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CHAPTER I

THE INTELLECTUALISTIC TRADITION

Existentialism is often regarded as a typical expression of a style of thought and sensibility that is characteristically contemporary. Certainly the widespread interest it has aroused and its numerous points of affinity with much that is peculiarly modern in the literature and other imaginative arts of the twentieth century speak in favor of such a view, which, in fact, is perfectly unexceptionable in the positive affirmation it makes. A one-sided emphasis on the contemporary character of existentialism could prove seriously misleading, however, if it encouraged the assumption that the philosophy of existentialism is capable of being stated or understood without a constant effort to relate it to the very philosophical tradition which it claims to supersede. As even the most famous and most cryptic formulation of that philosophy—"Existence is prior to essence"—shows, the terminology in which the existentialist couches his denials is, as often as not, drawn from the philosophies he is concerned to refute. Existentialism is, in fact, a reactive movement of thought which becomes fully comprehensible only when the philosophical positions against which it is reacting are identified and understood. Many of the commonest misunderstandings of existentialism as well as many "demonstrations" of its gross incompatibility with common sense have been due to an attempt to take its philosophy "neat," i.e., to interpret its theses without giving sufficient attention to the philosophical context in which these have been developed. Too often the result has been to mistake the sense of the existentialist's affirmations through having failed to grasp the point of his denials. This statement applies with special force to the relationship of existentialism to the main stream of Western moral philosophy; and in this chapter and the three that follow it, an
effort will be made to describe, however briefly, the reactive or dialectical relationship in which existentialism stands to dominant trends in the history of ethical theory, and also to say something about earlier formulations of the alternative conception of value and choice of which existentialism claims to be the definitive statement.\textsuperscript{1}

I

The belief that the concepts of truth and falsity are applicable to judgments of value has been a central theme of Western moral philosophy since its inception. While this view may have been first put forward by Socrates, it received an explicit philosophical interpretation at the hands of Plato; and it is not too much to say that the whole subsequent development of moral philosophy has been dominated by Plato's original statement of what may be called the intellectualistic thesis.\textsuperscript{2} This is the view that value predicates have meaning by virtue of standing for objective qualities or relations that are independent of our feelings and volitions; that rational beings are able to apprehend these qualities; and that true (and false) statements can accordingly be made about them. In this first formulation, as later, intellectualism was intended as a refutation of skeptical views which made the moral quality of things relative to the attitudes and aspirations of individual human beings. Against the view that values are artificial

\textsuperscript{1} In the brief historical review that follows, I pass over in silence a number of questions concerning the correct interpretation of the doctrines of the writers I discuss. These questions have their own considerable importance, but for my purposes, even setting considerations of space aside, they must be secondary. My concern here is primarily with the way such writers as Plato and Aristotle influenced the subsequent development of ethical theory; and in characterizing that influence I am not thereby denying the possibility that the traditional interpretation of their doctrines may be mistaken in certain important respects.

\textsuperscript{2} For a contrasting view of the ethical thought of Socrates which assimilates him to Kierkegaard, and thus to at least one wing of the existentialist tradition, see John Gould, \textit{The Development of Plato's Ethics} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955). This view has been decisively refuted, I think, by G. Vlastos in "Socratic Knowledge and Platonic Pessimism," \textit{Philosophical Review}, LXVI (1957), 226–238.
human conventions, intellectualism has always insisted that the goodness or badness of a thing and the rightness or wrongness of an action are functions of the nature of that thing or action rather than of our feelings about it. "Nature" in this context means simply the set of characteristics that an object possesses and by which it is classifiable as belonging to a certain kind or species of things. Since these characteristics define a class of things and are therefore not peculiar, at least in principle, to any single object, the natures they compose have traditionally been described as "universals."

Two features of Plato's account of moral knowledge were to play an important role in the subsequent evolution of intellectualism. First, his attribution of logical necessity to the relationship between universals suggested a similar conception of the relationship between the form of the good and other universals. Knowledge of the moral quality of things has thus often been conceived to be of a type with mathematical knowledge; and in both cases the test of truth is held to be essentially logical in character and to consist in a set of dialectical operations performed upon the definitions of the terms involved. At the same time, however, Plato often used the language of perception and of vision to characterize our apprehension of the good as well as of other universals. He did not, of course, mean that insight into moral relationships was literally seeing, but the metaphor of sight has a unique capacity to suggest the independence or "out-there-ness" of what is known, and it was therefore natural that Plato and the whole intellectualistic tradition which followed after him should make such extensive use of it. By combining these two features of moral knowledge, Plato worked out the conception of a necessity inherent in the object of moral knowledge itself that was perhaps his principal legacy to subsequent ethical theory. At the same time, by virtue of this very association of the idea of necessity with that of a vision directed upon self-subsistent entities, he created one of the most difficult problems that the intellectualistic tradition has had to resolve.

If Plato gave Western ethical theory its initial intellectualistic bent, it was Aristotle and the medieval Aristotelians who recast his teaching into the form of a detailed doctrine of human na-
ture. Since it was this form of intellectualism that principally stimulated—by reaction—the developments in ethical theory that eventually led to existentialism, a summary review of the main relevant features of Aristotle’s moral philosophy is in order.

A theory of natural teleology and a theory of natural kinds provide the basis of that doctrine. According to the latter, each individual thing is endowed with a nature or essence that it has in common with some other individuals and by virtue of which they are classifiable as belonging to a certain genus and species and so on down to the \textit{infima species} in the lowest tiers of the classificatory pyramid.\footnote{In the account I give here of Aristotle’s doctrine of the ontological basis of systems of classification, I have been influenced by the views set forth in Stuart Hampshire, \textit{Thought and Action} (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), particularly in Chapter I. While Hampshire does not explicitly associate Aristotle with the conception of language and its reference to objects which he describes and criticizes there, there can be little doubt, I think, that Aristotle’s philosophy offers a prime example of the kind of view that Hampshire has in mind.} This classification into kinds is natural in the sense that the distinction between defining traits and accidental or peripheral traits is conceived to be a real, and not a conventional, distinction. It is, in fact, a kind of prelinguistic datum that must be faithfully reproduced in language instead of being itself a pragmatically justified linguistic achievement. The metaphysical priority of the traits that constitute these “natures” generates a basic vocabulary for identifying individual things; and the way of cutting up the world that is thus imposed is emphatically not optional. To tinker with it would result not just in departures from a particular system of identifying reference but in a distortion of the natures of the things classified.

The doctrine of natural teleology can be described as a further stipulation attached to the theory of natural kinds. It asserts that the natures on which the “natural” system of classification is based are compounded in such a way as to define a function, or end, that is proper to the bearers of any given nature. According to this view, it will thus be impossible to identify a particular as having any specific nature without thereby committing oneself to a number of propositions with respect to the distinctive good of that thing; it is understood that right conduct for intelligent
beings consists in doing what realizes their distinctive *telos*. A conceptual system that would enable us to identify someone as a human being, while leaving open all questions as to what he ought properly to do, is thus in effect excluded. Once again, the reason is not to be sought in any linguistic conservatism on Aristotle's part, but in his conviction that what is real, independently of all language, is a combination of actuality with a special potentiality for realizing certain distinctive ends, and that this fact must be reflected in any viable scheme of classification. In summary, then, one may say that Aristotle's normative ethic consists of a set of implications that is built into the very language he uses for the description of the subjects of that theory; and this language, in turn, is interpreted as reflecting metaphysical structures that are antecedent to language and immune to change.

If this theory is applied to human action, it is clear that principles of right action will be derivable from the *telos*, or proper end, of man; and this end will be implicit in the "nature" that is peculiar to human beings. These principles will have the status of moral or practical truths; and if we follow Aristotle, at least one of them (i.e., the principle that the end of man is the exercise of intellectual virtue), will be a necessary truth. Others that bear upon the means to this end, will be among those things "that could be otherwise." In any case, they will function as the major premises in practical syllogisms; taken together with factual premises describing a given situation as of the type to which the rule applies, they will generate a particular moral judgment that tells what action would be suitable in that situation. To this piece of moral knowledge the will is referred for guidance. Aristotle's way of putting this is to say that the conclusion in a practical syllogism is an action, but this seems to prejudge the question of whether a person may not act otherwise while knowing what he ought to do.\(^4\) Intellectualism, as I am using the term, is a thesis

\(^4\) Aristotle's theory of the practical syllogism has been the subject of much recent discussion, particularly as it bears upon the much- vexed problem of akrasia. Much of this discussion is summarized in James Walsh, *Aristotle's Conception of Moral Weakness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); there is also a helpful analysis of the relationship of practical and theoretical reason which in general appears to support the view of that relationship which I am defending. (See especially pp. 131 ff.)
about the kind of knowledge that is involved in the apprehension of the truth of moral principles; and care should be taken to distinguish this thesis from the view that the will is somehow constrained to seek what the intellect represents to it as good. As we shall see, this distinction has not always been observed.

One very important effect of this doctrine of natural ends that are proper to each kind of being is the restrictions it imposes upon the concept of choice. According to Aristotle, choice is the outcome of deliberation, and deliberation is concerned with means to an end and not with the end itself.\(^5\) Deliberation and choice thus operate within a framework of goals over which they exercise no control; and the proper goal for any being is determined by the kind of being it is, i.e., by its nature. The telos or proper end of human beings may, of course, be misapprehended by them, and when it is, choice will be directed to means that do not realize their peculiar good. But even in this case, it would presumably not be correct, in Aristotle’s view, to speak of a choice of the mistaken end. Ends are apprehended (or misapprehended) by human reason, and precisely because our relation to them is cognitive, they are not objects of choice. If they were chosen, then there would either have to be some ulterior end to which they were means, and then this higher end would not be chosen; or the possibility would arise that in the absence of any end that has such a status, human beings might differ in their choice of the highest end. If such difference amounted to incompatibility, Aristotle’s conception of man as a social being whose true good is necessarily compatible with that of other human beings would have to be called into question.

The view that man has a natural end and that the moral principles in which this end is defined have the status of necessary truths became a central tenet of the medieval theory of natural law by which the Greek tradition of ethical intellectualism was transmitted to the modern world.\(^6\) In the classical formulation of


\(^6\) A compact review of the main stages in the development of natural law theory is to be found in Alessandro Passerin d’Entreves, *Natural Law: an*
natural law theory produced by St. Thomas, intellectualism has to accommodate itself to the Christian view that the ultimate basis of morality is the will of a personal God. Such a view has strongly anti-intellectualistic implications which, as we shall see, were to be fully developed in the later medieval and early modern periods. To meet this difficulty, St. Thomas tried to construct a theory of the divine personality in which intellect and will were related in such a way as to render compatible with one another the demands of a theistic ethic and the intellectualistic position which makes choice and will subordinate to intellect. In constructing this theory of the relation of will and intellect in the divine personality, St. Thomas was also providing a model by which the relationship of these faculties within human personality might be understood.

The premise on which Thomas’s theory of God’s personality rests is that God has a nature, or essence. This divine essence differs from the essences of finite creatures in many ways, but most notably by virtue of the fact that God’s essence and his existence are one, as man’s are not. It also differs in that all of God’s attributes are perfected or complete forms of attributes which finite beings possess only in partial and fragmentary form. In spite of these differences, there is a real sense in which St. Thomas may be said to apply Aristotle’s theory of natural kinds to God, since his being is tied to a constellation of attributes. As a result, God can—

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Introduction to Legal Philosophy (London: Hutchinson’s University Library, 1951). An excellent treatment of much the same subject is Hans Welzel, Naturrecht und materiale Gerechtigkeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1955), although Welzel somewhat incongruously treats as one form of natural law theory the kind of ethical voluntarism which I interpret rather as a directly antithetical doctrine worked out by critics of natural law theory.

7 St. Thomas’s doctrine of the nature of God’s intellect and will and of their relationship to one another is set forth in his Summa Theologica I, Qu. 14, 15, and 19 and in the Summa Contra Gentes, Bk. 1, chs. 44–96. In these discussions, St. Thomas often cites St. Augustine’s “De ideis” [De Diversis Questionibus 83, No. 46, Opera Omnia (Paris: 1861–65), Vol. 6] which is unmistakably Platonic in inspiration. Although it is often claimed that St. Augustine developed a new conception of the will that ran counter to classical intellectualism, the passages most often cited in De Trinitate Bk. X, 11 (17–18) seem to indicate that this innovation should not be interpreted in such a way as to qualify the primacy of intellect as the touchstone of moral truth, which is clearly expounded in the “De ideis.”
not be lacking in any of these attributes that constitute his essence; for if he were, he would not be what he is, and this is to say that the law of contradiction would have been violated. This is impossible even in the case of God, who must therefore act in a manner consistent with his own nature. St. Thomas certainly did not think that by this doctrine he was denying God a power that he might possibly have had, and he would doubtless have thought it senseless to assert that he was imposing real limits on what God could do, as some of his critics were to argue. On the other hand, if any of the things which, according to his theory, God cannot do, are not obviously unimaginable, the denial that God can do them will inevitably sound as though some real incapacity were being imputed to him. This is precisely what was to happen in the case of the moral limits assigned by St. Thomas to God's action.

St. Thomas assumes further that the object of God's knowledge is his own essence, and that God knows other things only mediately, i.e., as contained in his own essence. Now, one element in this essence is God's goodness which is thus, in the first instance, an object of knowledge—a bonum intellectum. Similarly, the good of each finite being that is included in the nature of God is included in the nature of that thing as it figures in the divine intellect. The crucial step in the argument is St. Thomas's assertion that the object of God's will cannot be something outside him, but must be his own essence. Otherwise, God would be in a state of privation, and this would be genuinely incompatible with his perfection. From this it follows that the will is addressed to the bonum intellectum, and that it is subject to the same law of contradiction that governs the intellect:

The will is only of some understood good. Wherefore that which is not an object of the intellect, cannot be an object of the will. Now things in themselves impossible are not an object of understanding, since they imply a contradiction. . . . Therefore things in themselves impossible cannot be an object of God's will.8

8 "Voluntas non est nisi aliquiili boni intellecti. Illud igitur quod non cadit in intellectum, non potest cadere in voluntatem. Sed ea quae sunt secundum se impossibilia non cadunt in intellectum. . . . in divinam igitur voluntatem non possunt cadere quae secundum se sunt impossibilia." *Summa Contra
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God cannot, therefore, will evil; and since there cannot be any possibility of error in his apprehension of the good, he does in fact will only what is truly good and good by a standard that is independent of his will.

It is another very important thesis of the theory of natural law that the moral truths that God knows infallibly and perfectly in apprehending the goodness of his own nature are in some measure accessible to the human intellect and will. To the extent that they are, human beings are not exclusively dependent upon an unpredictable revelation for guidance in the conduct of life, but are instead in a situation vis-à-vis moral truths that is essentially similar to that of God. Both stand in a cognitive relation to the good—the *bonum intellectum*—and in both cases this good is independent of their wills. Neither makes anything good by willing it or choosing it; for both, the goodness of an end is certified by a rational insight into its relationship to the nature of the being whose end it is. God’s knowledge is, of course, perfect as man’s is defective and partial; but man is subject to the will of God only as this is understood to be ordered to the ends proposed by his intellect, and these ends are in some degree apprehensible by the human intellect as well. If God loses his absolute autonomy by this submission of his will to his intellect, there is a compensating gain in moral intelligibility for man. Eventually, however, this subordination, which had been held by some theologians to place effective restrictions on the power of God, also came to be felt as a limitation on the moral freedom of human beings. In that feeling, a powerful movement of reaction against Thomistic intellectualism was to find one of its strongest motives.

The subsequent evolution of intellectualism in the modern period and the immense influence it has exerted over the development of ethical theory as a whole are too well known to require further comment here. One seventeenth century statement of its central thesis is so striking, however, that it must be noted:

... moral good and evil, just and unjust, honest and dishonest (if they be not mere names without any signification or names for nothing else, but willed and commanded, but have a reality in respect of the

*Gentiles*, Bk. 1, ch. 84. (The English version is taken from the Dominican translation published in London: Burns, Oates, and Washburne, 1923–24.)
persons obliged to do and avoid them) cannot possibly be arbitrary things, made by will without nature; because it is universally true that things are what they are, not by will but by nature. As for example, things are white by whiteness, and black by blackness, triangular by triangularity, and round by rotundity, like by likeness, and equal by equality, that is, by certain natures of their own. Neither can Omnipotence itself (to speak with reverence) by mere will make a thing white or black without whiteness or blackness . . .

And since a thing cannot be made anything by mere will without a being or nature, everything must be necessarily and immutably determined by its own nature, and the nature of things be what it is and nothing else. For though the will and power of God have an absolute, infinite and unlimited command upon the existences of all created things to make them to be, or not to be at pleasure: yet when things exist they are what they are, this or that, absolutely or relatively, not by will or arbitrary command, but by the necessity of their own nature.9

The interest of this passage is increased by the fact that its author, Ralph Cudworth, who was himself a Platonist, was consciously arguing against a radically anti-intellectualistic view of the divine will which had been worked out during the interval that separates him from St. Thomas, and which he imputes to certain "Occamite wranglers." A position that in its essentials is very close to Cudworth's was defended in the mid-eighteenth century by Richard Price.10 After a substantial eclipse during the nineteenth century, intellectualism was once again restored to a position of influence within ethical theory by the two moral philosophers whose work has been the cornerstone of twentieth century ethics on the continent of Europe and in the English-speaking world: Max Scheler and G. E. Moore.11 Their role in


10 Richard Price, A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals, ed. D. D. Raphael (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948). See especially ch. 1, sec. 3, and ch. 5. In the latter chapter there is a forceful attack on doctrines that assign primacy to the will over the intellect within God's nature.

11 G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903) and Max Scheler, Der Formalismus in de Ethik. und die materiale
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stimulating the further development of ethical theory will be discussed in Chapter IV.

II

While one form or another of intellectualism has continued to command widespread acceptance among modern writers on ethical theory, perhaps its most important influence has been to call forth strong negative reactions that have moved ethical theory in new directions. It is not too much to say that innovation in modern moral philosophy has typically assumed the form of criticism directed against a tenaciously surviving intellectualism. Sometimes this reaction has been purely negative, and has issued in a comprehensive skepticism. But while a skeptic like Montaigne may despair of the possibility of finding stable moral truths, he does not usually challenge in principle the propriety of talking about truth and falsity in moral contexts. Indeed, nothing testifies quite so eloquently to the influence of intellectualism as the skeptic's assumption that there are no alternatives to it that do not plunge the whole subject of morality into an irremediable disorder.⁰¹

Skepticism, however, is hardly a new kind of ethical theory. Among the constructive reactions to intellectualism, the best known is probably the "ethic of sentiment" that was worked out by Hume and later given systematic form by Bentham and his school.⑬ This view rejects the prime intellectualistic assumption that moral predicates denote independent attributes of the things


¹² For an estimate of Montaigne's skepticism, see R. Popkin, The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1960), ch. 3.

¹³ The most important texts illustrating this movement in moral philosophy—those of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and later, Adam Smith—can be found in L. A. Selby-Bigge (ed.), British Moralists (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897). The influence of Hutcheson on Hume is described in N. Kemp-Smith, The Philosophy of David Hume (London: Macmillan Co., 1941), ch. 2.
evaluated, and holds instead that the assignment of such predicates implies no more than a capacity for producing certain feelings in human beings. If we abstract from the occurrence of such feelings, there is (so the argument goes) no sense in which moral judgment can be said to be true or false. On the other hand, these predicates can apply to such judgments if they are considered simply as predictions of what kinds of things will tend to produce agreeable and disagreeable feelings in human beings. When the further assumption is made, as it was by Bentham and his followers, that only these feelings can be the object of human desire, the way is open to the development of a type of ethical theory that differs fundamentally from intellectualism in its conception of the nature and subject matter of moral knowledge but, at the same time, subordinates individual choice to the notion of moral truth quite as strictly as the most rigorous intellectualism ever did.

There is still another mode of reaction against intellectualism that is significantly different from both skepticism and the “subjectivism” outlined above. While the latter saves the concept of truth for morals by transferring it to statements about the so-called “tertiary” qualities, and the former treats it as an ideal that is, unhappily, unrealizable at least in moral contexts, a third position raises, as the others do not, the more radical question about the underlying assumptions of intellectualism, and in particular its unquestioning application of the concepts of truth and falsity to moral principles. For the vocabulary of cognition which the intellectualist applies to the description of the moral life, it proposes to substitute a new set of concepts of which the most important is choice. The most familiar label for this tradition or counter-tradition in moral philosophy is “voluntarism.”14 The central meaning of the term, as it will be used in this study, lies in the assumption that moral principles are principles of action

14 The term “voluntarism” was apparently first used by Ferdinand Tönnies in the late nineteenth century. A discussion of the long-standing antithesis of intellect and will within Western philosophy is to be found in H. Heimsoeth, Die sechs grossen Themen der abendländischen Metaphysik (Berlin: Junker und Dunnhaupt, 1922), ch. 6; also, David Pole in his Conditions of Rational Inquiry (London: University of London Press, 1961) devotes ch. 2 to a discussion of voluntarism in contemporary ethical theory.
to which the concepts of truth and falsity do not properly apply, and that while they certainly may guide individual choice, they are also, in a deeper sense, dependent upon choice. More specifically, a voluntaristic ethical theory denies that individual choices are subsumptions of particular cases under moral principles whose truth is independently established. It also denies that choice is psychologically or logically tied to some "natural" object, whether this be defined in terms of desirable feeling-states or in terms of some non-psychological form of teleology. Positively, voluntarism may be said to amount to a demand that moral phenomena be comprehensively redescribed in a vocabulary that explicitly recognizes the decisional and logically autonomous character of moral judgment.

Since the term "voluntarism" has often been used to characterize psychological or metaphysical doctrines of will, it is not altogether satisfactory as a term of reference for this set of theses in ethical theory. It has, however, the advantage of reminding us of the affinities such an ethical theory has with the conceptions of evaluation and action that are characteristic of a long line of theologians and philosophers who successively worked out a distinctive alternative to intellectualism and laid the foundations of a view of morality that is often supposed to be peculiarly modern. There can be little doubt that the first major statement of a "voluntaristic" position that is directly relevant to the concerns of ethical theory is to be found in certain movements of thought in later medieval theology that were to find expression also in the thought of the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century.\footnote{Perhaps the best treatment of medieval voluntarism is to be found in the article by P. Vignaux, "Nominalisme," in the \textit{Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique} (Paris: 1903–50), Vol. 11 (1), pp. 717–84.}

Later, voluntarism was transformed by Kant and others into a philosophical (as distinct from a theological) theory of ethics. It has often been remarked that Kant's ethical theory, as well as some contemporary views that bear the mark of its influence, have a distinctly Protestant flavor. In fact, this is what one would expect if, as I shall argue, philosophical voluntarism is in good part a transference to the sphere of human action of certain theses with respect to the relation of God's will to his intellect,
which are more characteristic of Protestant theology than of the main stream of Catholic thought.

The main argument of Part I of this book will be that existentialism, considered in its ethical aspect, is descended from this voluntaristic tradition in theology and philosophy. Whatever its merits and demerits as an ethical theory, it has an undeniable historical interest if only because it presents a conception of human action that is prefigured in the earlier phases of this tradition, but that had never before been isolated from the more or less adventitious religious and philosophical assumptions with which it was previously associated. The idea of a counter-tradition in reaction against intellectualism is, to be sure, not new; but it seems fair to say that the unity and pattern of development of the specific counter-tradition that is based on the concept of choice has not always been fully recognized, at least in the English-speaking philosophical world. Existentialism as a whole has many sources, and no claim is made here to give an exhaustive genealogy for it. But ethical voluntarism is certainly one of the main traditions of thought on which existentialism has drawn; and a brief account of the stages through which that tradition has passed should be a useful preliminary to an analysis and appraisal of its most recent formulation.

A word must be said here about the implications of the view I am proposing of voluntaristic and existentialist ethical theory as a dialectical reaction to other theses about the nature of value which have to be understood if their denial is to have any point. If such a view were accepted, what effect would it have upon the broader human relevance and interest that such doctrines claim to possess? If the existentialist treatment of moral phenomena is intelligible only within the context of the Western philosophical tradition, presumably it will have something important to say only to those who are familiar with, and in some measure influenced by, that tradition. After all, what is the significance of a reactive thesis when there is nothing to react against, if only be-

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16 One of the few books in which a review of the voluntaristic tradition is attempted is Herbert Spiegelberg, Gesetz und Sittengesetz (Zürich: M. Niehans, 1935), although Spiegelberg is more interested in the notion of morality as taking the form of laws than he is in will as the basis of morality.
cause (as is surely the case even for the overwhelming majority of educated persons), Platonic intellectualism is at best an ill-remembered relic of a college course in philosophy, and even more often a mere form of words to which no meaning at all is attached? To this question, the only justifiable answer might well seem to be flatly negative; and one might be tempted to go on to conclude that the widespread interest aroused by existentialism is due to a series of misunderstandings based on certain adventitious features of that doctrine, and can be expected to disappear when those confusions are dissipated. This conclusion could be avoided only if the intellectualism against which existentialism is a reaction proved to be not just an intra-philosophical phenomenon, but to have deeper roots in Western culture and life. In the latter event, a critique of intellectualism such as that undertaken by the existentialists could justifiably lay claim to a wider relevance. Whether or not this condition is satisfied is a question that must be postponed until the final chapter of this book.