as a separate category or type of thinking. More important, we would need to allow for those who do not acknowledge the existence of valid alternatives, those who cannot or will not tolerate ambiguity or accept the genuine conflict between obligations. These are, as argued in chapter 5A above, established standpoints although they are not positions taken in this research. Clearly, the student who deliberately rejects the existence of dilemma, or who takes the view that "there is no alternative", would not exemplify the similarities and would provide an exception which would require further theoretical explanation.

8.9.5 It must also be said that the definitions of types of thinking lack the degree of clarity required to make fair comparisons. It is more satisfactory to speak of the Recognition of Dilemma as a *style* of thinking, as Rybash, Hoyer and Roodin (1986) concluded about Adult reasoning. Having discussed studies that showed that adulthood is characterized by the growth of several components of postformal reasoning: relativistic thinking, metasystematic reasoning, problem finding, and dialectic thinking. They stated:

We concluded that adults think in a manner that is largely consistent with postformal accounts of cognitive development. However, we have come to regard postformal cognitive development as characterized by the emergence of a set of *styles* of thinking, not as a genuine structural stage of thought. (p56)

8.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be asked whether anything of value has been added to our original definition of dilemma. It is probably more useful to think of RD as a style which is characteristic of maturity, of post formal operational thought (and probably of creative or lateral thinking as well). It has not been argued that the recognition of dilemma is a stage, structure of the mind, faculty or category; dilemma thinking is very probably not a discrete cognitive ability and the evidence so far observed does not support this hypothesis. The students interviewed in this study were moving from one milestone in development to another and the waypoints may not be plotted with any accuracy. There are cases of inconsistency especially between one domain, in which dilemma recognition may be observed, and another, in which there is dualist and absolute certainty of conclusion. There are cases of reversion as well as the deliberate adoption of an absolutist position.

As with mature thinking, the boundaries are not clear-cut, and the definition, especially in transition from adolescence to maturity, is necessarily imprecise. We must allow for:

- (1) An occasional reversion to a previous style of thinking; people are rarely consistent in their level of thinking or "stage" of development across areas of activity.
- (2) The deliberate choice of an absolutist position or the considered adoption of a "there is no alternative" standpoint.
- (3) The possibility that some people might deliberately distance themselves from any commitment, preferring to stand aloof from any ethical conclusions.
- (4) The possibility that some individuals might be retarded or immature in their development and might not reach the later stages of mature reasoning.

CHAPTER NINE

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: COMMON SENSE CONFLICTS AND THE THINKING SOCIETY

The purpose behind considering this perspective is to see what light can be shed on the experience of dilemma by anchoring it in its social and ideological context. First, therefore, there will be a survey of some of the main approaches of sociologists and social psychologists towards dilemma and ideological conflict and then a critique will be offered. It will be suggested that most of these theories inadequately explain the existence of real dilemmas in practical living in that they tend to undervalue either the place of history or the thinking and argumentation of individuals. Rather than presenting dilemma as a genuine struggle for the individual or as playing a substantive and necessary part in the development of an individual's capacity to think or in creating a society in which argumentation flourishes, most theories apparently seek to explain or avoid it.

The approach taken here will be a "return" to common sense one, as advocated in previous perspectives (see 5.0 and e.g. Nussbaum, 1990, Gaut 1990). It will suggest that dilemmas are not only a natural part of society but a necessary precondition of the development of common sense, for liberal thought and much we take for granted in Western democracies. Focusing finally on the views of Billig (1988) and the Loughborough Discourse and Rhetoric Group, it will be argued that common sense grows only in a certain soil and that ideological dilemma should be regarded as essential for developing the ability to argue, to make comparisons and for the very existence of a thinking society.

9.1 Conflict and Contradiction in Sociological theory

If we are seeking a justification of dilemma as a genuine struggle for the individual to choose between at least two valid alternatives, it will not be easy to find it in sociological theory. On the face of it, sociological analysis, under the influence of Hegelo-Marxist ontology, has much to say about contradiction and conflict in society. In the main, these concepts mean an opposition between classes, world views and social forces; for Marx, at least, the means by which contradiction was eliminated was revolution. Sociological theory has especially recognized the place for ideological conflict. But the tendency has been to present this as *between* ideologies rather than to find a place for dilemma within them.

Sociologists are not especially concerned with the meaning or rational consistency of dilemma, rather they focus upon the circumstances and preconditions of its occurrence in society. Nor are they particularly interested in the agonies of choice, the decision making process, the moral development of the individual or the extent of a person's predisposition to recognize valid alternatives. Sociologists in general, and social psychologists in particular are more concerned to devise theories which explain the existence of conflict and contradiction within society, between ideologies, cultures and interest groups on the one hand, or within individuals on the other.

9.2 Avoidance Strategies

There are many ways in which the existence of genuine dilemma can be explained away. The main theoretical avoidance is the use (or rather, as

argued here, the misuse) of scientific reasoning. This accords with the rationalist stance considered earlier (chapter 5A) and the demand for logical clarity. Ryle (1953) considered that "dilemmas derive from wrongly imprinted parities of reasoning" (p67) and Flew (1975) wrote:

If contradiction is tolerated, then, in a very literal sense, anything goes. This situation must itself be totally intolerable to anyone who has any concern at all to know what is in fact true.
(p17)

It is possible to study dilemma as a disembodied concept with its own rationality (or lack of it), disregarding the human involvement, the perplexities and distress surrounding the process of decision making. By saying "it is time to bring in reason", Hare (1981 p31) demonstrated the view that to display a concern for human perplexity is an intrusion which clouds the main issue, which is whether or not dilemmas can properly be said to exist at all. This standpoint fails to distinguish between logical confusion and a conflict of values. It also overlooks the fact that science itself is not immune to controversy both in its theory and its method.

9.2.1 By contrast, the phenomenological approach welcomes attention to the details of dilemmatic situations; it compels us to anchor the study of personal dilemma, whether this be the concept or the process, in the empirical experience itself. Disembodied ethical theories have no place in this approach. As Macintyre (1985) has said:

We have to learn from history and anthropology of the variety of moral practices, beliefs and conceptual schemes. The notion that the moral philosopher can study the concepts of morality merely by reflecting, Oxford armchair style, on what he or she and those around him or her say and do is barren. (pix)

Observing closely the experience itself (being faithful to the data, listening to the evidence) leads inevitably to a respect for what

Nussbaum (1985) called "the every day facts of lived practical reason" (p5). It seems truer to the spirit of scientific discovery to ground one's reasoning upon the observed evidence, even if this involves the inconvenience and untidiness of a humanistic study.

9.2.2 Other sociological theories can be destructive of the substance of dilemma. Dialectical philosophy finds a positive place for contradiction within the historical process. Hegel (1975a) wrote , "Life involves the germ of death, and the infinite, being radically self contradictory, involves its own self-suppression" (p117). If, however, his views on the role of tragedy in finding a resolution of conflict are representative of his thought on social conflict, Hegel (1975b) held that "eternal justice is exercised on individuals and their aims in the sense that it restores the substance and unity of ethical life with the downfall of the individual who has disturbed its peace."

The truly substantial thing which has to be actualized, however, is not the battle between particular aims or characters, although this too has its essential ground in the nature of the real world and human action, but the reconciliation in which the specific individuals and their aims work together harmoniously without opposition and without infringing on one another. (p1197)

Engels (1957) developed a theory of historical inevitability and his arguments that thesis is followed by antithesis and then synthesis similarly devalued any belief in genuine dilemma. Contradiction is seen as part of life's mystery but does not describe real disagreement between individuals; dialectical conflict is part of the inevitable flux of history, the pattern determining social change, just as it determines individual values.

9.2.3 Marxist theory, inheriting a philosophy of dialectic, taught that

a person's consciousness was determined by his or her social, especially economic, being. There is as a result a genuine place for ideological conflict between economic groups or classes, and the concept of revolution was intended in part as a theory of conflict elimination. Althusser (1979) developed the Marxist concept of ideology and proposed that socialism might reveal as strong a tendency towards contradiction as modern capitalism. In the main, however, this tradition is more intent upon the removal of conflict than on tolerating it. In any case, ideology was seen as a coherent, internally consistent social structure, within the broader whole and this fails to give due weight to the contradictory nature within each ideology or culture.

9.2.4 Non Marxists are often equally reluctant to accept dilemma. For Weber, perhaps the closest parallel is to be found in his idea of "disenchantment" in *Science as a Vocation* (1970), the sense of loss in the face of modernity, in which not even death has a meaning. Such is the traumatic influence upon the individual of the profit motive and the materialistic ethic underlying modern capitalism that the resulting disorientation has much in common with the notion of living in a permanent dilemma. There is such a strong sense of nostalgia for good things now ruined that one can only call it despair. The resulting attitude can be seen in his essay on *Politics as a Vocation* (1970 and see 6.4), in which he reveals his reaction to a pietistic upbringing, yet reluctance to accept a Marxist interpretation of the world:

The devil is old; grow old to understand him ! ... Age is not decisive, what is decisive is the trained relentlessness in viewing the realities of life, and the ability to face such realities and to measure up to them inwardly. (p125)

Recent feminist writers (e.g. Adams and Cowie 1990), although too heterogeneous a group to classify with any confidence, seem to reveal an

acceptance of, and even a respect for, the idea of dilemma in society. Perhaps it is most clearly articulated in their descriptions of the distance and opposition between theory and political action.

9.2.5 Mannheim (1991) wrote that he was "concerned with how men (sic) actually think" (p1) and to understand this one must taken into account the social implications. For him, ideologies are figments of the mind which disguise the true nature of any given society. They arise unconsciously. Utopias on the other hand are "wishdreams" that inspire opposing groups to act collectively with the aim of revolutionising an entire society. "A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of mentality within which it occurs" (p173), and in this way conflicts can emerge between utopian beliefs.

The world is known through many different orientations because there are many simultaneous and mutually contradictory trends of thought (by no means of equal value) struggling against one another with their different interpretations of "common" experience. (p241)

Throughout this work, an important aim for Mannheim was to have a view of the whole, which, he claimed, was not possible in modern philosophy or in empirical science. To him, ideologies were whole constructs and utopias were subtypes. The weakness of this ideal-type approach to resolving dilemmas is seen when applied to individual cases. Mannheim's analysis of the debate between Marx and the anarchist Bakunin (p219f) reveals that his interest was not in the argument itself, but rather in the way the dominant ideology eventually eliminated the utopian subtype. The conflict thus was resolved without the need to pay attention to the personal dilemma. Indeed, as he put it, the individual case is of less significance than the whole process: "No single individual represents a pure embodiment of any one of the historical-social types" (p189).

It can be seen that Mannheim had an appreciation of the social and historical influences on the way we think but underplayed the place of dilemma in individual patterns of thought or in the development of common sense.

9.2.6 Berger and Luckmann (1971) likewise took as their starting point the root proposition which they based on Marx, namely that man's consciousness is determined by his social being (p16). They therefore demonstrated a concern for social processes, which they distinguished sharply from the philosopher's concern for truth and validity. They were interested in whatever "passes for moral". This permitted them to accept the relativism which is the precondition of much cultural dilemma. They quoted with approval Pascal's maxim that what is truth one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other. ("Verite au deca des Pyrenees, erreur au dela", *Pensees* v 294).

Their aim was to explain the ways in which symbolic systems in modern societies are socially constructed and to offer an explanation of how contradictions are either eliminated or ironed out. This they did by considering four types of "machineries": mythology, theology, philosophy and science. The first two contained inconsistencies which were explained on the grounds of their simplicity. Neither myth nor theology (only slightly less naive), contained conflicts which could be considered substantial. Philosophy and science remove dilemma by means of two more mechanisms, therapy and nihilation. Successful therapy:

Establishes a symmetry between the conceptual machinery and its subjective appropriation in the individual's consciousness; it re-socializes the deviant into the objective reality of the symbolic universe of the society ... Nihilation, in its turn, uses a similar machinery to liquidate conceptually everything *outside* the same universe. (p132)

In each case, dominant perspectives are secured by the rejection of alternatives and the dilemma is effectively removed.

9.2.7 By contrast, other theories place too great an emphasis upon the individual in society. If we can extend the concept of dilemma to include that of "double purpose", Freud (1901) found a central place for it in his analysis of the unconscious sources of motivation; psychotherapy has as one of its tasks in his tradition, the accommodation of each individual to the inner forces of conflict. Little attention is paid here to the part played by society; dilemma, would therefore seem to be accepted as a normal part of one's psyche, not automatically eliminated.

It was seen in chapter 8 how Festinger considered the main motivation of each person is to achieve balance and harmony. If there is any inconsistency, therefore, between the choice and the afterthought, the person will find this too uncomfortable and be led to seek a reconciliation. The dilemma remainder therefore disappears. It is as if, as Billig (1988) put it:

There is for each individual a blood red silicon chip which organizes thoughts and actions. This chip is the psychologist's Rosetta Stone: if only it could be discovered and then decoded, the hidden plan of the mind would be revealed. (p19)

This approach also effectively denies the substantive existence of dilemma for the individual because he or she is internally motivated to see that it disappears and harmony returns.

9.2.8 Other individualist interpretations stress the cognitive processes and the way decisions are taken (e.g Hamilton 1981). Each individual requires rules and procedures in order to process the incoming

data. This is essential in order to select the information, direct thought and action. Dilemmas are explained as mere occasions in this process of organizing information. Data would be selected in order to confirm prejudices. Racists, right wing and left wing theorists would all discover evidence to support their views. Such schematic processing will tend to avoid any inconsistency, double standards or clash of values. In this way cognitive social psychologists also evade the reality of dilemma for an individual.

Explanations of dilemma which stress only the individual, isolated from his situation and background, do not square with the insights of classical tragedy. As Nussbaum (1986) argued, Greek tragedians appreciated that we are not untouched by our environment; fate plays a hand. Conditioning, in modern parlance, is a central factor for us all. We therefore need to appreciate not only the inner struggle of dilemma as a substantive, real event but also at the same time see each person as sharing in the "common sense" of society. We grow in the soil of our environment and upbringing:

I am an agent but also a plant and much that I did not make goes towards making me whatever I shall be praised or blamed for being; that I must constantly choose between competing and apparently incommensurable goods and that circumstances may force me to a position in which I cannot help being false to something or doing some wrong; that an event that simply happens to me may, without my consent, alter my life; that it is equally problematic to entrust one's good to friends, lovers or country and to try to have a good life without them - all these I take to be not just the material of tragedy but everyday facts of lived practical reason. (p5)

9.3 Dilemma and Rhetoric

Billig (1988) studied dilemma from the point of view of a social psychologist (he and his co-authors formed the Loughborough Discourse and

Rhetoric Group). They criticised both those writers who undervalue the place of history and the influence of ideology in our culture and those who ignore the importance of the individual making concrete and real choices. The authors' definition of dilemma is close to that adopted in this research. Dilemmas are a real and tough choice between two alternatives; as such they are a natural and common part of our lives. But they went much further than this:

What is involved is clearly not a straightforward issue of choice, of alternative courses of action, nor on the other hand a matter of intellectual puzzles or paradoxes.. The characteristic of a dilemma which makes it significant for social analysis is that it is more complex than a simple choice or even a straightforward technical problem... (dilemmas are) social situations in which people are pushed and pulled in opposing directions... They are also seen to impose an assessment of conflicting values. (p163)

Dilemmas, it is claimed, are built into our culture and contradictory elements can be found within both ideology and common sense. They are necessary for us to develop as thinking human beings. The authors, therefore, intend:

To oppose the implications of both cognitive and ideological theory, which ignore the social nature of thinking. In contrast to the cognitive psychologists, we stress the *ideological* nature of thought; in contrast to theorists of ideology, we stress the *thoughtful* nature of ideology. (p8)

They distinguished between a lived ideology, "which refers to ideology as a society's way of life", and an intellectual ideology, "which is a system of political, religious or philosophical thinking and, as such, is very much the product of intellectuals or professional thinkers" (p27).

They believed that:

The study of dilemmas should not be confined to actual choice-making behaviour. There is a need to recognize the dilemmatic aspects of thought, which are preconditions for any dilemmatic choice and which continue to exist in common sense, even in the absence of actual situations which necessitate the taking of difficult choices. (p24)

9.3.1 Their argument was founded upon four main points: first, "thinking is necessary for a society and .. a society without thought is either an impossibility or a totalitarian nightmare" (p149).

They believed that dilemmas will always be with us and that they fulfill a vital function. We should not dream of "a silent society, in which all dilemmas have been resolved and whose members, in consequence, have nothing to deliberate about" (p149). This, however, does not mean that the issues will be the same in every society, let alone that every society should think in the same way as do people in late-twentieth century Britain.

In their view, most social psychologists, when they study dilemmas, have seen them in terms of making difficult decisions. This "prevented (them) from appreciating the dilemmatic quality of much everyday thinking, which can be revealed whether or not individuals are actually faced with decisions to be made" (p9). By contrast their concern was to examine the social preconditions for dilemmas, in order to show how ordinary life is shaped by dilemmatic qualities. Ordinary people who may not experience the Scylla and Charybdis of dramatic choice, nevertheless are well aware of those conflicting points of view "which surface so vividly in the dilemmatic situation *per se*" (p9).

9.3.2 Second, they believed that thinking, arguing and ideology were closely interdependent. Billig, (1991) wrote that "the holding of opinions is an essentially rhetorical and argumentative matter. Moreover, it is also deeply ideological" (pvii). In each individual, thinking takes the form of an "internal dialogue" or debate, a skill akin to the rhetoric which was so prized and developed in Greek and Roman education

(for example by Quintilian, Aristotle, Socrates). They held that there was much to be learned from the insights of these classical writers who so influenced European education.

However, the revived interest in rhetoric has a new emphasis. Traditional rhetoric concentrated on the speaker, on training those who wished to be an orator, to communicate. Modern rhetoric shifts the focus to the listener, or reader (for all discourse now falls within the rhetorician's interest). Under the influence of modern philosophy, the duality of knowledge and opinion, persuasion and conviction, reason and emotion is challenged. Phenomenologists and existentialists would claim that a person's basic method of judgment is argumentation, whether in dialogue with others or with a text; the results, in either case, are necessarily relative and temporal. Not only the processes of the speaker's mind are of interest, but also the response of the audience. The elements of speech, metaphor, allegory, antithesis, parallelism, and so forth, are all a crucial means of studying the transactional nature of discourse.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) argued that people were not necessarily consistent in their attitudes, they did not hold a single opinion but rather used complicated and sometimes contradictory ideas and patterns of speaking. It is as if a living dialogue is taking place within each person. It is also crucial to consider the context in which the speaker may be operating. One example of how this may raise dilemmas is described by Edwards and Potter (1992). They particularly highlight what they refer to as the "dilemma of stake":

The dilemma of presenting factual reports while being treated as having a stake in some specific version of events or some practical outcome. The recipients of such reports may well, in turn, respond to them accordingly, as designed to manage that dilemma. So, by offering a report rather than, say, directly making an accusation,

speakers do not ensure a certain interactional outcome, but seek to garner the accountability of 'just telling it how it is' " (p7ff).

Billig went further and argued that conflict and dilemma were therefore essential prerequisites of a thinking person:

By stressing the dilemmatic and rhetorical nature of thinking, we see thinking as inherently social. In fact, thinking is frequently a form of dialogue within the individual (p6)...Thus, the paradox of the term "the thinking society" describes the reality that our dilemmas of ideology are social dilemmas and that our ideology cannot but produce dilemmas to think about. (p7)

9.3.3 Third, Billig saw dilemmas as genuine conflicts for the individual. He is sceptical of social theorists and theorists of ideology, who tend to give weight to the processes of history and how they create the culture and beliefs of particular societies but tend also to "ignore the thinking of individuals, for individuals are often seen as the blinded bearers of a received ideological tradition" (p2). On the contrary, Billig claimed, whereas people may not have invented the common sense which they use, they are not "dupes" and each individual is a thinking person, not "his master's voice".

Conflicts are of interest... not to find how they might be institutionally resolved or functional for the social system, but to show how they give rise to both problems and opportunities for reflection, doubt, thought, invention, argument, counter-argument. Hence our conception suggests that in everyday thought the individual is a lay philosopher, not a marionette dancing to the desires of a great design. (p163)

9.3.4 Fourth, their interest did not lie in the motivation or information processing of individuals but in the fact that knowledge is socially shared and that common sense includes conflicting and contradictory notions. The authors quoted a number of classical sayings and proverbs to illustrate how normal and natural a part of life dilemma is. In particular, they refer to Francis Bacon who, in his *Of the Dignity and Advancement of Learning* (1605), collected a number of antithetical

proverbs (see Whately 1963, appendix A), which by their seeming contradiction reveal how dilemma is woven into the heart of our practical wisdom. Today, in our upbringing, we are still receiving contrasting messages from our traditional proverbs: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" on the one hand, and "out of sight, out of mind" on the other; "nothing ventured nothing gained" but "look before you leap"; "many hands make light work" but then "too many cooks spoil the broth"; "charity begins at home" yet "love thy neighbour". Similarly, we have come to accept as normal Hamlet's predicament that it is sometimes necessary "to be cruel, only to be kind" (Act 3, Sc.4).

Billig argued that such dilemmatic contrasts are necessary if we are to learn how to think at all and that fireside wisdom, even though frequently contradictory, assists in the very development of our thinking and arguing processes.

The contrary themes of common sense represent the materials through which people can argue and think about their lives, for people need to possess contrary themes if they are to think and argue. (p8)

9.3.5 Billig then undertook some "initial investigations", "key illustrations" of real and concrete dilemmas which confront individuals in specific situations: education, medical care, race and gender. The authors identified common ideological themes which recurred in these discourses. They drew out the tensions between authority and equality, freedom and determinism, the individual and the state. The same conflicts occur frequently whatever the dilemma being considered. They concluded:

In this way the characteristics of dilemmas are revealed as fundamentally born out of a culture which produces more than one possible ideal world, more than one hierarchical arrangement of power, value and interest. In this sense social beings are confronted by and deal with dilemmatic situations as a condition of their humanity. (p163)

9.4 Conclusions

This analysis has been found particularly relevant to the present research and elaborates the original definition and understanding of dilemma. It accords closely with what Hampshire wrote (1980 and see 2.12). It gives due weight both to the individual and to the constraining influence of his or her cultural environment. As Gaut (1993) pointed out when she argued that "a reflectively improved version of common-sense morality is the best morality":

We already possess a raft of moral convictions, which has been passed on to us by our parents and fellows from our culture, altered and refined by the common understanding of previous ages, and which we, in turn, will pass on to our descendants after we have made our own reflective contributions. Ethical convictions and deliberations are always historically located and conditioned. These inherited convictions are those of common-sense morality. (p33f)

The perspective we have been considering likewise stresses the place of "common sense" and the importance of developing the capacity to debate different sides of a question. It perceives the ideological basis to many recurring dilemmas (e.g. between individuality and collectivity, equality and authority, freedom and necessity). It sees dilemma as a constant in society and does not aim to remove it (or discover a method of resolution); it does not look forward to the end of dilemma, "towards a pure consistency of thinking, for that would be to look forward to the end of thought" (p148).

This approach leaves the experience of dilemma centre stage and of permanent significance in the life and thinking of any individual, indeed of society itself. For these, and other, reasons it is justifiable to claim a more important place in our educational programmes for the consideration of, and reflection upon dilemmatic situations.

CHAPTER TEN

EDUCATION: SUBJECT SPECIFIC DILEMMA

The intention in this chapter is to provide a justification for the inclusion of dilemma in the teaching programmes, the counselling and the general entitlement for all 16-19 year old students. It will also offer some guidance on ways in which this might be done. It, therefore, provides in part a new perspective, that of the educationist, and in part an application of the insights from the other perspectives to the role of a tutor or counsellor.

There are four sources upon which this chapter draws: first, there is a fresh analysis of the informal discussions which took place over two years with a group of ten subject tutors on the recognition and resolution of dilemma (abbreviated to RD); these culminated in the attempt to devise hypotheses and to test these amongst groups of randomly selected students. The data is revisited in the light of the changed objectives and methodology. Second, a study visit to the USA to look at a variety of programmes for the "Gifted and Talented" pupils, on critical thinking and problem solving, in a range of schools; these included acceleration, enrichment and "pull out" programmes. Third, a letter and questionnaire which was sent to sixty Heads of Departments in ten different post-sixteen institutions across the country, requesting examples and comments on subject specific dilemmas. Fourth, some background literature on the philosophy and ethics of education and counselling. Drawing on this data and background, some conclusions and recommendations for tutors and counsellors in post 16 colleges are tentatively put forward.

It should, however, be made clear that it was no part of this study to evaluate the theories on the identification or treatment of "Gifted and Talented" children, nor on counselling theory, nor comparative education.

10.1 The Dilemma Research Group

Are dilemmas considered as part of the course in different subject disciplines and, if so, to what extent are they distinct? What kinds of opportunity occur in post 16 courses to develop the ability to recognize and resolve dilemma? What do different disciplines understand by dilemma? These were some of the questions considered by a group of Sixth Form College teachers meeting over two years (1988/89). A four month secondment had been granted to me by the LEA, the terms of which required any findings to be applied to programmes for the "gifted and talented". It was therefore necessary to consider first the differing theories on the identification and selection of able students; then, to compare the various strategies for teaching them. The following subject disciplines were represented: Chemistry, Government and Politics, Geography, Design and Technology, French, Psychology, Physical Education, Classics, Physics and Religious Studies. Meetings took place three or four times a term, after college. There were two weekend study sessions and two pieces of fieldwork amongst students. It was recently followed up by an enquiry amongst 60 Heads of Departments in post sixteen institutions during 1994.

The details of the earlier, informal study need not concern us. Briefly, however, the aim was to discover whether "able" students, as defined, had any advantages over "average" students when faced by dilemmas (see 1.6, 3.2.1, 4.1). Would they be better at recognizing dilemmas, accepting the

validity of alternatives (ie a form of relativism) and resolving or taking appropriate action in response to them. In order to research these questions, a number of problems had to be overcome; in the first place, what was meant by "able" and how would they be selected? In the event a multi criteria method was chosen, such as is widely accepted in the literature, for example Postlethwaite and Denton (1984) or Renzulli's Revolving Door Model (1977), which includes observations of intelligence, creativity and task commitment, or as described by Sternberg and Davidson (1986). In practice students were identified as "gifted" on any of the following grounds: if they had 6 or more grade A's at GCSE; if they had been previously screened by an Educational Psychologist and identified as "gifted"; if they were nominated by subject staff as being "exceptional" in their subject, or had indicated an outstanding performance in some socially useful activity, possibly outside college.

Secondly, what was meant by "average" students? Should the term include a random cross section of the college and thus include a proportion of able students? This was accepted as the statistically valid method. But common sense seemed to suggest otherwise. It was finally agreed that you do not compare the distinctive characteristics of blonde over brunette students by including blondes in your control group, so the "able students" were omitted.

The team of staff who had volunteered began by setting themselves the task of clarifying and refining the meaning of dilemma and the definition in respect of their own subjects. There was no disagreement about a working definition of dilemma, which was accepted as a situation or issue which invited "various approaches, interpretations, strategies or techniques" and therefore had "alternative legitimate solutions". It was

also agreed that dilemmas would usually (but not necessarily) have a remainder in the form of a cost such as regret or guilt over the rejected alternative. It was accepted as a working assumption that the recognition of dilemma might vary from one subject to another and therefore the group should draw its membership from across the curriculum. It was agreed to begin by looking in a fairly general way at the kind of problems students came across in their A level courses which were open ended and admitted several valid solutions. Each member of the group presented a paper in turn from the perspective of her/his own subject specialism.

10.1.1 The physicist began by denying that there were any real dilemmas in his subject until a student had progressed far into the subject (to degree level at least). In his view, genuine dilemmas did not arise as such, in A level courses; there was only ignorance or lack of insight. Even when faced with a difficult choice, for example between methods of measurement, there was always a preferred solution, clear to any student with enough knowledge or understanding. When pressed on this, he allowed that it might be a useful pedagogic technique for the teacher to let the student work under the illusion that a dilemma existed and to refrain from providing the missing ingredients of knowledge or insight.

10.1.2 In Design and Technology, the opposite standpoint was taken. Students, it was claimed, were faced with dilemmas from the outset of their course and at every stage; The example was given of a student who was dismayed at the right-handedness of everyday life and the implements available and who wished to design tools for the left handed. There were always different and equally valid options open. Other members of the group challenged this on the ground that the examples given were problems not true dilemmas; it was also questioned whether there was any sense of

cost in making the choice; was it not a question of good, basic thinking as applied to problems of design and technology?

10.1.3 An interesting slant on the discussion was provided by the Physical Education teacher. The example he gave was that of instant decision-making of the kind, "Do I pass or kick at goal?" "Do I play a lob or make a passing shot?" These were decisions usually made at high speed in response to an immediate situation. This in turn led to a discussion on whether or not that decision was more of an instinctive, reflex action than a considered reflection. In fact, it was suggested that the exercise of RD in a physical situation was probably a case of hesitation or fatal dither. Most members, however, considered that there had to be some cognitive element in such cases, however physical the skill and however instantaneous the decision. It would therefore qualify as a dilemma.

10.1.4 In Politics and Government the example was given of a discussion on Proportional Representation (PR). It was held that to devise a system of PR would simply constitute a problem, because there was an accepted definition of PR and the task was defined and limited. On the other hand, to consider whether or not one *ought* to have PR would be a dilemma. The main challenge to this opinion was on the grounds that there was no sense of loss in the rejected alternative. This raised the question whether the existence of a remainder was a sufficient but not a necessary characteristic of dilemma. On this point the group was divided, but most members believed a sense of cost was an essential part of the definition.

10.1.5 In Classics, the question was considered, "What life style was enjoyed by Plautus?" This required the student to enter into the life of

slaves, and also to express a personal judgment. Able students, it was suggested, might avoid giving any opinion, preferring the safer option of learning, then describing. This was likened to a swimmer who refused to let go of the side and launch out for fear of making a mistake. This teacher considered "letting go of the side" the most important ability in the recognition of dilemma and to develop the confidence to risk error, even to do badly on occasion.

10.1.6 When Religious Studies was considered, a number of dilemmatic questions emerged of the type, "Can there be a Just War in a nuclear age?" This led to such questions as what value should be placed upon idealism by comparison with practicality? Is religion world affirming or world denying, assuming a pessimistic or an optimistic view of human nature? A more distinctive dilemma was the question of the place of RS in the curriculum; was it an essential part of the culture (as Buddhism might be in Sri Lanka, Catholicism in Spain or Islam in Iran)? If so, who was qualified to teach it, a convinced believer only, or any qualified teacher? The answer clearly would depend upon whether the objectives of RS included, or specifically excluded proselytism. This in turn raised dilemmas for educators and students alike, as both would need to ask to what extent it was permissible (or essential perhaps) to let one's personal standpoints influence the direction of the course.

10.1.7 In Modern Languages, it was suggested that the quintessential dilemma was the search for an appropriate translation and the appreciation of meaning. It was also argued that "dilemma for 16-19 year old linguists is the recognition of the need to think in the language and to understand what that actually means; for example the first positive sign is often dreaming in the language. Not knowing what is coming next

is part of this, in that you are not planning the sentence ahead before deciding to speak."

10.1.8 One major outcome of these discussions over the two years was the quality of the contributions, which it was unanimously agreed had a beneficial influence on day to day teaching strategies. The vigorous debates which took place not only refined the definition but also increased their understanding of dilemma in each subject specialism and how it might be included in the college curriculum. After the individual presentations, hypotheses were drawn up to compare the ability to recognize and resolve dilemmas (RD) between "able" students and other students. An assessment procedure and marking scheme was devised and interviews and essays were arranged.

It remained an unresolved question whether or not dilemma was subject specific or whether, rather, there were subject based perspectives on each dilemma (see 10.3) The outcomes as regards the chosen hypotheses were (predictably) inconclusive, but as far as the study of dilemma thinking was concerned, they were very encouraging. Dilemmas, as defined, certainly existed in A level courses, as well as general education (complementary study) programmes; it was considered by all, with one exception, to be an important component of good teaching; it was subject specific not in the sense of being a distinct form of knowledge (see 10.4) but in the sense that students might be able at recognizing dilemmas in one subject but not in another, or alternatively in college courses but not in their personal lives (and vice versa); it was agreed that RD could be taught and included in the curriculum, preferably within existing courses rather than by arranging a special place for it on the timetable. This earlier study, although informal, not only kept

the researcher's interest alive but also provided data which it has been possible now to rework and apply to the new objectives of illumination and providing assistance to tutors and counsellors.

10.2 A Study Visit to the USA - October 1988

A study visit, under the auspices of the English Speaking Union, was arranged in the Autumn of 1988 to the U.S.A.; the purpose was to look at both selective and normal schools and seek educational programmes which might relate to dilemma thinking. The itinerary covered six stays: in New York, where visits were arranged to schools in Harlem, Manhattan and Long Island; then to Princeton, where in addition to the High School and University, there was an opportunity to learn at first hand from the staff at the Education Testing Service about the thinking behind the Standard Achievement Tests (SAT's) and the Advanced Placement (AP) courses and to what extent dilemmas were included or valued in these. The next visit was to Baltimore to see especially the School for the Arts; then to Washington to visit the Thomas Jefferson School for Technology in Virginia; then to Houston University and the centre for Gifted and Talented Education at the School of Education. The final visit was to San Francisco and to the Lowell High School and GT programmes in the Fremont Unified District.

10.2.1 In the US there has been in recent years a strong tradition of teaching critical thinking and in selective schools, such as Dalton High or Stuyvesant, in New York, both of which had fought hard against prevailing educational policy to remain selective, a high premium was placed on problem solving and fast thinking. In one such school, which included two Nobel prizewinners amongst the recent alumni, the head

believed that, "provided you have the genetic basis, what you need to motivate a pupil is economic striving"; he put success down to diversity, challenging teaching, questioning, and out of class activities such as publications, plays and concerts. It was hard to find any acknowledgment that dilemmas existed, at least in academic situations. Problems had solutions and reaching conclusions at speed was rewarded, together with confident and articulate argument and competitive activity. The preferred and most successful approach towards their most able students was to accelerate them in specific subjects.

10.2.2 At Levittown on Long Island there was a special centre for Gifted Programmes, starting at the third grade. The state had provide some funding for salaries, materials, software and a coordinator. Parents, too, were very supportive. Each Middle School had a teacher servicing three classes and on a rota basis the pupils selected (according to a multi criteria definition) were "pulled out" and bussed to the centre in order to receive enrichment sessions for three hours a week.

The activities were varied, clearly enjoyed by the eight and nine year olds, and noisy, with plenty of visual material. Written on the board was a quotation purported to be from Einstein, "The soul never thinks without an image". The theoretical backbone was Bloom's taxonomy (even to the children they spoke of "meta cognition", "synthesis" and "problem solving") and the staff consciously aimed at the higher order thinking . Fast responses were encouraged but there was not the same stress on "correct" answers as at the selective schools previously visited. One activity was called "Alike it or not", in which the teacher presented the pupils with a set of four words, numbers or pictures and asked them to put their thumbs up or down to indicate whether they saw a likeness; it

was suggested that one would be the odd one out (for example, dime, rope, glass, slide; foot, hand, knee, cheek; 127 52 108 99). The aim was to loosen up the rigid mind and to create confidence in their own thinking. As long as they could justify the similarity, there was no search for a "correct solution".

10.2.3 Also relevant to the understanding of dilemma thinking were the programmes undertaken at The Thomas Jefferson School for Technology. Here 85% of the pupils were already identified as Gifted and Talented. Admission was competitive and although they tried to meet some ethnic and gender quotas, the tests were strict; 20% screening was provided by a maths, verbal, spatial and abstract reasoning test. This was followed by an essay to discover motivation. In the classes, the participation was impressive. A conscious effort was made to promote divergent thinking, discussion and argument.

The preferred strategy for the most gifted was acceleration, although not to the exclusion of enrichment, because most staff considered their teaching was already "enriched". Three students were already attending Princeton University for mathematics lectures, whilst still on the school roll. In this way they retained their pastoral and social links with their known age group. Within the school there was considerable counselling before pupils were accelerated to a senior class.

10.2.4 At the Center for GT Education at Houston University, there were 40 teachers doing an MA on GT education (fifteen other similar set-ups existed in other universities in the USA at that time). Much work was being done on how to teach problem solving and critical thinking, but it was not possible to find anything that encouraged the recognition or

resolution of dilemma (or anything like it).

10.2.5 In the Fremont School District outside San Francisco, Lowell High School had recently been identified as one of the "top ten" schools in the USA and was the the only school in San Francisco to be selective (indeed only one other state funded selective school existed throughout California). Scores for SAT' would be in the top 15% and there were many considered gifted; these were placed on an accelerated track in a specific subject after counselling. The Principal strongly denied it was an elitist school. "True elitism occurs only when there is an economic or social advantage obtained, not when it occurs by merit", he said. He preferred breadth to accelerated advance and personally encouraged creative and divergent thinking in the school.

10.2.6 Most administrators met on this visit were eclectic in their approach to the identification and teaching of the "Gifted and Talented", using both enrichment and acceleration strategies for their most able pupils. Segregation in the form of "Pull out" programmes and special schools was a more controversial policy and in many districts was ruled out on political or social grounds. In the best examples witnessed, as at Levittown, students were encouraged to think divergently, creatively and to allow for alternative approaches. They were also encouraged to be confident of their own ideas and to practise articulating them. Such concepts were directly relevant to the issues raised by this research into dilemma. Specially funded programmes, however, with specific objectives along such lines were confined to those pupils identified as gifted and talented. A strong impression was gained, throughout the visit, that most G and T pupils on special programmes were taught that problems have correct solutions and that there is a right answer to be

sought by the brightest minds in the shortest possible time.

10.3 A Survey of Heads of Department 1994

The earlier small scale study referred to above (10.1) had given considerable encouragement to expect that many teachers would think that dilemmatic issues were an important part of their specific subjects. To follow this up a letter was sent to 60 Heads of Department (appendix 3.1) in ten different post sixteen institutions. Dilemma was defined as "a situation in which a choice has to be made between at least two pressing alternatives, where there is no obvious solution" and examples were given of both moral and non-moral issues. It was explained that the research interest was to discover "the extent to which there are opportunities to "practise" this common predicament in college based examination courses (i.e. not simply in general courses or tutor periods)". A questionnaire was enclosed (appendix 3.2).

10.3.1 The first surprise was the response, which was remarkable and very encouraging; 43 (72%) replied which was a considerably higher percentage than was expected. Many were positive, even enthusiastic about the matter, enclosing photocopies of parts of the syllabus they taught, adding a page of explanatory notes, in order to elaborate on their ideas. In one case, five pages of closely argued analysis of texts, ranging from the Book of Job to Hamlet, illustrated dilemmas of the intellect and of the soul, the mental process from confusion to enlightenment, via various levels of realisation, agony and "eureka" type discovery to occasional resolution. One said the questionnaire had jogged him into the realisation of the importance of the subject and several wished to be kept informed of any findings or outcome. In all, 19 different subjects

were represented by the respondents. All, with one exception, acknowledged the existence of dilemmas in their subjects. One wrote that "they should be avoided if possible by careful planning." Another thought it unprofitable for students to consider the question, because it could only lead to confusion in a student's mind.

10.3.2 Amongst the respondents, 38% said they covered the issue weekly and only 2 (3%) said that they never considered the matter. One was a biologist (while four other biologists gave several examples from their teaching and said it was "very worthwhile"); the other was a mathematician (which did not agree with the view of another mathematician who claimed to deal with dilemmas regularly).

10.3.3 When asked what value they would personally place on the consideration of "dilemma" type problems in a student's general education, all except one thought it "worthwhile" (33% said "very worthwhile"). A similar figure thought such problems in vocational education to be worthwhile (15%), very worthwhile (33%). Despite the high proportion who thought it worthwhile or very worthwhile and who considered dilemmas frequently, nearly half of the respondents could not recall having had any teacher training or preparation in the recognition of resolution of dilemma; even so, there was a substantial number who considered dilemmas frequently in their main course; 38% said this was weekly, 7% monthly, 18% occasionally and only two respondents who said that they never considered the question at all.

10.3.4 All were asked to give examples of the type of dilemma which students considered as part of the course. It was suggested that this might perhaps be "a set assignment, an essay topic, part of the

coursework, a practical or experiment". The replies covered a wide range of topics and problems, providing evidence that moral issues occur in every discipline, particularly in its application.

There was manifestly no shortage of examples of the type:

- Which type of energy production should a developing country spend its scarce resources on developing? (Geography)
- Siting a chemical plant (Chemistry)
- Funding the Health Service, how to allocate scarce resources (Sociology)
- Government economic policy - the need to raise revenue while preserving an image as the party of low taxation (Government and Politics)
- The morality of feeding grain to cattle in the rich world whilst approx one billion starve (Geography)

Some illustrated a general concern for the study skills and stressful choices which students could sometimes face:

- Do I miss lessons to make deadlines or not?
- Students preparing a group demonstration are faced with maintaining their individuality (by stressing their own ideas) or accepting the dominance of others, so benefitting the group's progress. (Theatre Studies)
- A key stage is when a piece of work is nearly finished when it is frequently possible for the artist to do something that will either brilliantly resolve a piece or ruin it (Art and Design)
- Dealing with young children who exhibit behaviour difficult to handle (Health Education)

It was sometimes difficult to see just how subject specific some dilemmas were. For example:

- Revolutionaries in nineteenth century Tsarist Russia - what methods to use to effect change, propaganda or assassination? (History)
- The dilemma of GDR citizens in 1989, go west for jobs but leave family, friends and home behind. (German)
- Whether to seek full employment or to reduce inflation. (Economics)
- Students are presented data about the candidate drugs and they are asked to recommend one of the drugs for further development. (Chemistry)
- The impact of science on military decisions. (Physics)

How much German is required to deal with the GDR emigrant's problem and how much Chemistry is required to locate a chemical plant, or Physics to

assess the impact of science on military strategy? Arguably very little, and the subject knowledge is therefore separable from the dilemma. What this reveals is that there are no English dilemmas or Chemistry dilemmas as such, but rather issues which can be diagnosed and perceived from a particular discipline but not confined within it. On the other hand, a decision as to which chemical to develop cannot be taken without scientific knowledge; some understanding of Economics is needed to allocate scarce resources and knowledge of History is desirable before discussing the choices confronting Tsarist revolutionaries.

10.3.5 This point was considered by the staff discussion group (10.1). The question, "Are there any dilemmas in your subject?" is not the same as, "Are there any distinctively Physics type dilemmas?" The former can legitimately include applied moral issues, of the type "Is it right to build a nuclear reactor on that site?" In the same way, students studying German might properly be asked to look at current historical or cultural issues and thereby face a question about GDR emigrants. But, however valid these situations might be as dilemmas, none of them substantiates the proposition that there are *subject specific* dilemmas. This is very possibly why one of the scientists claimed that there are no scientific dilemmas as such, only dilemmas of application.

A parallel and well known problem is where to locate Moral Education, given that Moral Education is not a distinct discipline (as opposed to Moral Philosophy). Should it be taught within other disciplines or as a separate subject? Similarly, "Can study skills be acquired apart from particular studies?" The answer given by most teachers is of a "both-and" nature rather than "either-or". As in moral education, there are formal characteristics or skills of argument and organisation, theory and

concept where all the possible exemplars will come from other disciplines and cannot effectively be studied apart from them.

10.4 The Search for a Philosophical Rationale

Can a philosophical rationale for including dilemma in the curriculum be found? This is a deceptively simple question. It suggests that it is somehow the business of philosophers to prescribe the content or method in education and, moreover, that if and when this is done, there is a consensus which may be treated as a *vade mecum* for the guidance of educators.

There are, however, problems with both these suggestions. On the question of an agreed consensus, this has never existed in practice. Aristotle (1962) expressed his uncertainty like this:

We must not leave out of sight the nature of education and the proper means of imparting it. For at present there is a practical dissension on this point; people do not agree on the subjects which the young should learn, whether they take virtue in the abstract or the best life as the end to be sought, and it is uncertain whether education should be properly directed rather to the cultivation of the intellect or the moral discipline. The question is complicated, too, if we look at the actual education of our own day; nobody knows whether the young should be trained at such studies as are merely useful as means of livelihood or in such as tend to the promotion of virtue or in the higher studies, all of which have received a certain number of suffrages. Nor again, if virtue be accepted as the end, is there any agreement as to the means of attaining it.
(7. 2. 13337a33)

10.4.1 We have seen grounds for thinking that a majority of teachers believe that there is indeed a place for including dilemmas in the post sixteen curriculum. Many would no doubt call these "philosophical" grounds, perhaps linking them with the tradition of "liberal education" in this Western Europe. But the picture is no clearer when we look at

modern liberal democracies. The idea that educators might discover some agreed guide, theoretical basis or common practice on which to base their policies is fruitless. As Jeffreys (1950) remarked with more than a touch of romantic nostalgia:

The most serious weakness in modern education is the uncertainty about its aims. A glance over history reminds that the most vital and effective systems of education have envisaged their objectives quite definitely, in terms of personal qualities and social situations. Spartan, Feudal, Jesuit, Nazi, Communist educations have had this in common, they knew what they wanted to do and believed in it. By contrast, education in the liberal democracies is distressingly nebulous in its aims. (p61)

10.4.2 O'Hear (1981) had no doubt that philosophy could provide a supportive rationale:

One's philosophy of education .. will be distinct from a sociology of education; reflecting one's values and concept of what men (*sic*) ought to be, as opposed to what they might be in any particular society. It also ... reflects one's ideals for society as a whole. In saying that a philosophy of education reflects one's concept of what men ought to be, it can be distinguished from a psychology of education. Human nature is not something that is just given. It is something we can make something of, in the light of how we conceive ourselves and others... So a philosophy of education will attempt to specify a set of educational aims, justifying them in the light of our general ethical values. (p1)

On the other hand, Peters (1973) doubted if was sensible to ask about the aims of education. He found it an odd philosophical question. In his view, at best it served as a "salutary request for teachers to survey what they are doing, get their priorities straight, concentrate their attention on them, and discard irrelevancies" (p14). He would have us concentrate on worthwhile activities, implied by the meaning of the word "education" itself and leave aside thoughts of distant goals:

To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view. What is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion, and taste at worth-while things that lie to hand. (1965 p110)

Thus Peters undercut the search for a philosophical rationale by denying what he called the "layman's view that the task of the philosopher is to provide some kind of synoptic directive for living" (1964 p8).

Approaching the question of educational aims from the analytic tradition, Peters argued that the word 'education' like 'reform' had a norm built into it, which "functions as a very distant target for such activities... 'Education', like 'reform' picks out a family of processes culminating in a person being better" (1973 p15).

Whilst this view has been strongly challenged (e.g. Woods and Dray 1973), it can safely be concluded that unless one can find a prior argument for saying that recognizing and resolving dilemmas is a "worthwhile" activity in itself, being adept at which is to be a better person, philosophy will not provide one. Perhaps, as Vernon (1942) said of the place of psychology in education, philosophy has a more lowly role to play:

Educational psychology is in many respects an advanced and highly technical form of applied science. Owing to the nature of the material with which it deals, it is more comparable to medicine than, say, to physical engineering; it cannot by itself give answers to definite questions about the art of teaching. Still less can it affirm the soundness of educational policies or ideals; perhaps it is more often useful in a negative way, that is in indicating what principles are unsound. (p99)

10.4.4 A different line of argument can be developed based on the idea of a liberal education. The consideration of moral values (and dilemmas amongst them) together with the ideas of generality and breadth are often attributed to this tradition, which is central to the educational practices and institutions of most western countries, at least until recently. O'Hear (1981) describes a liberal education as consisting in:

Initiating students into disciplines such as those of mathematics, science, history literature and the arts. ... students are to be taught by teachers who have some claim to authority in what they

teach... All involved.. are to be guided by the standards of excellence inherent in the disciplines concerned, wherever these standards might lead, even into conflict with church or state.. it is not primarily vocational or practical. (p4)

Recognising that a liberal education is a process concerned directly with the pursuit of knowledge, Hirst (1973) defines education in terms of "man's knowledge of what is the case." As knowledge is itself a distinctive human virtue, "liberal education has a value for the person as the fulfilment of the mind, a value which has nothing to do with utilitarian or vocational considerations" (p88). This inevitably involves a consideration of values, the source of which, Hirst argued, cannot be found in religious, political or utilitarian theories; these are always open to debate and doubt. He sought a more "ultimate basis for the values that should determine education, some more objective ground". This, Hirst claimed, is discovered if one ensures that knowledge corresponds to objective reality. "A liberal education in the pursuit of knowledge is, therefore, seeking the development of the mind according to what is quite external to it, the structure and pattern of reality" (p90). From this position Hirst developed his argument for there being discrete forms of knowledge, which he summarised as follows:

(I) Distinct disciplines or forms of knowledge (subdivisible: mathematics, physical sciences, humans sciences, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, philosophy).

(II) Fields of knowledge: theoretical, practical (these may or may not include elements of moral knowledge).

It is the distinct disciplines that basically constitute the range of unique ways we have of understanding experience if to these is added moral knowledge (p105).

The subsequent debate led many practitioners to identify Hirst's "forms of knowledge" with a list of subject disciplines (something he was reluctant to do) and thereby to derive a school curriculum. The conclusion of this argument is that the consideration of dilemma would

find a place within the "moral knowledge", which is rather untidily "added" to the other forms of knowledge.

10.4.5 Since Hirst's attempt to categorise objective knowledge, in order to find a sound basis for a liberal education, there have been many other attempts to subdivide the elements required in a satisfactory curriculum. Phenix (1964), who proposed six "Realms of Meaning" which were characteristically "human" argued that:

The highest good to be served by education is the fullest possible realization of the distinctively human capacities and that these capacities consist in the life of meaning. Hence the course of study should be such as to maximize meanings. (p267)

Amongst other attempts may be mentioned the H.M.I. Report (1977) which argued pragmatically for eight "Areas of Experience" (p30). Since then there have been increasingly utilitarian attempts to hijack the curriculum in order to serve technological or industrial or social purposes. What, for the purposes of this study, is significant is that there is in practice no difficulty in locating the consideration of dilemmas within the curriculum, although it would be hard to justify it as a distinct "Form of Knowledge", "Realm of Meaning" or "Area of Experience".

10.4.6 In this century a number of objections to a "liberal education" have been voiced. O'Hear (1981) identifies five: first, it is sometimes said to be unnatural. The liberal intellectual becomes cut off from his natural roots. His education is contrasted sharply and critically with a natural peasant life, one of simplicity, self-sufficiency, manual work, closeness to nature, fraternity, honour and hospitality. The intellectual may be clever but he is not wise. This idealistic picture of an education

which corrupts innocent children is associated with the writings of Tolstoy and Rousseau.

Second, liberal education can be described as irreligious, in so far as it gives priority to worldly and secular distractions which can conflict with religious dogma. A fundamentalist approach to education (O'Hear quotes examples from Protestant groups such as the Amish in North America, some Moslems and some Catholics) will not approve of education taking place in an irreligious (or even neutral) setting and would certainly wish to censor certain topics (such as biological evolution or sexual ethics) from being considered at all.

Third, a liberal education can be thought of as undemocratic; the teacher, by being regarded as the expert in pursuit of excellence, can easily impose both content and method of learning upon pupils, whose voice and cooperation are essential in a democratic community. Fourth, a number of left wing sociologists have advocated radical reforms in education, even the abandonment of schooling altogether. Fifth, it can be seen as irrelevant to the experience of most participants and should be reformed to be based on the objects and concepts familiar to pupils.

10.4.7 None of these alternative "philosophies" of education affects the need to face up to dilemmas. It will be apparent, however, that totalitarian or fundamentalist doctrines are unsympathetic to any position which allows, even extols, the notion of doubt. It has been said that "the sane man doubts often, the drunkard seldom and the madman never", but this, whilst welcome in a liberal education born in the religious disputes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and favouring tolerance, would be considered morally feeble and

intellectually indecisive in opposing traditions.

O'Hear declares roundly that "what we want to do in schooling is to prepare pupils for adult life", a view which would be endorsed by most practitioners although it begs the questions that most would want to debate (about precise content or method). In so far as the case has been established that the experience of dilemmas is a common feature of adult, and indeed adolescent, life, they have a place within the curriculum.

10.4.8 When we consider where to locate the study of dilemmas, the same arguments that can be brought against teaching moral education as a separate subject apply equally to the consideration of dilemmas. Whilst moral philosophy, in so far as it has a place in the post sixteen curriculum (and I would want to say that it does), would need to be treated separately, there is a strong case for considering dilemmas, like moral education itself, not in terms of a specific subject but rather as pervading the whole college in all its activities. The moral dimension and dilemma with it, would be considered in each discipline and in every activity, not given a special label and confined to a particular room or spot on the timetable.

10.4.9 Teachers can frequently find themselves in dilemmatic situations. The practical activity of teaching will often reflect the principles demanded by opposing theoretical positions. One such situation, the conflict between a transmission oriented education and a progressive, child centred one was described and analysed by Billig (1988). The problem is "how to 'bring out' of children what is not there to begin with, how to ensure that they 'discover' what they are meant to" (p54). Using the dialogue in the *Meno* (Plato 1956), Billig argues that the role

of Socrates is similar to that of the classroom teacher:

He remains in control of the talk, governing the taking of turns at speaking, closing the boy's options even to an extent that we have not witnessed in schools, by merely inviting affirmations of ready-made propositions- the familiar 'leading questions' of the courtroom. The assumption implicit in Socrates's account of the process, that he will 'simply ask him questions without teaching him', is that questions do not carry information; that they may not inform and persuade, command and convince. Of course this is a demonstrably false assumption. (p60)

Although Plato's theory of anamnesis can be distinguished from the use of "leading questions", Billig is concerned to make the point that the teachers he interviewed tried to find a place for both the progressive and the transmission oriented traditions and thus resolve their dilemma by practical compromise in any given situation.

10.4.10 Winter (1982) was concerned by a problem which frequently arose in action research, namely the difficulty of summarising and analysing a mass of interview data from teaching practice. Finding widely used methods inadequate (analysis by content, themes or social science theory) he devised a method which he terms "Dilemma Analysis". His aim was to be "faithful to the views of students, classroom teachers, and pupils, as well as those of fellow supervisors", to their different aims, priorities and philosophical positions (p167). He wished to "evoke the main areas of tension in the situation without generating immediate controversy by seeming partisan", which would lead to the point of view being rejected. The formal theory underpinning this method, which he called "loosely" the sociological concept of contradiction, was:

That social organizations at all levels (from the classroom to the State) are constellations of (actual or potential) conflicts of interest; that personality structures are split and convoluted; that the individual's conceptualization is systematically ambivalent or dislocated; that motives are mixed, purposes are contradictory and relationships are ambiguous; and that the formulations of practical

action is unendingly beset by *dilemmas*. (p168)

He analyzed each group of statements into a number of expressions of dilemma, tension, or contradiction, which he categorised as Ambiguities (tensions and awareness of complexities which do not require action), Judgments (courses of action which are complex, but not seen in negative terms - they are merely interesting) and Problems ("courses of action where the tensions and ambiguities seem to undermine the validity of the action, the rationality of the action required"). By means of this framework, he condensed the material into four "perspective documents", each one summarizing the responses of teachers, students, supervisors and pupils respectively. He concluded:

My argument has been that this method produces an analysis which is fully responsive to the concerns and definitions of interviewees. It retains something of the structural complexity of the original statements, and produces a thematic ordering whose coherence does not depend on academics' theories of practitioners' behaviour, not simply on researchers' hunches and prior commitments. (p173)

10.4.11 Experiencing dilemmas and being able to reflect upon them can be a time of learning and growth and one of the most powerful justifications of the consideration of dilemma in a person's education is to be found in Nussbaum (1985). She bases her argument on the practical conflicts in Greek tragedy, especially the slaughter of Iphigenia by Agamemnon:

I must now add, with the *Agamemnon* Chorus, that the experience of conflict can also be a time of learning and development... hard cases like these, if one allows oneself really to see and to experience them, may bring progress along with their sorrow, a progress that comes from an increase in self-knowledge and knowledge of the world. An honest effort to do justice to all aspects of a hard case, seeing and feeling it in all its conflicting many-sidedness, could enrich future deliberative efforts. Through the experience of choice, Eteocles might have discovered cares to which justice had not previously been done; Agamemnon might have come to a new understanding of piety and of the love he owes his family. (p260)

It is a regrettable fact of experience that it often takes the shock of

suffering to help one to learn many of the values of human relationships, to discover self-knowledge and to make us examine our lives afresh. It would be inconceivable to plan this as part of the curriculum. We must, therefore, take seriously Illich's observations (1973) that "most learning happens casually" (p20), that "we have all learned most of what we know outside school.. everyone learns how to live outside school. We learn to speak, to think, to love, to feel, to play, to curse, to politick and to work without interference from a teacher" (p35). This undervalues the part of reflection and the opportunities to reflect, to reason and to be guided in forming a balanced judgment occur predominantly within schools and colleges. Taken with Nussbaum's remarks, this is the fundamental justification for considering both the recognition and resolution of dilemmas during adolescent educational experience.

10.5 The Role of the Counsellor

Student counselling has developed greatly in the last thirty years. Prior to that the counselling was undertaken by chaplains, and by the one to one relationship offered by tutors. The pastoral side of a tutor's role, giving individual advice and assistance, has long been a distinct feature in European education. Today, there are numerous training schemes and courses and, although the first American course in counsellor education was offered by Harvard University in the summer of 1911, the impact of the new discipline of counselling and guidance did not make a significant impact upon further and Higher education in this country until the 1960's. By 1973 the Association for Student Counselling had almost 200 members, by 1992 membership had risen to 552. Today by far the majority of Universities and Further Education colleges have the services at least

of a part-time counsellor.

10.5.1 Counsellors deal with the given. They are trained not to let their preconceptions intrude into the needs of their clients. It is one thing to hold an opinion on the existence of dilemmas; it is quite another to counsel students who perceive themselves in the middle of one. In theory, their choices of attitude might be: either dilemmas do not really exist and there is no need to accommodate them for they are merely problems awaiting a solution. Or dilemmas do exist, but they are mistaken perceptions and there is a need to re-educate the student to see things correctly. Or they do exist and there is a need to counsel the regret and remorse or guilt. Or they do exist and are to be welcomed. Thus, it ought to be of little consequence whether or not individual counsellors personally believe in the existence of genuine dilemmas. The counsellor might wish to persuade students to cut through the problem, to clarify it, to reach a reasonable solution.

10.6 Late Adolescence a Distinctive Period

As tutors and counsellors would attest, late adolescence is a particularly interesting period of development. Several modern studies (e.g. Marcia 1980, Erikson 1968) reveal 16-19 year olds to be a distinct group, on the threshold of adulthood. Louizos (1994) in a study of sixth form college students "confirmed late adolescence as a distinct phase in the life cycle, qualitatively different to the earlier teenage years... Lessons have been learned from it and incorporated into new structures and strategies for dealing with life" (p54).

Writers have described this period variously as a time of "turmoil"

(Offer, 1969), the "doldrums" (Winnicott, 1968), a "normative crisis" (Erikson, 1968). Noonan (1983) specifically likens this whole period to living in a permanent dilemma:

The active and emotionally energetic process of mourning provides a model for the adolescence transition, since both are attempts to achieve a sense of personal continuity out of the confusion of drastic disruption... It is easiest to see and describe the mourning process when the loss is stark, when someone actually dies and cannot be retrieved in any physical way. The survivor is faced with a dilemma: of letting the dead person go while still giving him space in life as a living if not palpable being.... (p3)

We can sometimes feel that our childhood has been irretrievably lost. For instance we can return to our family, home and childhood haunts and relationships, but they will never be as they were when we left them, because we and they have done things in the meantime ... Personal maturation requires some things to be yielded to make way for new ones; it requires us to convert childhood into a memory which is alive, if not palpable, inside us, and this means we have to mourn aspects of our child-self so they may be internalized. (p.5)

As late adolescents, students are acquiring independence from parents, from society, from each other, in an effort to gain "identity status" which according to Erikson (1968) means "the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity (one's ego in the psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p159).

Marcia (1966) developed Erikson's concept of "identity" and provided a specific model of "ego identity", offering a precise analysis. Bilsker (1992) adapted these ideas through the eyes of an existentialist and stressed the freedom of individual choice which each adolescent has in breaking away from previous constraints. Certainly, the interviews with students (7.0) revealed a sense of freedom, rather than a sense of being imprisoned and determined.

10.6.1 Students have difficulties peculiar to their age group. There are several lists of such problems. Lago and Shipton (1994) provide a summary which includes: relationship difficulties, with parents and other family members, "learning how to get into intimate relationships, but just as importantly, how to leave them is a major concern"; academic difficulties, impaired performance (study skills, writing or presentation), exam problems, loss of motivation (apathy) and failure with its aftermath; there are emotional and psychological problems, a wide category which "covers all kinds of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, adjustment to loss and bereavement, self image; self-defeating patterns of behaviour, obsessional thinking; and also fears and stresses caused by illhealth or disability" (p27-34). They also list problems linked to transitions, homesickness and new academic demands.

Louizos (1994) found that students rarely admitted to having problems. "Most students claimed to have few problems and even fewer serious ones" (p44). There was a general reluctance to disclose, based on the fear of not being understood and of getting too close to others. The need to feel "really understood" governed the choice of confidant(e), whether friend, parent or counsellor. The most common coping strategy was found to be self-reliance "as only oneself can truly understand". The importance of privacy and resistance to intrusion was confirmed by the evidence.

10.6.2 The danger of using category lists of problems is that this "predetermines the options in how a problem might be defined" (Lago and Shipton 1994 p27). Nor do they help our investigation beyond alerting counsellors and tutors to the kinds of issue which might form the raw material of a dilemma. Whatever school or training (and it is not part of this study to evaluate counselling theory) the counsellor will be working

with tutors and supporting them. Their role is also changing. Tutors in post 16 colleges today occupy not only an adult role model but also operate as friend, a peculiarly difficult half-way position in which to operate; they are the professional expert and facilitator but also they are seen to be just the other side of the fully adult threshold.

10.6.3 One approach to the analysis of interviews with students about their dilemmas is to distinguish between two standpoints, that of the observer and that of the interviewee. There are two sets of questions which then become apparent:

THE OBSERVER	THE INTERVIEWEE
(1) Is this a "genuine" dilemma?	Does the subject acknowledge any sense of loss, regret or guilt?
(2) Has it been resolved?	Did the subject resolve the issue?
(3) What alternatives are there?	Has the subject considered any alternatives?
(4) Is there a deadline or pressure to reach a decision?	Does the subject experience stress or pressure?
(5) Is there a moral decision to be made?	Is there evidence of awareness or concern for the moral issues?
(6) How isolated is the subject?	How isolated does the subject feel?
(7) Is the subject a victim of determining factors, necessity, luck?	Does the subject feel trapped, under constraint?
(8) Is the expressed dilemma a cover for other concerns?	Is the subject aware of other concerns?

10.6.4 - Perhaps the most important lesson of this study, as far as the counsellor is concerned, is that students do experience dilemmas, as well as problems and that they are capable of distinguishing between the two; that, nevertheless, they are reluctant to admit to either; that they wish

to be self reliant and to resolve them if possible without help, and so avoid relapsing into a form of dependency from which they are, as young adults, just emerging; above all, that they need to be able to face the uncertainties and ambiguities implied by dilemma, the post decisional conflicts, the doubts, regrets and occasionally the guilt which they carry with them afterwards. Reflective common sense is likely to be their only aid. Standing by to listen when invited, responding without "giving the answers" or removing from the students their ownership of the decision, is probably the most valuable role which the counsellor and tutor can fulfill.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An intellectual interest in the concept of dilemma and an abiding professional concern to improve the educational experience of young adults combined to provide the focus of this research. In the first place, the researcher has, over many years, been fascinated with the concept of dilemma and with such questions as whether moral perplexity in principle could be soluble, as Brennan (1977 p135) thought, despite its complexity and even when rooted in differences of belief.

Together with this, there has been a longstanding interest in the way different people respond to the strong attraction of two choices, the cast of mind that can accept valid alternatives, tolerate ambiguity, yet can, without mental paralysis, make a reasoned decision on the basis of reflection and common sense. As Rockeach (1960) thought, there seems to be, at one end of a continuum, a closed way of thinking, an authoritarian outlook, an intolerance towards those with opposing beliefs and, at the other end, an open mind. With this researcher, as with Rockeach, there has been an engrossing interest, "in the structure rather than the content of beliefs" (p6) and the possibility that one might "predict how a person will go about solving problems that have nothing to do with his (*sic*) ideology" (p7).

Secondly, there has been a determined concern to ensure that, however goal orientated or utilitarian the education of adolescents became, space in the curriculum would be protected in order that they might develop their own academic interests, practise making their own judgments and consider matters of moral application. This has meant resisting the

allure of a "general studies" programme consisting of hobbies, light relief and games, which is what many consider the content to be and which clog the timetable, giving the idea of non-examination courses a poor reputation. These were the two interests which have been at the root of this research.

At the outset, the working definition of "dilemma" was "*a particular type of predicament, which is experienced by everyone at some time or another (which) occurs when the pressing alternatives available to us, or serious obligations we face, seem so evenly balanced that it is hard, and sometimes impossible, to make a choice*" (1.1).

Gradually, other insights and emphases were added. In particular, there was the notion of regret, opportunity cost and sometimes guilt which can adhere to a decision. This can be stated in anecdotal form, as Socrates is reported to have said, "Whatever you do you will regret it" (Laertius 1972 p163). Alternatively, in logic, dilemma can be defined as "a form of argument, the purpose of which is to prove that from either of two alternatives an unwelcome conclusion follows" (Stebbing 1965 p51). Or, it may be put more neutrally: "A situation in which an agent S morally ought to do A and morally ought to do B but cannot do both" (Gowans 1987 p3). Most illumination on definitions, however, came from the individual perplexities which were considered, for example, Norah in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, deciding to leave her family and home, or the student deciding to give up former friends in preference to forming new ones (interview 15).

The research objectives for this study were set out in chapter 3. They were, first, "*to provide insights into our understanding of the*

experience of dilemma"; second, "to establish the case for including examples of dilemma more methodically in educational programmes" and third, "to assist counsellors, tutors and others whose work puts them in daily contact with young adults."

A fair claim can be made that these objectives have been met and that the outcomes provide a useful contribution to what we know both about the concept and about the experience of dilemma (with special reference to 16-19 year olds) in an educational framework. An attempt will now be made to draw together the main threads of argument from the six different perspectives which have been considered. First, however, there are some methodological difficulties and criticisms which need to be considered.

11.1 Some Advantages and Disadvantages in using Triangulation

There are problems as well as advantages in using a multi perspective method. Studies of dilemma are relatively rare and, where they exist, are usually written from one perspective - the philosophical, as likely as not, (see Gowans 1987, though a notable exception is Billig 1987).

Bringing together examples from a wide range of standpoints and different points of view enriches our understanding of this subject and provides a cross-check on our conclusions but at the same time raises certain difficulties. As Parlett and Dearden (1981) wrote: "The extensive use of open-ended techniques, progressive focusing, and qualitative data in illuminative evaluation still raises the possibility of gross partiality on the part of the investigator" (p21).

They offer a number of "precautionary tactics", such as using other researchers to question one's interpretations, playing devil's advocate

and, above all, making the assumptions explicit and more open to challenge. Their main defence against this line of criticism is, however, that it is fundamentally flawed; in their view (and in the opinion of this researcher), it is false to assume that there can be forms of research which are "immune to prejudice, experimenter bias and human error" (p21).

In this study, assumptions have been made explicit to the reader and potential bias has been explored by consideration being given to alternative explanations. This has been achieved by pitting the various viewpoints against each other, each perspective interrogating the others, and by presenting the various arguments for discussion to fellow researchers, to colleague teachers and to teacher participants in the study.

11.1.1 Other difficulties should be acknowledged. It is an inevitable disadvantage of the triangulation technique that it should leave itself open to the charge of achieving breadth of illumination only at the expense of depth of study. No claim has been made to any specialist knowledge (nor would it have been feasible to acquire it) when discussing the six perspectives. One recommendation, therefore, would be for specific studies, in the light of this multi faceted analysis of the concept and experience of dilemma, to take this research further. For example, it would be interesting to see an empirical study of students' post decisional responses. Also, a strong recommendation would be that, given more time and resources, a more thorough analysis of the responses by the Heads of Department on teaching dilemma should be undertaken. These should, however, be designed deliberately to complement one another and to take into account the broader overview, if only to challenge it.

11.1.2 A conscious preference was made for a multi perspective study in this research. Nevertheless, a method which attempts to reunite fragmented knowledge in order to provide a modern, renaissance overview, might give the impression of being something of a pastiche. A harsh critic might consider that this study has tried to combine too many ideas, that against a background of philosophical wrangles and psychological conjectures, there is assembled a sprig of classical rhetoric, a small pinch of quasi Marxist conflict theory, a dash of dilemmatic syllogism, a touch from the "dirty hands" political debate, topped off by current bio ethical issues, TV discussions of personal dilemmas and sundry examples from literature ancient and modern. The result might be thought somewhat dilettante.

It is vital, therefore, to underline that the illuminative approach was deliberately chosen on the grounds that the advantages were judged to outweigh those of a specialist analysis, which in isolation might not reflect the breadth and diversity of the human experience of dilemma situations. Without acknowledgment of other perspectives, such a specialist study is likely to be unbalanced. To achieve both breadth and depth, therefore, individual studies must be designed to complement each other as suggested in 11.1.1.

11.1.3 The third pitfall in using various disciplines is the possibility of semantic confusions. Different studies, each employing their own specialist language, can sometimes use different terms to describe similar ideas. In chapters 2 and 5, considerable attention was paid to the definition of dilemma. Some of the differences that were encountered were more verbal than substantial. For example, it is fairly clear that

the concept of "dilemma" that Billig acknowledges, indeed welcomes (see 9.3.4), is not at all the same as that which Conee denies and deplors (5A 2.1). On the other hand it does seem that we have a head to head disagreement between the "conflict of duties" said by Kant to be "inconceivable" (2.8) and the "moral conflict" which Williams allows (5B 11). We, therefore, have to be equally aware of agreements, or disagreements, which may be more apparent than real, or which may be more tenable or conceivable in theory than they are in practice.

In another case, there is little to distinguish the expression "post decisional regret" or "dissonance," as used by psychologists (8.0), from "remainder", as employed by Williams (5B) or simply "second thoughts" as described by students. Similarly, Sinnott's "relativistic uncertainty" (8.3.3) occupies the same philosophical ground as Fletcher's "situation ethics" (5B.9). The word "guilt" as used in Personal Construct Theory by Kelly (8.7) means something very different from the same word used by Fraassen (5B 13). Further, where Greenspan, like Statman (5B 12), justified "guilt", in certain cases, there is a genuine difference of view from that of Conee. It is important, therefore, in comparing different perspectives to be aware of these dangers in the use of specialised language. In this study, the meaning embodied by the words has been sought in order to avoid being misled by the words themselves.

11.2 Common Sense Evidence for the Existence of Genuine Dilemmas

Turning directly to the conclusions and recommendations of this study, the first to be stressed, and a consistent theme throughout is that both a contingent basis and a theoretical justification can be found for the claim that genuine dilemmas are experienced. The evidence for this

conclusion has been derived from a number of sources: the interviews with students, which left one in no doubt that the experience was well known; the response by the Heads of department, whose surprising level of interest supported the concept; the examples from literature, which, in so far as the latter derive from real situations and reflect human life accurately, cannot be dismissed lightly as mistaken.

11.2.1 The students interviewed had little doubt what they meant by the term "dilemma". In 7.0 it is shown how some stressed the serious nature of a genuine dilemma, others the idea that someone would be hurt whichever alternative was chosen, and others that it was the regret or guilt that they wished to emphasise:

A decision where the consequences of your taking action in either way may be beneficial or not as the case may be and you find it hard to decide what to do. (Interview 8)

I guess something that doesn't have obvious reasons for and against, or has equal reasons. (Interview 9)

Something you really have to wrestle with yourself to decide what to do. (Interview 14)

The Heads of Department survey also revealed a near unanimous conviction that dilemmas existed and were worth studying as part of both examination and non examination courses. To deny that they genuinely existed would mean overriding the considered views of experienced and intelligent practitioners.

Finally, the variety of reported dilemma strengthens one's confidence in the concept. This study has considered political issues, examples from the public domain, such as medical ethics, dilemmas of deterrence, ideological dilemmas, the "dirty hands" debate, subject specific dilemmas, everyday quandaries and perplexities of a personal nature, as

well as evidence from students' lives. The conclusion which was reached reinforced the common sense assumption that genuine dilemmas are of great variety. It is recommended that a future study might explain further the procedural processes used in recognizing and resolving dilemmas in other fields such as, military decisions, scientific research, business ethics and international relations.

11.2.2 As a consequence, therefore, strong disagreement was expressed with the theoretical standpoint that the moral and other contradictions which are experienced in practice and described by thinking people are merely cases of confusion that can best be resolved by clarity of thought. This study would claim that, to argue as does Hare (1981) that moral conflict which is "intuitively" perceived can be eliminated by the use of "critical" thought, is to demean all experience as "prima facie" and potentially mistaken.

Such philosophical arguments against dilemmas simply do not stand up against the phenomenological evidence. Although some apparent dilemmas might turn out to be merely practical problems (e.g. the case of which of two children to save from a fire, or which operation will have the greatest chance of success), others are genuine in the sense that it would be artificial and patronising to deny them from one's armchair and to see them simply as cases of confusion. The prioritist, monist and single principle arguments against the genuine existence of conflicting obligations were, therefore, rejected in this research (5A and 5B) where the conclusion was that we would need to set out with an *a priori* definition that excluded dilemmas, which could only be done at the expense of understanding the lived experience.

11.2.3 The preferred standpoint in this study has been that form of pluralism which was described by Gaut as a "reflectively improved version of common sense morality" (see also Hampshire, Williams amongst others 5B 4). Pluralism, it is argued in this research, conforms best with the common sense observation that there are conflicting moral duties, not only between different cultures, religious standpoints and ethical positions, but even within the same tradition. Relativism and Situation Ethics allows for the same principle to be applied differently in different circumstances. In Bonhoeffer's example (5B 9), the obligation to tell the truth does not have the same force when applied to the parent as it does to the child. Hampshire's view that "the capacity to think scatters a range of differences and conflicts before us" (5B 4) neatly supports Billig's argument that common sense in our Western culture contains contradictions which are an essential prerequisite of the ability to think or debate (9.3), as does Gaut's reference to an inherited "raft of moral convictions, which has been passed on to us by our parents and fellows from our culture, altered and refined by the common understanding of previous ages" (9.4).

11.2.4 Other philosophical arguments against the existence of genuine dilemmas were considered but rejected. The rules of deontic logic, as Gowans argued (see 5B 15) are not the same as alethic logic; they do not rule out conflicting all-things-considered duties. Whilst they would make it incoherent to have two opposing "must" prescriptions, the fundamental challenge of a dilemma is that the subject has not yet reached the point of saying "I must". Agents are is still at the stage of trying to decide between (at least) two "oughts", which it is not incoherent to compare. Often, in fact, it is the consideration of "all things" that itself gives rise to the dilemma.

One aspect of this, which was touched on in 2.2 and 5B 8 and which it would have been useful to explore further, given time, is Brennan's argument that the moral perspective can always be distinguished from the pragmatic. "A moral judgment ... is not the intonation of 'right' or 'wrong' over an array of neutral facts. It is the answer to a question which is raised only within a situation which has been structured by a moral concept" (1997 p35). He gives as an illustration the Bernini colonnade in St Peter's Square:

If one takes up the proper point of view - namely, one of the two *foci* of the ellipse - what is from any other vantage point an undifferentiated conglomeration of columns sorts itself into neat, rank-and-file order so that only the front rank is visible. ...The moral of this is that one can classify things the same way from only one point of view. (p54)

In this study, it has not been accepted that "moral" can always be distinguished from "non-moral" (see 2.2) because the practical situation is usually too complex to be susceptible to such a cognitive taxonomy. It is recommended, however, that a philosophical study examining this contention is undertaken.

11.2.5 Regarding the argument from remainders, it must be admitted that feelings of regret do not of themselves prove that anything is regrettable (Foot 1983 p382), nor that anyone is culpable. The existence of remainders does not on its own establish the existence of dilemma. However, if we allow that in some cases guilt is appropriate, we indicate our belief that a genuine dilemma has been experienced. It may well be the case that guilt is sometimes irrational, that it is occasionally implanted by a persuasive speaker, or that it may be the result of an over scrupulous conscience. This is not the point at issue. The person

who experiences the regret, guilt or remorse is convinced that his or her feeling is appropriate and, however much the rationalist may like to dismiss the assertion as subjective or misplaced, this can only be done by applying an external, and therefore different, standard, to prove the case. It may be that this standard is also subjective or misplaced but, while we dispute the issue, the person's guilt needs to be faced and perhaps counselled.

11.2.6 Having considered dilemma from the perspective of moral philosophy, the study concludes, *inter alia*: (a) that a rational basis, as well as contingent evidence, has been established for speaking of "dilemmas"; (b) that dilemmas may be irresolvable, because morality is multi principled; (c) they may be resolvable, but leave a remainder of reasonable regret; (d) dilemmas may be in the public or private domain.

11.3 The "Dirty Hands" Argument

In 6.0 it was suggested that the "dirty hands" debate represents a particular instance of the ethical argument. The recommendations which emerged from that discussion could be summarised briefly as follows: (a) in public life, there are not two spheres with separate moral codes, but one with the same moral code applied in different ways as appropriate to the situation; (b) there is no escaping an occasional conflict of obligations for anyone in a post of responsibility; (c) as it is inevitable, we had better prepare for it, learn how to respond appropriately and how to live with the consequences. In other words, getting one's hands "dirty" goes with the job; it is inescapable in positions which represent a variety of codes of behaviour, where one is required to negotiate with others of a different or no moral standpoint.

Nor is there escape from responsibility by recourse to the utilitarian argument that "where the act accuses, the result excuses" (Machiavelli, *Discourses* book 1 chapter IX). Machiavelli was clear that learning "how not to be good" still left you, a guilty if successful leader, within the one moral sphere applicable to all human beings (6.1.4).

It was suggested (6.2.7) that the fact that experience of dilemma was universal and inevitable did not mean that the postholder was exonerated from all blame, allowed to live in a cocoon of alternative moralities. What was required of individuals was neither a Krishna-like detachment from the moral maze (5B 6.1), nor an escape from their obligations altogether, but, as Walzer suggests (6.1.5), an appropriate attitude of humility and penitence, a willingness to make reparation when possible (unlike Agamemnon), to take responsibility for the decision they had taken and to remain sensitive to the codes they had transgressed.

It was argued (6.0) that this conflict between the judgments made as a private individual and those made when occupying a post of responsibility applied not only to politicians or generals, but club secretaries, college governors, prefects, board directors, members of foreign delegations, insurance brokers, in fact to any person with an obligation to satisfy clients as well as employers, and towards a private as well as a public code. What was true of Creon or Agamemnon is equally true of any person who holds a position of responsibility. The problem is not a measure of the importance of the post but a reflection of the role conflict encountered. It is recommended that further study might compare the responses of adults with those of adolescents in regard to the recognition and resolution of dilemmas (as was originally intended in this research, had time allowed).

11.4 Situations which cannot be Replicated

It has been emphasised (eg 10.5) that a knowledge of the context is critical if any tutor or counsellor is to appreciate a student's dilemma. This is partly because the ability to recognize dilemma and reflect upon it is dependent on the circumstances in which it was experienced. "The time and place in which the people live affect their thinking" (Billig 1991 p1). Partly also, it is because the way forward, that is to say the moral judgment required to inform a decision, will likewise be dependent on the contextual details of the situation.

The students' predicaments were found to be distinctive and impossible to duplicate (7.0) just as the incidents in which politicians get their hands dirty cannot be reproduced. Political arguments are never settled once and for all; as Lucas argued (6.2.5), even the slightest shift of circumstance will mean that they are returned to and reworked. Each situation demands a reaction in which consistency with the past will rest upon the core of the person's character, individual moral sensitivity and perception, but not upon a neatly replicated answer.

11.5 The Individual's Freedom to Question

Several perspectives provided grounds for respecting the individual as an autonomous thinker. The Marxist tradition that the ordinary working man or woman has their thinking determined for them by the ideology of the ruling class in practice demeans the very class that is ostensibly being defended. Ordinary people, however, are not puppets, incapable of questioning, arguing or reflecting. They, too, have the power to create a philosophy; in such an instance, ideology regains the dignity which was lost when it was only seen as an instrument of oppression.

This raises an interesting variant of the freedom vs determinism argument. Just as the question was asked, in the tragedies of Sophocles and Aeschylus, whether or not Agamemnon, Orestes, and Antigone were trapped in a framework beyond their control, in the same way it was an issue whether students were architects of their own misfortunes or caught in a web of parental, circumstantial or college constraints. Where traditional Marxist ideology has sometimes portrayed the agent as deceived, controlled by outside forces, the rhetorical debate stresses the very existence of argument and vibrant thinking and underlines the ability of individuals to question their cultural inheritance, to criticise the "common sense" into which they were conditioned.

11.6 The Resolution of Dilemmas

Turning now to the issues surrounding the "resolution" of dilemmas, it was no surprise to find that students wished in nearly every case to reach conclusions on their own. Other people could be used to share the problem, discuss it, to learn from it, but at the end the decision had to be owned. This accords well with other findings about autonomy and the search for identity, the escape from parental and childhood constraints which is experienced in late adolescence (see 10.5.2).

"Common Sense" is a deceptively simple expression and by no means all the uses of it which have been quoted share identical meanings. Nevertheless, in this study, it is argued that this is the only principle to which one can appeal. To decide which of the four bioethical principles has priority in a given case where they conflict is a matter of having recourse to what Mill (1974) called the "umpire"; in his case such an

arbiter was to hand, in the shape of the utility principle. However, it has been argued here that to accept *that* priority principle, or any other, is itself to express a moral preference, be it for the standard as utility, as divine law or as the moral imperative, and would be also in the final analysis a question of common sense. This is partly derived from one's culture and as such is likely to reflect the norms and moral sense of one's society; it is also however, the outcome of the argumentation and debate which takes place within the individual.

11.6.1 It has been argued that pluralism is a fact of experience and that, even though rationalists may not find it tidy or coherent, it is the nature of the world, including the mental world, around us. Conflicts and contradictions are what we should expect and this is why we are brought up to hear contrasting maxims and proverbs. Much religious belief is concerned with the reality of conflicting forces and their adherents are expected to learn the mythology by which these beliefs are preserved and transmitted. The Taoist perceives reality as the Yin and the Yang, the two great opposites which permeate the entire universe and on whose interaction everything depends (5B 4.1). Other religions believe in the idea of conflicting cosmic forces (eg Zoroastrianism 5B 4.2)), which humans need to reconcile for themselves by following the right path of action. In the Bhagavad Gita, the permanent dilemma of life is the belief that whatever one's choice of action, the cost will be bondage to this world (5B 6.1); reconciliation comes only by renouncing false desires. In these and other ways, an attempt is made to explain the sense of eternal contradiction. Some beliefs seem more passive than others, some absolving us from responsibility to consider or challenge the conflict, others prescribing the "correct" way to find a resolution and the path to salvation.

The argument of this study is that, whether the reality of conflict is described in secular or religious language, whether it is perceived as ideological, sociological or cosmic it is necessary to accept that reality. This is preferable than to deny its existence or to suggest that a rational priority, or intuitive (even divine) principle, can be sought, discovered and used to resolve all contradictions.

11.7 The Place of Dilemma in Education

It has been the contention of this thesis that the ability to recognize dilemma should have a far more prominent place in the education of 16-19 year olds, and that it has a positive contribution to the curriculum and in the objectives of all courses. A number of threads can be drawn together at this point in support of this claim. The Heads of Department who took part in the survey (10.3) saw it as "worthwhile", 33% said "very worthwhile", to study dilemmas. Typical examples offered were:

Whether to seek full employment or reduce inflation (Economics).
The morality of feeding grain to cattle in the rich world whilst approximately one billion starve (Geography).
Siting a chemical plant (chemistry).
The impact of science on military decisions (Physics).

These examples supported the earlier study (10.1) where it was argued not only that each subject discipline had a distinctive type of dilemma (e.g. in modern languages it was the search for the "right" translation to convey the intended meaning; in P.E it was the instantaneous decision whether to cross the ball or shoot, lob or play a passing shot) but also that cross curricular study skills could be uncovered. For example, the classicist suggested that when an able student preferred to play safe and opt for description rather than risk an opinion, it could be compared with the swimmer who dared not "let go of the side" (10.1.5).

One might summarise the skills acquired by an education which included more explicitly the study of dilemma recognition and resolution as follows:

(a) *The ability to accept the validity of conflicting alternatives.* This develops the thought processes, the intellectual and rhetorical skills (Billig 1988); as Sinnott Armstrong described it, "people can disagree without arguing that the other side is defective or mistaken" (1985 p325). Moreover, it encourages a reflective judgment (Kitchener and King 1981), a common sense morality (Gaut 1993) and a more mature self awareness (Nussbaum 1985).

(b) *Practice in resolving dilemmas.* By entertaining alternatives, weighing the various courses of action and their consequences, it is possible to plan strategies that will improve the quality of decisions taken.

(c) *The appropriate post decisional attitude.* It is necessary to learn how to live with the consequences of a difficult, marginal decision together with an ability to deal effectively with the issues surrounding guilt. Contrary to a "my country right or wrong" approach, this is likely to improve the effectiveness of modern leadership by increasing its acceptability and developing a confidence which rests more upon the care and thoroughness of the balancing process than upon blind assurance or arrogance in presentation. Including both emotion and reason in the process of resolving dilemmas develops the concept of the whole person (see 11.7.3 below) and in a world of increasing technological complexity assists decision takers to come to terms with conclusions which are not cut and dried, black or white, either-or, but sometimes finely balanced, costly, both-and.

(d) *Relativistic thinking*. Perry referred to the "journey from adolescence into adulthood" consisting of "sequential challenges" until one reached the maturity of "a changing pluralistic culture, in which man's very knowledge and values are seen to be relative" (1968 p16). The study of dilemma assists such a journey by providing opportunities to adopt different standpoints, try out a variety of arguments "as if" they might be true (as Kelly [1955] proposes as a constructivist approach), before reaching the commitment which is also a part of maturity.

The students interviewed (7.0) tended to look positively at the benefits of their dilemmatic experiences. Whilst they admitted they might not resolve a repeat dilemma with any greater speed or certainty, they had learned awareness, caution, self reliance, independence and much else of value besides. Many of these educational advantages were seen by Postman and Weingartner (1969) as producing "good learners":

Good learners prefer to rely on their own judgement... Good learners are usually not fearful of being wrong. They recognize their limitations and suffer no trauma in concluding that what they believe is apparently not so. In other words, they can change their minds. Changing the character of their minds is what good learners are most interested in doing... Good learners are emphatically not fast answerers...

Perhaps most importantly, good learners do not need to have an absolute, final, irrevocable resolution to every problem. The sentence, "I don't know", does not depress them, and they certainly prefer it to the various forms of semantic nonsense that pass for answers to questions that do not as yet have any solution - or may never have one. (1969 p42)

This accords well with the argument that classical rhetoric has much to teach us (Billig 1991 p1). Rhetoric was primarily an educational programme and an increasing number would say that when it fell into disrepute, much was lost. To teach the power of persuasion was regarded negatively during the last century (a question of "mere rhetoric") the ability to make representation triumph over truth. There is now, however,

some evidence of a renewed respect for the skills taught and the assumptions made by the original teachers of rhetoric (9.3).

It has, therefore, been argued that there should be increased opportunities created for the study, experience and reflection upon dilemmatic situations. This need can be justified, as an enrichment for all students, but Special Needs students would benefit considerably from greater use of such materials, as would the "gifted" or the very able. More research is required here, and one should not rule out the possibility of a study looking at the effects on young people of studying dilemma (3.2).

11.7.2 It may be objected that consideration of dilemmas in schools or colleges is somewhat artificial, since both the emotional involvement and the urgency of decision may be lacking. On the other hand, too often education is concerned with finding "answers" to defined and closed questions (10.2). This is surely an inadequate preparation for a life in which most issues of any complexity are open ended. Practice in weighing alternatives in an environment in which the cost of a "mistake" is not too high can only be beneficial.

11.7.3 It might also be asked whether there is any place for the development of conscience within the school or college system? The stance taken in this thesis has been that education is a holistic matter, concerned for the moral, spiritual, physical and aesthetic as well as the intellectual development of students (10.4). This will include the growth of personal integrity, and preparation for future responsibility. This policy would hardly be questioned within the British tradition and is enshrined within the various education Acts since 1944.

11.7.4 There is, therefore, a clear justification of a tutor system, of appointing counsellors, Year Heads, and the various structures of pastoral care, as well as of a general education which reaches beyond the limitations of particular examination syllabuses. Whilst there are those who would prefer to leave such matters to the home, and many more who pay mere lip service to anything other than examination courses (driven increasingly by a payment by results funding methodology, and public competition, league tables and the like), the tradition of education of the whole person has not yet disappeared, starved by lack of funds. The fact that it has not done so is probably due to the idealism of the teaching profession and to parents who wish to ensure its survival.

A number of ideas have been offered regarding the opportunities which exist, or could readily be created, for the development of experience of dilemma. Some were described in 10.1.1-8, others in 10.3. These opportunities occur in different disciplines and in both examination and non examination courses.

11.8 The Value to Counsellors and Personal Tutors

This study has concentrated on the potential use of a greater understanding of dilemma in educational contexts, where most teachers, within the English tradition at least, are inevitably dealing on a daily basis with students as personal tutors, counsellors and such like. Post sixteen colleges aim to treat pupils as individuals, holistically. This is rendered less effective when the advice offered is informed mainly from a single and fragmented perception.

It has, therefore, been recommended that at least some theoretical

understanding of dilemma is important to the work of counsellors and tutors. Similarly the perspective from psychology suggested a way to understand the stage of maturation that adolescents have reached. It was argued that a pattern of post formal thinking could be found and that many 16-19 year olds reveal signs of it: relativistic reasoning, dialectic thinking and reflective moral judgment (8.0). The counsellor or tutor needs to be conscious of the potential implications when a student first accepts relativism, the resulting difficulties and conflicts that can arise at home, at churches, at work, as well as more positive outcomes, such as the increasing ability to reflect on their own prejudices and to be able to empathise with those from different cultures, classes or backgrounds.

11.8.2 These last outcomes indicate that a positive view of dilemmas should be held by educationalists and counsellors. We should not regard them only as choices between negative poles, but as choices between alternatives which may have positive as well as negative outcomes, not the least of which is the relief at having arrived at a decision. Furthermore, we should welcome their occurrence, not only as a sign of a healthy degree of argumentation within society, and of alertness in a democracy, but also a prerequisite of developing tolerance and even of a religious understanding of reality. Students have claimed with some justification that they learn from their experiences (even though they might not resolve a repeat situation any more rapidly). What they gain is self knowledge which is an important strand in a general education. As Nussbaum (1985) has expressed it: "The experience of conflict can also be a time of learning and development.... a progress that comes from an increase in self-knowledge and knowledge of the world" (p260).

11.9 Towards Developing a Typology of Dilemma

Dilemmas are problems that will not go away. We may "solve" some of them but still have to learn to live with the consequences of our decision. Even when a form of resolution is found, a best-in-the-circumstances decision, the dilemma does not disappear, as it would with a brain teaser or "problem". With this in mind, it has been recommended that dilemmas are categorised under six headings (see 5B 16), three of which are resolvable and three of which are irresolvable. It would be useful for a further study to test how helpful such a conceptual framework was in practice.

11.9.1 Some dilemmas can be resolved without second thoughts or regrets (*Type A1*). The incident in the tent was such a case, as was the question whether or not to drop AS Art. The best all-things-considered decision was taken in the circumstances. These differ from "problems" simply in the fact that there was a personal involvement and the memory, the sharpness and intensity still remains.

Other dilemmas are resolved but only by leaving a feeling of regret that one was unable to select the second alternative (*Type A2*). Not all such cases are a matter of indecision, weakness or the simple inability to stand by one's decision. The choice between entering Higher Education or taking a job is such a case (interview 5) as was the question of studying in Australia or in England (interview 14). There are yet other dilemmas which, though resolved by an all-things-considered best decision, leave such a serious remainder that one can only use the word "guilt" or "remorse" to explain adequately the feelings that recur afterwards (*Type A3*). The issue of dropping old friends in order to participate fully in

one's new life might well be such a case (interview 15). *Sophie's Choice* was almost certainly another.

11.9.2 There is a second class of dilemmas which is irresolvable (B1). Again, some leave a memory of piquancy or emotional involvement. Whether or not to keep mother's secret (interview 10) were such cases. Some leave a post decisional remainder of regret (B2), as with the problem of moving house or staying with grandmother (interview 1). A third group (B3) leave more than regret, but something akin to moral anguish at a wrong action, however unavoidable it was, and therefore a justified feeling of guilt, such as the student who had to choose whether to live with his mother or his father (interview 12).

11.10 Between the Hammer and the Anvil

Inter malleum et incudem - "Between the hammer and the anvil" - would be a fair description of the way in which this thesis was wrought. At every stage there have been conflicting constraints. The requirement to be thorough conflicted at times with the constraints of time and finance; ideally, it would have been desirable to continue with the fieldwork, interview more students and to follow these up later to discover what changes in perception, if any, had taken place; particularly regrettable has been the impracticality of returning to the many Heads of Department who sent interesting examples of work, some challenging ideas of their own and suggestions for curriculum development. Each research decision taken left one with a sense of regret about the rejected alternative, however necessary the various compromises were in practice.

There were also frequent tensions between the responsibilities of one's

job, family and research interest. The difficulty of divorcing the "subjective" experience from the "objective" study was unexpectedly sharp. It compelled one to face directly and personally the phenomenological technique of *epoche* and to bracket out one's own personal bias. However, it has to be said that, although no person is an expert at dilemma resolution, a great deal has been learned of personal benefit during this research, from discussions with colleagues, from reading, from letters and responses, and not least from the students themselves, proving once again that there is an immense amount to be discovered from those whom one is committed to teach.

Undoubtedly dilemma is a widely, perhaps universally, experienced phenomenon. As such, studies which offer support, a wide range of examples, and provide categories for the analysis of dilemma will very probably be welcomed by many people other than academics or teachers. One outcome which should be of considerable benefit to tutors and counsellors of post sixteen students will be the increased awareness and wider understanding of this complex phenomenon. Postman and Weingartner (1971) described well the almost impossible educational dream that is permanently under threat:

The new education has as its purpose the development of a new kind of person, one who...is an actively inquiring, flexible, creative, innovative, tolerant, liberal personality, who can face uncertainty and ambiguity without disorientation. (p204)

ESHER COLLEGERESEARCH INTO THE RECOGNITION OF DILEMMA

Student: TG: Date:

Dear

I am writing to ask if you will help with a research project which I am undertaking.

I am interested in the way students take difficult decisions and the way they resolve problems where the alternatives make the choices very hard. So I am writing to a random sample of students to ask whether there has been any such situation in the last year which they would, in confidence, be prepared to describe. Would you be prepared to help?

Ideally I would like to have an individual interview when you could describe the situation, what you thought and felt about it and the way you tried to resolve it. It will not mean doing extra work! It would involve a short interview of about 20 minutes, at lunchtime on either a Monday, Tuesday or Friday.

Your name would be kept confidential and I would see to it that anything you said could not be traced back to you. Also I would show you the transcript of the interview afterwards for your amendment and agreement.

If you are willing to help please return the tear-off slip below to my secretary, Sally, and I will contact you shortly.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Miller
Principal

ESHER COLLEGE R.D. RESEARCH GROUP

I am/am not* willing to be interviewed in connection with the research into the Recognition of Dilemma amongst students.

I understand that this will be in confidence and whatever I say will not be traceable to me personally.

Signature:

Name: TG:

*Please delete as applicable.

PLEASE RETURN TO THE PRINCIPAL'S SECRETARY NOT LATER THAN MON. 1ST FEBRUARY

THE EXPERIENCE OF DILEMMA

CHECKLIST FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEWS 1992/1993

1. Thank you for agreeing to help. You understand what its about? **Confidential**, will show you the transcript and ask for your comments before its used.
Are you happy/comfortable about this?
2. Can I first ask what you understand about a difficult decision? Why did you choose this?
3. So has there been a situation like this for you in say the last 12 months?
4. Would you describe it for me please? (draw out the who, what, when and where of the situation, including how long ago)
5. What alternatives were there? What choices did you have? What other options did you consider? What else might you have done?
6. How evenly balanced were the choices? Any clear advantages? What factors did you consider? What were the pros and cons? How far did you think of these? What were the decisive factors, what made you decide?
7. Reaction/ effect. How did you feel at the time? How did you take this situation? What effect did it have on you? Was it at all worrying?
8. Resolving the problem. What did you do about deciding? What steps did you take? Ask any advice? Talk with anyone? To what extent was it your own decision?
9. Afterwards. Did you have any second thoughts? Did you ever wish you had made the other decision? Any regrets? (if R mentions 'guilt', ask what did that mean for them?)
10. What have you learned from this? Would you be any better at deciding a similar question if it came up again?
11. OK if I come back to you again later?
Thank you.

INDEX OF INTERVIEWS 1992/1993

Interview No	Respondent Reference	Dilemma Subject
1	R921 (T)	Move house with parents or live with Gran?
2	R922 (F)	Leave home or stay?
3	R923 (H)	Drop Art AS level or continue?
4	R924 (D)	Come to College or take a job?
5	R925 (A)	Enter Higher Education or take a job?
6	R931 (R)	Help friend with problems or not?
7	R932 (E)	Remain at college or return to school?
8	R933 (I)	Stay inside tent or make a run for it?
9	R934 (Z)	Take holiday in Florida or go with family?
10	R935 (HC)	Keep Mum's secret or tell younger sister?
11	R936 (B)	Make choice between College and school?
12	R937 (N)	Live with Mum or Dad after divorce?
13	R938 (K)	Cover up for sister or tell the truth?
14	R939 (M)	Study in Australia or England?
15	R940 (AM)	Keep up with old friends or not?

I = PFM

R = No R922 (F)

Date: 1 July 1992

I Well F. Thank you very much for agreeing to help and I think you understand what I'm interested in, as I put in my letter, it's the way students resolve problems where there is a difficult choice to make... and your name came out of that random choice.

Can I just reassure you that your name will be kept confidential and the interview will just be referred to as a number. And I will show you a transcript at the end. Can I ask you, are you happy with those arrangements?

R Yes I suppose so (n/a)

I Can I ask then whether there has been in the last twelve months or so what I'm calling a dilemma, there has been a difficult choice to make? ¹⁰

R Yes I think so, (n/a) there has

I Would you like to describe it to me?

R Um well my parents and I haven't been getting on now for a very long time emotionally ... and we don't get on personally .. and the choice has been to move out and leave them behind basically, because we don't get on at all..

I Right, how long has that been a problem?

R Well about three or four years and .. I moved to a place in Kingston which I couldn't really afford, so I moved out and about well eight weeks ago I decided to leave again and I never intend to move back, basically.. ²⁰

I Right..right..quite a difficult problem (yes a bit of a hassle really) when did you make the decision to move out?

(microphone too far from I. This means tape is almost impossible to use or to hear interviewee's replies)

R I made it basically in October last year, but I couldn't, I didn't have the resources.... I went to the YMCA which took all my Summer savings... we basically haven't got on for a very long time, particularly with my mother.. but me and my Dad haven't got on either, because together they think I'm a failure, I just haven't achieved what they want (unclear) but at home a lot of it comes from me... basically its a two way thing ⁴⁰

I What are the pros and cons, I mean if we go back to the time when you hadn't made up your mind, was it really a difficult choice or was it relatively straightforward, were there advantages and disadvantages?

R Well, there aren't any advantages but the disadvantages were that my parents weren't there, I mean I saw them again this weekend and we didn't exactly get on (unclear).. I was hoping that we might get back together but I know I'm not going to go back there again ever, we just don't mix (right) so it was fairly straightforward, but financially it was very hard for me to go to college, because they aren't supporting me at all so I have to earn my money plus, um, I get eleven quid (?handed) me per week .. so to get it to balance is pretty hard. 40

I Right, so it was a really difficult choice then?

R Pretty hard yes (n/a).. so .. then..

I Could I ask how this affected you, what sort of influence did it have on you to have this choice to make? 50

R I was under a lot of strain, but I was really lucky to have one of the teachers to help me a tremendous lot.. which was great (unclear) and that was really great, but emotionally, though I didn't show anything on the outside but on the inside my emotions were totally screwed up, putting it plainly, so I've been feeling pretty rocky these past few months and especially evening outs because the whole evening I had to think a lot, to make a budget.. because at my age you don't just go out to the pub, or anything, I can't do that. My work's gone off as well.. 60

I But before you made the decision it really worried you inside? Is this what you're saying?

R Yes, it put quite a lot of pressure on me, (yes) because, like I knew what I wanted to do but I knew that once I'd moved out the contact between me and my parents .. I mean however much we argued we'd still lose each other, sort of thing (yes) it was pretty hard to take, yes. It probably put my parents under a lot of mental strain as well....its not the best thing that happened between a kid and his parents (unclear) . But it was a lot of me and a lot of them, so it was a fair share. but it happened I suppose, so .. 70

I Yes, can I ask, the main decision as you're describing it was to move out in the first place, last October, and in fact you chose the YMCA because you had no other choice at that time (yes basically) but that was the main decision (yes), you haven't had to make one since..

R I knew I'd have to move back then, but the decision to move out and never to move back again happened in March when I started looking again for places, and I was pretty lucky to get the place I've got (Right).

I So you did move back to your home? 80

R Yes I moved to my house between October and about May but all that time I was under constant pressure to find somewhere else to go (right).. only I left it for, well from the start of the year to March (right) but I felt pretty hassled..

- I So the key decision was in March? (in March, yes)
- R And my work was, um, I couldn't keep everything up (right).. so my work seems awful.
- I When you took the decision F. did you have any second thoughts, any regrets?
- R Yes 'cause I didn't like leaving my brother and sister behind, because I used to see them a lot.... I don't want to blame my Mum⁹⁰ and my Dad but emotionally they didn't understand me at all, I mean my Dad thinks of me as a shy, retiring person.
- I So you had regrets but not sufficiently to make you change your mind? (no)...I'm also very grateful to you for sharing this with me F. because its a real tough one. I'm interested in one other aspect and that is, how did you reach your decision. Did you talk it over with anybody? Is it something you did entirely on your own, how did you reach that decision?
- R Well I had a lot of help from.. I started off talking to one of my teachers (right) and she sent me to my tutor who's a counsellor¹⁰⁰ anyway, but, I'm not being rude but I didn't really feel that confident with X as I had with the teacher (right) but we kind of worked things out and the decision, the decision came from me (right) and my teachers supported me and everything.
- I So you used them to sound your ideas and to support them.
- R Yes to support basically (Yes) but I knew what..
- I They didn't advise you?
- R No, as I said the decision's got to come from you (right) Its just that I didn't feel that confident talking to my tutor (Right) without being too rude and that .. but the decision did come from me (Right).¹¹⁰
- I May I ask if that's the way you normally resolve a difficult issue, I mean on the whole do you do it on your own?
- R Yes thats it basically. Its just that I needn't have gone to talk to anyone unless I was in really dire straits which I was, But emotionally it really affected me.
- I It was so exceptional that my next question may seem a bit curious but I'm interested to know whether you've had other dilemmas, other problems in which you've really not known which way to turn, you've had a difficult choice to make. Have you had any others in the last year? maybe not at the same level of personal seriousness but.. any others? Is it common?¹²⁰
- R Well ... I've always had a lot of problems, emotionally, but most of them were generated between me and my parents.
- I In other words extensions of the same problem?
- R Yes, because at my old school (X) I wanted to stay there and most of

my teachers, well all of my teachers wanted me to stay, but my parents were really set on my coming here because they didn't think that I had made use of my private education and that my grades weren't good enough but I thought they were pretty high as far as I was concerned, I got two As and 7 Bs which wasn't what I wanted, I should have got higher I know that but they constantly got on to me, in a way . . . they sent me here because they didn't feel I'd used my private education enough and the idea was I was being snobby, you know I didn't want to come here because it was you know like state run, and it wasn't that at all it was because that school changed me a lot, I became a personality by myself and the teachers could see what was going on, and could see that things were going wrong, and they knew me, and coming here and having to leave all that behind, and there again it was going to be so much of a hassle and anyway I was really content there. Everyone in the school knew me, so .. you know, so it was just having to leave all that and come here, my parents, it wasn't financial, they told me it wasn't financial, and there was a big hassle about that, it was just that things had gone really wrong... I hadn't done what they wanted me to do, and that....

I I'm going to end the interview now, and we'll just go on talking in a different way, but can I just end by thanking you F. very much for your help.

nla = nervous laughter

I = PFM

R = R931 (RF)

Date: 12th March 1993

- I OK R thanks very much for agreeing to help. You understand what it is about and what I am interested in? (yes) and are comfortable about the arrangements, that it is going to be confidential (yes I am) thank you. Well can I first ask you, what you understand by a difficult decision.
- R Well I think it is something that will make a big impact on your school life or further life, whether it is really going to make a difference to you or not. Most decisions in life will make a big difference as you live on.
- I That's fair enough. So that is what you see as a difficult decision? (yes). Has there been that kind of situation in the last 12 months or so? ¹⁰
- R Yes there was quite a difficult one I had, maybe about two or three months ago now. It would have affected my school work if I hadn't made the right choice I think and it was due to a friend who himself was having family problems. Instead of trying to seek some professional help he kept coming to me every day.
- I Was this a close friend? (yes it was) So you saw him every day?
- R Yes and most evenings, although I don't see him so much now.
- I But at that time you would have seen him anyway every day and he would now come up and ask you your opinion of this situation. ²⁰
- R Yes he would ask me what to do and he always asked me what was best, he could never decide himself. Towards the end it began to annoy me and ..
- I Are you able to tell me what the situation was?
- R Yes his parents were just going through a divorce, His father's second divorce, and my friend was very upset because it is the third time it had happened and he felt that through all the divorce he has been very much neglected by his father. He felt as though he didn't belong to the family and that upset him.
- I So what was he facing a choice to do - leave or ..?
- R He was talking about leaving College at one time and moving away from his family altogether or trying to patch it up and help himself but he³⁰ just couldn't decide which one - so every day he would come to me and discuss all the arguments they were having at home, telling me what's happening and asking me what I thought he should do. He just really wanted to be with friends because his family never wanted him.

- I Right. So he was upset, didn't know what to do - was he actually thinking about other things like whether to go with his mother or step-mother?
- R Well he had already tried going with his mother and she had sent him back to his father so (right) so he didn't really have a choice. 40
- I His real choice was whether to stay with his father or leave altogether (yes) and that would mean leaving College? (yup) so he laid this on you (yes he did). Was it mainly to get advice, do you think, or was it mainly to get your friendship and just any opinion?
- R I think it was both. He really didn't know what to do himself and just wanted to be with friends all the time, so he mixed both of them together.
- I But mainly he focussed on you, not other people, he wasn't talking about it with everybody?
- R Yes it was me. 50
- I OK well of course it is your dilemma, or problem, that I am mostly interested in. So what choice did you have?
- R Well I thought whatever choice I did make was very important because it was for his life. I thought either I could just do my best and risk messing up his life or get him some professional help and risk ruining our friendship, so I know that would have offended him if I did go for professional help. I tried to make the choice whether or not to tell him I was going to get some help, because there was a risk that he would think that I was now neglecting him as well as his family.
- I So quite heavy for you? (yes it was) May I ask you what kind of friend he was, how long had you known him? 60
- R I had only known him about four months but we moved to the area at the same time and started school at the same time and because we were both new we just stuck together.
- I Do you mean school or do you mean (X) College?
- R No (Y) School. (right) and then .. (you came here together) right from the start he wanted someone to basically cling onto and I don't like being like that. I just want to be free to mingle, I don't like to have 'best' friends, I like to get on well with everyone.
- I So you liked him and he was a good and close friend (yes) but perhaps not a best friend? 70
- R He thought, I mean I was his best friend he kept telling me, but I never really wanted to tell him that he wasn't my best friend.
- I So you were worried about hurting him? (yup) and about letting him down (yup) and adding to his pressure. So those were your choices, well what would you say were the advantages and disadvantages as they seemed to you then?

R What of seeking help?

I Yes.

R Well it would obviously get him off my back and allow me to carry on with my life and the disadvantage would be that he was bringing down my school work and he was always asking me to go places with him, so I⁸⁰ wouldn't be able to get my work done and handed in on time. So I knew there was only one choice to get him off my back as soon as I could, because it started to irritate me towards the end.

I Yes and what steps would that mean you had to take, would you just recommend professional help?

R No I remembered at the beginning of term we had been given a problem sheet with all the professional help and I went to my tutor and talked about it and she gave me some people that he could talk to, who work in the college as counsellors and so ...

90

I So the actual choice was whether to give him this name.

R Yes that's what I thought I would do.

I And persuade him and say look enough of me now it's time you got in touch with this counsellor (yes) I see. Did you do that in the end?

R No I never actually gave him the name. I offered it and he got upset and he started asking me if friends are supposed to help each other and sort problems out. But I told him you have just got to do it yourself, because I had never been in that position as my parents had never divorced so .. I don't really know how it feels. I told him I was completely the wrong person to go to, he needed someone who knows what they are talking about.

100

I Right. Can I ask how this affected you? Before you made the decision and while you were telling him, getting him off your back as you put it, what effect did it have?

R On our friendship?

I Well on you generally. Did you worry, did it affect your work, your food or your sleep?

R It is not the actual worrying that affected my work, I mean I didn't lose sleep at night over it, but it was just him constantly wanting me to talk to me. Even if I wanted to go to the Library to do some work he would follow me in there and start talking about it.

110

I So really you were clear, am I right, you were clear from the start what you ought to do? (yup) So why was it a difficult decision, in other words what were the disadvantages of doing that?

R I felt inside I might be upsetting him more, because by that time everyone had started neglecting him even his friends because he was annoying them as well. So I thought well I am the only person who actually speaks to him much now and it would affect him a lot if I sent him off. He would have basically had no friends. I always felt inside

that it was up to me to do something.

120

I Would you describe yourself as a sensitive lad, do you get easily upset by .?

R No nothing really upsets me much, I don't really normally think much about it, I just let it happen.

I So you haven't had a lot of friendships which have been involved?

R No this is the first one. I didn't like it when it was happening I just didn't want to be there, so I just wanted to get some help as quickly as possible, but there was always that thing in my mind whether I should or not.

I What was the worse thing that came to you about letting him down, if you like? 130

R I just kept imagining him like leaving College and ruining the rest of his life and (blaming you perhaps?) yes and blaming me. I always thought that people might drive him a bit crazy in the end and he will always have hatred for me and I was a bit scared because he was the sort of person who could get a bit crazy so I wanted to bring him down slowly and easily and didn't just want to tell him to go away.

I Yes difficult for you. Tell me how you reached this decision, did you need any help, did you take any steps to make it, you mentioned a tutor but what else?

140

R Yes I spoke to my parents about it and they told me it was best if I just got him professional help, but they didn't seem to really understand the full details about it.

I You mean the full weight on you, that kind of detail, the full pressure on you? (yes) So who did you speak to that did understand, anybody?

R No in the end I just decided on my own.

I So really it was just your decision (yup in the end) and although your parents supported you it was support in taking the right decision not support in understanding the pain of taking that decision. Well turning now to the situation afterwards did you have any second thoughts, have you ever regretted the decision? 150

R No not at all, because it has allowed me to get on with my life now and not worry. I mean I have got enough worries in my life without worrying about someone else.

I (laugh) Carry someone else on your back. Fine well that is straight forward. Do you think you are better at taking decisions now, of that kind, what have you learnt from this would you say?

R Well I have learnt how people do get very sensitive over certain things which I never thought of before, but I prefer not to think about the pain other people are going through. I am always thinking 'I'm alright Jack' and although it is not really right I just think it is the best way - the only way you can get on.

I Have you become more independent or more like that?

R Yes

I Do you think you are more emotionally independent now?

R Yes I would say very much and I also now can spot a problem if someone has got a problem, if I feel they are trying to put it on my shoulders, I more or less back off whilst I can. Because I would not fancy getting into any more problems like that.

I Involved like that again? (No) fine. Well thank you very much indeed, if I get this typed up I will show it to you, and is it alright if I come back to you at that point.

R Yup that's fine.

I Thank you very much.

That is the end of interview No 6 R931 (RF). It took about 20 minutes.

INTERVIEW 10

I = PFM

R = R935 (HC)

Date: 10 February 1993

- I Right H thank you very much for agreeing to help me. Can I ask do you understand what I am interested in? (Yes) I think you know what I mean. Are you happy about the arrangements the fact that it is going to be confidential and that it won't be traceable to you?
- R Yes I am perfectly happy with that.
- I Good, well could I begin by asking what you mean by a difficult decision?
- R A difficult decision is when you have to make a choice between something that you want to do and something that you don't want to do and you have to decide which is the right way to go. (Right) So if you want to go to university or you don't want to go to university and your parents are going to make you, that's a difficult decision (Yes) as to whether to say¹⁰ what you want to do.
- I Fine, yes that's just what I wanted to hear. Well H have you got such an example in your last year that you would be prepared to talk about?
- R Yes.
- I Do you mind telling me about it then?
- R Well about 9 months ago now I found out, completely by accident, that my Mum was pregnant again and nobody had even thought about it because she had another baby ten years after my last brother was born and we thought that would be the end of it. My aunt swore me to secrecy and said not to tell anybody else because she said it wasn't any of our business and wasn't our concern and it wasn't going to affect us. I didn't believe this because it was going to affect us, and I knew it would affect us because I had already gone through the experience with my little brother, who is now two. My Mum went through deep post-natal depression when she had my little brother and I spent most of my first GCSE year looking after him and doing the housework and things like that so I knew what was going to happen. I didn't want to spend 6 months knowing that this was what was going to happen and not being able to tell anyone else about it, so I wanted to talk to someone about it.
- 30
- I Can I just stop you there and ask you are you in your first year H? (Yes) And how many brothers and sisters are there in your family already?
- R I have three brothers and three sisters and they are all younger than me.
- I Right so you're the eldest, you carry the can as it were?
- R Yes and all the responsibility and my Mum did it just at the time when my

sister was starting her GCSE's and I was starting my A Levels, so she picked the most difficult time. It was a planned pregnancy as well and she didn't ask us what we thought about it. I didn't really understand why she didn't ask us because it would affect us, and I didn't think it was fair that she should let all the weight of the knowledge lie on me and not be able to talk to anybody about it, just because she wouldn't talk about it. I was suppose to keep silent until it was the right time to tell everybody, so I wasn't even supposed to tell my sister who is my closest friend. 40

I How old is your sister? (14) and how are you spaced in ages?

R I am 16, my sister is 14, I have a brother who is 13, a brother who is 11 nearly 12, a brother who is 2 and a sister who is now four months.

I Right so there is a big gap between the 12 year old and the 2 year old.

R I was 14 when my brother was born, so the same age as my sister is now.

I Is it the same father? 50

R Yes for all of them (n/a) my Mum is a Catholic which doesn't actually have anything to do with why she has so many children, because otherwise I would have about 15 brothers or sisters. She just decided after 10 years that she would like to have another baby and at the time I thought, oh yea that would be quite nice and it was fine for the first two or three months. Then she got tired and depressed and bored with him and she didn't want to look after him anymore and she said that she had done it 4 times before and had had enough of it. Which is why I was really, really angry with her when she got pregnant again because she already knew she had gone through it two years earlier and 4 times before that and she said when she had Joshua, my little brother, she was never going to do it again, but she did. 60

I Joshua is the one who is four months?

R Two years (sorry yes) my sister Sophie is four months. 50

I But even with Joshua she said she was not going to do it again?

R Yes she said I won't do it again, which is what she said after my brother Nicholas, he is nearly 12, and she went into it thinking, which is my Mother's fault you know, babies, she likes babies, but she doesn't like them after that. She is getting really frustrated with my little brother now because he is getting to the 2 stage, which is a really naughty age, when they are not old enough to understand that they are being bad but old enough to be bad and do naughty things. Her way of dealing with that is to lay him on everybody else and say Sophie is my darling little baby so that he gets really upset. 70

I Well I can see how this is bound to affect you. What was the choice that you had, whether to tell somebody or not, whether to tell your nearest sister or not, was that it?

R That was the choice and in the end I told my sister because I didn't think my Mum was being fair to us to go through that again and then to expect me to not say anything to anybody and just keep quiet about it. 80

I So you told your sister?

R So I told my sister (how long ago?) I found out when my Mum was about two months pregnant and I told my sister when she was about four months. So I waited two months before I told anybody. My sister had already suspected something by then because my Mother was acting really strange as she does. We didn't know what to do then either, the only thing we could do was talk to each other about it. We still couldn't tell anybody.

I So how did you see it then? What were the pros and cons - how did you see the advantages and disadvantages of talking to your sister.

90

R The advantages were that I could get all my anger out about it to her because I really didn't think it was fair that Mother was doing this again and also that she hadn't involved us and then said that it didn't affect us, all of which was not true. So I got my frustration out by talking to my sister and it just helped to decide what we were going to do when the baby was born because we were expecting it to be the same as last time. We just needed to prepare ourselves for the amount of work we were going to have to do when the baby was born and what responsibility we were going to have to take, because two years on it would be different responsibilities. I have a social life now as well and I was quite worried that it might affect that because I am quite often expected to baby sit or to look after the baby when Mum gets home from work. I was worried about my work as well because it did effect my GCSE's.

100

I So the advantages were that you would have somebody to share and plan ahead.

R Plan ahead and see what we could do.

I What were the disadvantages?

R The disadvantages were in case my Mother found out, as she would absolutely kill me. I wasn't suppose to tell anybody, and she trusted me in that, but I didn't think that she trusted me really because she wouldn't have told me ..

110

I But how long could your Mother be pregnant without it being obvious visibly?

R She didn't tell anybody until she was six months because she had put on a lot of weight anyway so she looked quite big and didn't really start showing until she was six months and that is when she told everybody.

I Did she know that you told your sister?

R She found out afterwards, after she had had the baby, because I told her.

I So the only real disadvantage was what your Mother might say or do?

R Yes that was the only disadvantage.

120

I Was it evenly balanced in your mind?

R No it wasn't, because I felt very confused for the first month because I sort of felt I should be loyal and not say anything. But after the first

month had gone and she was still pretending, she still hadn't told anybody and she was nearly four months by this time, I thought no its about time you started telling everybody. I really thought then she is not going to tell anyone, she is going to hang on as long as possible, and I can't wait to keep quiet about it, because by that time it was really, really worrying me.

I I wanted to ask you about that H. Leaving aside your anger about the situation and about it being put on you as you described, what was it like to live with this secret and live with the decision whether or not to tell your sister - before you actually took the decision. 130

R It was horrible because I really didn't know what to do and I was really afraid that if I told someone my Mother would be really, really angry with me. But at the same time I did want to tell someone, because I didn't think that what she had done was right and I felt very confused about it. It was worrying me quite a lot at the time and really just didn't know what to do.

I Did it worry you all day, I mean did it interrupt your classes for example or was it just in the evening when perhaps you had less to do? 140

R When I was around my Mum and around my family it worried me the most because I kept wanting to say something but I couldn't. When I was at school and people said things like, "Oh your Mother's not going to have any more is she?" it made feel guilty or when they were talking about my little brother. But on an ordinary every day basis, if I was in the classroom doing my lessons I wouldn't think about it so much.

I At night? (Yea) kept you awake perhaps? (Sometimes). Right well now you made the decision what steps did you take, if any, either on your own or to talk to other people, to help you make the decision? How did you go about it? 150

R Well I asked my sister what she would do if she wanted to tell me something but thought she shouldn't tell me. She said she wouldn't tell me and I said that if it was really important thing and you really felt that I should know would you tell me then. She said it would depend what the reason was for not telling me, so I said well Mum would kill you and she said she would tell me then (n/a).

I You really prepared the ground with your sister and she probably was guessing.

R She knew that I wanted to tell her something. 160

I Did you talk to anyone else. (No) Not your Father?

R No my Dad's the same as my Mum he doesn't like talking about things like that. He was the same as my Mum he didn't want anyone to know for some reason, so kept quiet about it for quite a while. My Dad said I wasn't suppose to tell anyone either.

I So really you made up your mind on your own, is that a fair description? (yea) because your sister really helped without you giving it away (Yea). OK well now you told your sister, since then a lot has happened including the birth, have you had second thoughts in that time?

- R No I still think I was right to tell her because for one thing she has a right to know because she is part of the family as well. I thought it was really bad that they hadn't just sat us down and said look this is what is happening and we don't want you to tell anybody. I found out by accident anyway and it made me wonder how long they would have left it before telling us, so I didn't have any second thoughts about it at all. 170
- I So you would do the same thing again?
- R Yes I would do the same thing again, except I would probably do it sooner this time, I wouldn't leave it so long.
- I Do you have any feelings about the decision in terms of regret or seeing disadvantages about telling your sister. Have you had any second thoughts even if you would do the same again, have you had regrets? 180
- R I didn't have any regrets because my Mum had done much the same to us in a way and although it wasn't revenge, because that is too strong a word, it was sort of quits in a way. She wouldn't tell us so I thought it was then fair to tell my sister. She did have a right to know and I didn't have any regrets about that. If I had been an only child and my Mum said don't tell anybody and I had told my best friend I would have felt very guilty about it.
- I I have one last question for you and that is - do you think that having wrestled with this decision that you would be better at taking it again - do you think it has taught you anything? 190
- R After I had told someone it made me feel clear in my mind about what I would do next time, because the advantages of having someone to talk to about something that is bothering you are far greater than sitting around worrying about it. Even if you are not suppose to tell someone else, if you can find someone neutral who is not involved in any way, so that it will not get back to the person involved, then I think it would be better than just worrying about it. My sister was quite involved actually and so I wasn't so worried about my Mum finding out.
- I So it has taught you? 200
- R Yea, if something was bothering me now and I had been told not to tell anybody about it then I would try to find somebody completely neutral who could talk to me about it without getting involved. You definitely have to try and release it, if you don't it can get you really worked up even if it is not really a big thing.
- I Well H I am very grateful to you for sharing this with me. Would you mind if I came back and saw you again perhaps later if necessary (No I don't mind) - thank you.

INTERVIEW 12

I = PFM

R = 937 (NW)

Date: 15th March 1993

I Well N thank you for agreeing to help. You understand what I am interested in (yup) and you understand that it will be kept confidential and I will see that it does not get traced to you?

R Yes I understand.

I And are you happy with those arrangements? (I am very happy) thank you. Well can I ask you first what you would understand by a difficult decision?

R A decision before the actual event, you know which is going to take place, or to go with it, if you see what I mean.

I Yes and what is the nature of it being difficult. What makes it difficult?

10

R What do you mean, the decision I am trying to make?

I Yes - how would you decide whether it was a difficult decision or not?

R If it was a decision that was going to hurt someone in a way or you know what I am going to talk about now basically. You know, whether, to decide to live with my Mum or my Dad, either way it is going to hurt one of them.

I That is interesting yes.

R So basically it is just advantages and disadvantages?

I Right so thank you. So we know what we are talking about. Have you had such a situation sufficiently recently for you to be able to describe it? 20

R Yes the divorce of my parents basically.

I Right could you tell me about that. To start with when was it and what happened?

R It was about four/five years ago now and how it happened

I Well how did it affect you?

R Well you know there was quite a bit of arguing going on in the house which got me down basically. I started to get depressed and started to hate both them and you know I just knew they were going to get divorced. I felt myself that it would be the best thing for them to, but when it came down to it I was pretty upset that they did get divorced. The changes in the household once one of them has gone, you know the different personality change with my Mum so I stayed to live with her. 30

- I Right. Obviously there is much we could describe here and talk about, but for the purposes of this interview all I really want to focus on is what your decision was. What did you have to decide at that time?
- R Whether to live with my Mum or my Dad.
- I Right and was this really down to you. Did you have to make that decision yourself?
- R Well I didn't really have to make it myself but they asked me and I didn't really want to say it is not up to me you know, I don't mind who I⁴⁰ live with, because I did at that time. I wanted to live with my Mum because I was closer to her than my Dad.
- I So you felt that you had a decision to make because you were being asked? (yes) right. Can you say how that affected you having to make that difficult decision?
- R Well as I say, you know, I knew it was going to hurt one or the other so it was so hard just to make the decision who to live with.
- I Did it have a personal effect on you, on your eating or sleeping or work or games or any aspect. Did it affect that?
- R Yes it did affect my appetite and stuff, you know I was nervous in a sense, I had to make a decision and basically ...
- I You knew you were worried about it and didn't want to eat as much (yea). Was there a date by which you had to decide, did you know there was a court case coming up by which you had to decide?
- R Yea I was in court .. you know they asked me as I was sitting in the court room and they said 'who do you want to live with?'
- I Right and they asked you that you in court - in front of your parents?
- R No, no, they left the room and I went to another little room and the judge basically just said 'who do you want to live with?' because there was evidence for and against both my Mum and Dad. Both sides of the family were saying this could be better for you or worse for you.
- I You knew this date was coming up? So you were prepared for that question? (yup) and you had made up your mind how to answer it and you were worried about that decision of course?
- R Yes, because I had lived with my Mum until the court hearing so you know obviously she was saying if you don't want to live with me I will understand and still love you. But it was much easier saying that I wasn't going to live with my father because I wasn't in his presence up until the court hearing.
- I But you still worried about that. Can you tell me - I mean the alternatives were clear it was either your mother or your father, there wasn't a third alternative was there open to you like staying with an aunt?

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60

70

R Not really, I really didn't want to do anything like that.

I No. It was definitely one or the other. So what were the advantages and disadvantages as it seemed to you?

R At the time (take one alternative first what were the advantages and disadvantages of remaining with your mother for example?) I was much closer to her, I could talk to her much more personally ..

80

I And remind us of your age?

R I was about 10 at the time but I didn't know what was going on so .. the disadvantage was at the time, it might sound stupid now but, you know my Dad used to spoil me more and I was thinking, it was always in my sub-conscious, that if I lived with my Dad would it be more fun, you know what I mean he used to play football and stuff ...

I Well these are good reasons. So do the same pros and cons apply with your choice with your father. Obviously the reverse of what you just said applies - but was there anything else about the advantage of going to your father?

90

R Also my father was much more strict on certain matters and issues. You know he would be (that was an advantage or disadvantage?) disadvantage (right). He would be much more strict when it came to going out to places and around the home, he was always the one to tell me off, so I was more scared of him in a sense.

I Was it an evenly balanced choice?

R Um .. I would say so but I would have preferred to live with my mother at the time.

I So what was the difficulty, not the choice itself, but stating it?

R Sorry?

100

I Well what was the nature of the difficulty, was it the choice itself - like which was preferable your mother or your father - or was it the difficulty of having to say that in court or having to say that in front of your parents?

R Yea it was just like facing them afterwards, after I had made the decision.

I So you were clear about the decision, it wasn't a really evenly balanced choice?

R Well it was pretty even, but I preferred to live with my Mum.

I Right. So most of the difficulty was what to do after you had taken the decision?

110

R Hmm that is all I thought about. I could easily say to one or the other at the time I would rather live with Mum but afterwards I would feel so

guilty and like afterwards I saw my Dad and it just didn't feel right at all.

I Were they both pulling, were they both in their own way making it clear they wanted you? (Hmm) you felt the pull?

R Yes. I would get treats and all sorts.

I They both wanted you?

R Definitely. It was just I don't know morally - the things they would say to me. 120

I There was pressure being put on to you (hmm) right. Was it more strongly from one side than the other? - the pressure I mean or the pull.

R I don't know, I think it was stronger on my Dad's side because he was not as tactful as my Mum is, you know my Mum would say if you go and live with your Dad don't worry about it I will still love you. My Dad would say the same thing, but not in so many words and it would sound much more like come and live with me.

I Right. In making the decision what did you do? Did you go to different people, how did you help solve this? 130

R I spoke to my grandparents about it, on my Mum's side because I don't really know the other set of grandparents, and they were basically saying it's just your happiness we are worried about and if you are going to be happier with your father, which we don't think you are, we don't mind if you go and live with him. They gave me quite a lot of moral support.

I Did you see this as even handed advice, or just subtle pressure?

R Hmm.

I Did you know you were being got at as it were, being persuaded or did you think of it as being fair?

R It was quite fair I thought. Because they didn't put any pressure on me at all. 140

I Right. Did you talk to anyone else?

R Not really. Not about my decision making. You know I just told my friends and they said what are you going to do then and I said I am not sure.

I So would you say that this was your own decision, you reached it just by talking with your grandparents on your mother's side?

R And my sister as well (agh) she is about four years older than me and she just said straight away that she wanted to live with my Mum. And because she stayed with my Mum I thought hey I want to stay with my sister also. You know I don't want to be split from her as well. 150

I So that is another factor. How much did you feel it was your decision in the end?

R Umm .. I am not quite sure actually because in the court hearing they were just saying all the pros and cons of living with Mum, her wage coming in cannot support us .. (and you listened to all this?) ya and it seemed like they may have just been asking me to make me feel a whole lot better about it and stuff .. because I have known a lot of people who have got divorced and no one has even asked the children where they wanted to live, it is just a fight between the father and mother.

160

I Yes and legally I suppose that is the case, but they do take notice and so that was the pressure on you, you knew you had a real point to make. So it was partly your own decision.

R Yes and partly the pressure from the court ..

I And your sister and grandparents. Fine, afterwards did you have any second thoughts? and have you had any second thoughts, we are of course talking about something that was five years ago.

R Yea I did have second thoughts afterwards, you know as I said the response between my Dad and myself wasn't quite right and I thought my Dad's been quite depressed and if I went to live with him it might cheer him up and he wouldn't feel that way.

170

I How long did this last?

R What my second thoughts? (yes) I am not sure it took about .. initially about six months but lingering about two years or so. Like whenever I saw him on visits and stuff and I went on holiday with him. When I came back I just felt quite bad that I was leaving him. I enjoyed his company so much because we are just like really good friends. Nothing like father and son relationship now at all and I could never imagine living with him now, but then definitely.

I So you did frequently regret your decision (hmm) but was your regret only when you had just seen your father or did the regret live with you afterwards?

180

R It didn't so much as live with me but whenever I spoke to him it always seemed to make it worse and so on.

I You sound as if that regret is with you now.

R Yes I could say it is in a way because I am thinking back now how it used to be and it would have been fun to live with him.

I So it was all along a very even handed decision, I mean it wasn't clear which way you would have been happier.

R I think I would have been happy living with my father as well, but it was just at the time ...

190

I Would you say that has affected you now?

R In what sense?

I Well you say you haven't got a father/son relationship, is that partly because of your decision to go with your mother, or would it have

happened anyway?

R No I think that's just because I went to live with my mother. If I had gone to live with my father I am sure it would have saved my Mum feeling we are more friends.

I Rather than feeling you were their child?

200

R Yea because he hasn't had the responsibility for me living with him.

I So you concentrated on the things that you have been doing together, your football and your holidays. Well my last question really is do you think you have learnt something from this very difficult decision? Learnt about making decisions I mean. Is it possible to say whether you would be better at making a personal decision again.

R Well definitely I don't jump to conclusions at all about anything any more, you know if I was asked that question I would just sit down and think about it. If I am given a request on a piece of paper or something I will sit down and think it through.

210

I Because you are aware that you might have second thoughts? (hmm) That's interesting. Does this mean you take longer over making all decisions or just difficult ones? Has it made you less decisive?

R No it doesn't really make you less decisive I think it makes you more ... hmm how can I put it .. more on the ball. It doesn't really take long to make decisions but you are more precise with your decision making and ..

I You don't mean cautious?

R Yea I do, you could be more cautious.

I Does it mean you go for the safe decision, the safe alternative more often now?

220

R Not always but if I go for a risky alternative, you know I make myself aware of what could happen, the pros and cons of what could happen.

I Yes. Well N thank you. I very much appreciate you sharing that difficult decision with me. If I needed to come back to you would that be alright? (yes) thank you.

31 Hare Lane,
Claygate,
SURREY KT10 9BT

20.3.94



University
of Surrey

Dear Head of Department,

I am taking the liberty of writing to you, with the permission of your Principal, to ask if you would be prepared to help me with some research I have been doing into the nature of "dilemma" thinking, especially amongst 16 to 19 year old students. I hope it will not take more than a few minutes of your time, although I appreciate that any request like this will seem something of an intrusion.

Dilemmas raise a number of interesting psychological and philosophical questions. My present interest, however, is in the extent to which there are opportunities to "practise" this common predicament in college based examination courses (i.e. not simply in general courses or tutor periods). It is hoped that the results will be of some benefit to counsellors as well as subject tutors.

Briefly, by "dilemma" I mean a situation in which a choice has to be made between at least two pressing alternatives, where there is no obvious solution. I am not particularly concerned whether these are perceived as moral problems (eg you ought to do A and you ought to do B but you cannot do both) or non moral problems (eg, perhaps, the choice between two experiments).

Common examples are: a person has made two promises but can only keep one; a planning decision has to be made about the siting of a nuclear power station or a ring road; a doctor can only allocate a scarce resource to one of two equally deserving patients; a business manager has to choose between two contracts each bearing serious disadvantages.

Normally, in a dilemma situation, whichever decision is made will leave you with some kind of remainder as an opportunity cost, perhaps in the form of regret or guilt about the rejected alternative. In other words, whichever choice you make you will regret it. As we know, dramatic literature abounds in such dilemmas, from Sophocles' *Agamemnon* to Styron's *Sophie's Choice* and it is an everyday predicament for most adult occupations. This seems to me to raise the question whether or not we prepare students to face such dilemmas and learn to live with the consequences of marginal decisions.

I would be very grateful if you would be prepared to take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the s.a.e. provided. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

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THE RECOGNITION AND RESOLUTION OF DILEMMA

N.B. Please see the attached letter for a working definition of what is meant by "dilemma". For the purposes of this questionnaire, please select one of the examined courses you teach or for which you are responsible.

1. Name of subject
Name of course and/or syllabus
2. How frequently do students consider "dilemmas" (as defined) as part of this course?
Monthly ... Weekly ... Occasionally ... Never ...
[If the answer was "never" please go to Q.7]
3. Please describe a typical example of a "dilemma" which students consider as part of this course (perhaps as a set assignment, an essay topic, part of the coursework, a practical or experiment).
4. Is this work assessed as part of the course? Yes ... No ...
5. If "yes", what proportion (approximately) of the total assessment of the course would you estimate is occupied by such dilemmas?
Less than 5% ... 5% ... 10% ... 20% ... More than 20% ...
6. Do you consider that the time spent on "dilemmas" in this course should be:
Increased ... Left as it is ... Decreased ...
7. What value would you personally place on the consideration of "dilemma" type problems for a student's *general* education?
Very worthwhile ... Quite worthwhile ... Not worthwhile ...
8. Similarly, what value would you personally place on the consideration of "dilemma" type problems for a student's *vocational* education?
Very worthwhile ... Quite worthwhile ... Not worthwhile ...
9. Can you recall having had any teacher training or preparation in the recognition or resolution of dilemma? Yes ... No ...
If "yes", what form did it take?
10. If you think that the consideration of "dilemmas" in the curriculum (examined or non examined) is worthwhile, how would you like to see this implemented?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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