What appears to be clearly a characteristic feature of modern moral philosophy is its almost exclusive preoccupation with the most general moral concepts such as 'good', 'right', 'duty', and so on. This has given rise to theories in moral philosophy which try to define, what are sometimes called the purely 'formal' properties of a moral action or a moral judgement. This concern with the formal has also quite naturally led to an unfortunate neglect of ideas which form, as it were, the core substance of, what might be called, the moral life. Thus the ideas which are overlooked are ones such as 'love', 'humanity', 'courage', 'self-sufficiency', 'purity of heart', 'moral discipline' and the role of examples in morality and so on.

It is also apparent that the theories in modern moral philosophy of both the analytic and existentialist varieties are also such that they are quite unable to throw any fresh light on the special phenomenon of moral life. A truly philosophical account of morality must at least begin with the consideration of the elements of the moral life and the special relationship between these elements which inevitably confers a sense of unity and coherence to the moral life. It certainly appears that the idea of 'love' is the most crucial of all ideas, since the unmistakable mark of a moral
life seems to be the predominant and organic role that love plays in such a life. The accent of this chapter is a philosophical justification of this idea.

Mention has also been made about the role of examples in the study of the moral life as crucial. It is quite obvious that in the entire history of mankind, there are no more than a handful of people whose lives would unqualifiedly deserve the title of 'moral'. The peculiar quality of the moral life can, therefore, best be understood through an understanding of what held the moral life of such people together. I would like specially to consider, in this connection, as examples, of the moral life, Christ and Gandhi.

The ideas expressed here are a good deal based on two articles, namely, 'The Availability of Gandhi', and 'The Means-End distinction, rationality, and the moral life' by Mrinal Miri.

A study of morality must necessarily take into account a study of the concept of man. Hence, at the root of the moral self-awareness of modern civilisation are two seemingly mutually contradictory conceptions of man which are powerfully peculiar to our age. There is the one derived from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, according to
which, man in his true being is 'autonomous'; and there is the other idea which seems to have been influenced by the essentially monistic completeness of modern science. According to this, man is logically reducible to 'an object of nature'... the very anti-thesis of the former idea.

Interestingly, diametrically opposed as these two conceptions of man seem to be, they share, the argument reveals, a common failure, namely, that of the inability to account for the traditional moral insights of man. Here, of course, the adherents of either school of thought, might be tempted, defensively, to argue that the fault lies not with the conception of man in question, but rather with the so-called moral insights themselves. This stand however, as it is explained below, is unjustified: it does not generally seem to be a point of the effort in the articulation of these two conceptions of man to reject what has been termed as the traditional moral insights of man. Rather it is the case that the endeavour is to incorporate these insights into the conceptions; but this attempt succeeds—and on sound logical grounds—only by distorting the moral insights. So paradoxically, such a success is therefore not a success at all. Thus the only explanation available as regards this situation is that there seems to be a kind of incoherence involved in each of the conceptions. And so,
"they are in a fundamental sense, unable to do what they would, at least, want to be able to do." 1

Let us now consider both these conceptions of man and their differences in moral philosophy which that entails. Firstly, we will deal with the one that is derived, as mentioned, primarily from Kant. The salient features of this conception seems to be: (1) The criteria for distinguishing the moral and the immoral, and the notion of moral and the non-moral "need make no appeal to anything else other than man himself in his isolation from both God and nature". (2) Now whether these distinctions are to be, in Moore's sense, intuitively apprehended or conforming to what go's by the name of "universalisability", implicit in man's capacity to think rationally, or even by the criteria of the "Existentialists" such as J. P. Sartre, that is associated with man's exercise of his freedom, it is man alone, that is the source and ground of these distinctions.

2. What motivates man to actions is his 'pure' choice. "Pure" here means, the absolutely ungrounded pristine choice suggestive of the ultimate exercise of freedom.

Our concern now is: "how would the traditional moral insights be appropriated into this conception of man", or

1. M. Miri: The Availability of Gandhi, NEHU.
"what would be the place of the place of the traditional moral insights within this conception of man", when one considers insights such as "one ought never deliberately to injure another human being (ahimsa)", "humility (conquest of egotism) is a supreme principle of morality", "moral perfection and complete fearlessness are inseparable?" (these moral principles, in recent times, seem to be embodied in the life of Gandhi with such near perfection that that earned him the title 'the Mahatma' or 'the Great one'). Take for example, the view that the condition of the moral character of a principle is its fulfilling the notion of 'universalisability'.

It has been made seemingly, abundantly clear in recent philosophical debate that the formal requirement of universalisability for a principle to qualify as a moral one is not a sufficient one, though a necessary one. This requirement can quite easily be shown to be capable of being satisfied not only by undeniably moral principles as the ones mentioned, but also by principles of action which are only dubiously moral or downright immoral. This must be expected as natural, since morality as traditionally conceived has its groundings on insights which transcends the merely 'formal' properties of man's capacity to reason. And this is precisely, what gives it its distinctive
character. Hence, if the traditional morality were to conform to the formal properties of reason, the distinctiveness of the former would be compromised.

Let us consider Kant's attempt to show why it is that it is one's moral duty to develop one's natural talents: someone finds in himself a talent whose cultivation would make him a useful man for all sorts of purposes. But he sees himself in comfortable circumstances and he prefers to give himself up to pleasure rather than to bother about increasing and improving his fortunate natural aptitudes. Yet he asks himself further: "does my maxim of neglecting my natural gifts, besides agreeing in itself with my tendency to indulge, agree also with what is called duty?" He then sees that a system of nature would indeed always subsist under such a universal law, although (like the South sea islanders) every man should let his talents rust and should be bent on devoting his life solely to idleness, indulgence, procreation, and, in a word, to enjoyment. Only he cannot possibly will that this should become a universal law of nature or should be implanted in us as such a law by a natural instinct. For as a rational being he necessarily wills that his power should be developed, since they serve him, and are given him for all sorts of possible ends. (The Moral Law p. 86). It is thus clear that the reason for which Kant
would consider the maxim "one ought to develop one's natural talents" a moral maxim is precisely the ground on which he would, otherwise reject a principle as being moral, the ground that, it can be represented as a hypothetical imperative (e.g. if you want 'X' then you must do 'Y') A. K. Coomaraswamy proclaims in a similar issue: "manufacture is for use and not for profit. The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man who is not an artist in some field, every man without a vocation is an idler. The kind of artist that a man should be, carpenter, painter, lawyer, farmer or priest, is determined by his own nature, in other words, by his nativity. The only man who has a right to abstain from all constructive activity is the monk who has also surrendered all those uses that depend on things that can be made, and is no longer a member of society. No man has a right to any social status who is not an artist". (Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art, p. 24).

This conception of man thus induces a kind of moral anarchy which characterises much of modern civilization. Phrases such as, "the permissive society", "every man's right to pursue his own ideal" and so on, are linguistic expressions of this phenomenon. One of the most prominent feature of this anarchy is the acquisitive nature inherent in it. In Erich Fromm's word it is a life devoted to the pursuit of 'having' rather than to that of 'being'. 
4. Some of the important ingredients of the other conception of man, which, as mentioned, derives its idea from the essentially monistic completeness of modern science are the following: 1) man is ultimately exhaustively describable in physical terms alone 2) that being so, man in his totality is reducible to an object of nature 3) therefore, man and his cosmology can be explained in terms of the norms of explanation of the natural sciences. This conception of man has given rise to the popular notion of behavioural studies as evidenced in the academic discipline of experimental or behaviouristic psychology. In philosophy this view of man finds expression, quite ambiguously, in what is known as the doctrine of philosophical behaviourism, 'ambiguous' because, as the argument goes, while on the one hand, it essentially agrees with the notion that man is really nothing more than a special kind of material body, it, on the other hand, finds it, strangely necessary to make irreducible distinctions such as between "cause" and "reason", "law" and "rule", "movement" and "action", "utterance" and "speech", "fact" and "truth". While the first of each of these pairs of concepts are applicable to the natural world alone, the second of each of these pairs are supposed to be indispensable to understand the reality of man. Hence this paradoxical ambiguity appears to be a resistance to the idea of reducing man to
an object of nature. Considering the metaphysical base of philosophical behaviourism, the irreducibility of the distinctions cannot be justifiably maintained. Take the notion of the "freedom of the will", and observe how philosophical behaviourism might seek to solve this problem. The explanations that are offered in this regard are nothing but the arguments that would be typical of psychological behaviourism in dealing with this problem. Now the problem arises from the contention that if man could be exhaustively explained in terms of causal laws alone, then the idea of his "free will" being exercised in any of his actions is clearly a logical impossibility. Philosophical behaviourism might answer to this in the following response: Human actions are categorically distinct from the concept of mere physical change. This is evident in the employment of concepts such as "motive", "intention" and "reason" in explanations to human actions. Thus, as a philosophical behaviourist would contend, to accept the appropriateness of such explanation is to reject, at the same time, the appropriateness of explanation in terms of causes. And so "man's possession of freedom of will is just another name for the fact that the explanatory concepts appropriate for human action are what they are."  

2. Ibid.
The notion of physical change is however, still, unfortunately centrally involved for the philosophical behaviourist, in the concept of human action. The problem of the will arises when it is maintained that the physical change involved in human action might quite exhaustively be explained in terms of causes alone. To insist at this juncture, that the idea of the free will of man is still tenable because the concept of human action is a logically distinct concept would be merely to beg the question.

Having gone so far, it is now quite plain to see that morality, if one can sensibly call it that, as maintained in the sense of the behaviourists is no morality at all, at least from the traditional point of view. If notions such as "praise" and "blame" etc. are used merely as means to effect certain desired changes, then, as I see it, threats of any kind might prove to be just as efficaceous. This follows quite logically from what is implicit in the behaviourists idea of morality as merely illusory. So fundamental moral concepts such as "responsibility", "blame", "praise" etc. have no legitimate application at all in its metaphysic. This indeed is the view held by many. Now others even within the domain of the behaviourist school might prove to be somewhat more tolerant - not with the understanding that 'morality as illusory' rests on a mistake, but indeed, from
the perception of morality as conceived traditionally, for a flagrantly immoral reason. Hence, moral notions though considered illusory, are not entirely useless, and so might profitably be retained within our vocabulary. According to this thought, to praise or blame somebody may not literally make sense; but as long as 'praising' or 'blaming' brings about desired changes in human beings and societies, their usefulness as means or devices is conveniently defended.

It is all too plain to see, that this view of morality or rather tragically and more accurately, the devaluation of moral values has cleverly or unwittingly entered into what might be considered to be one of the most basic activities of human life - namely, the institution of politics, and has permeated all spheres of life. What can be more glaring an example of this phenomenon than the primal motivation of present day politics, which nationally or internationally, is "manipulative" in nature and seeks to control both peoples and societies everywhere by the attempt to bring them under its ambit. Thus the insidious 'moral exhortations' required in fulfilling this motivation has, as the argument reveals "much the same role as bombs and missiles and the behavioural scientists' experiments with population and resources control methods."

3. Ibid., p. 7.
devaluation of moral values is found to be a natural associate of the moral anarchy implicit in the idea of the absolute "autonomy" of man.

It would be of relevant interest to note what Chomsky had remarked about the social reality, albeit principally that of American society, that: "what can one say about a country where a museum of science in a great country can feature an exhibit in which people fire machine guns from a helicopter at Vietnamese huts with a light flashing when a hit is scored? What can one say about a country where such an idea can ever be considered? You have to weep for this country" (Noam Chomsky: AMERICAN POWER AND THE NEW MANDERINS, 1967). This was said during the U.S. Military involvement in Vietnam but the astoundingly disturbing transformation of values symbolised in this one act has become a general feature of present political life. One has to weep for mankind.

Having observed the failure of these conceptions of man to account for morality and the resulting moral confusion which that expectedly entails, let us now dwell on the Gandhian idea of morality and its criticism of the present social values. Prof. A.K. Saran proclaims that: "Gandhian thinking strives to participate in the transcendental centre;
it is concerned with the destiny of man, not with the prospects of a given civilisation; hence its explosive stance. Once this is firmly grasped, it will be easy to discover the essential texts and context of Gandhian thinking."

(Gandhi and the Concept of Politics", Gandhi Marg, 1980).

To come to grasp with what is now known simply as Gandhian morality, one must begin with the "Truth-God-Ahimsa" trio of concepts. This is not only the basis on which all Gandhian thought springs up from, but also that, it can be shown to be an inalienable part of any adequate conception of the moral life.

In Gandhi's use of the term, "Truth" had little to do with the logician's sense of the term in which only propositions can be "true" or "false". Thus Gandhi was more concerned with the truth of being, rather than a logician would, with the truth of statements (It has been recorded that Russell claimed total incomprehension when D.H. Lawrence, remarked about the "falsity" of a person. His only incredulous response to the suggestion apparently was; "Only propositions can be true or false. How can one speak of persons being so?"). What Gandhi meant by "Truth" was perhaps in the sense in which Wittgenstein had remarked, highlighting the nuance: "No one can speak the truth, if he
has still not mastered himself. He cannot speak it; — but not because he is not clever enough yet. "The Truth can be spoken only by someone who is already at home in it; not by someone who still lives in falsehood and reaches out from falsehood towards truth on just one occasion" (CULTURE AND VALUE, BLACKWELL, 1980).

It can, no doubt, be said that the Gandhian sense of "Truth" is reducible to the other more "fundamental" sense. However, as this exercise, like most other attempts at "logical reduction" will leave the core of the other out of consideration, the attempt may not be quite profitable here in this context. Suffice it to say that though the two senses of "Truth" are quite undoubtedly related to one another, there is a radical and phenomenological difference between the two.

What might be understood minimally from the Gandhian conception of truth is that of the conquest of "self deception"; which may be considered, though there are other things besides it, to be the core of the concept. This being the case, it is implicit in the idea that once the shroud of self-deception is removed, one is in touch with the TRUTH of one's being. But this is no easy task. Wittgenstein pronounces: "nothing is so difficult as not deceiving oneself". Perhaps it is too radical to declare hastily that
for human beings self-deception is totally impossible to overcome, but still it can be maintained that the phenomenon is almost inescapable. Only God, by the very notion in which the idea of God is conceived is necessarily free from all self-deception. Thus it is in this sense that God and life of truth are one and same. Hence, Gandhi's occasional equation of God with truth and vice versa.

The most expected question now, in this matter is, 'Why is man almost doomed to a life of self deception?' What seems to be the most reasonable answer to this problem is that 'man is endowed with a powerful ego; and it is the responsibility, as it were, of the ego of each man to show him off in the best possible way under all circumstances. The "action" of the ego is most clearly manifested in one's relationship with other human beings. Each person's ego is perpetually in competition, either covertly or overtly with other egos; and so frequently, the only way to save one's own ego from being crushed by other egos is by deliberately distorting the reality of other persons. The ego, has a way of infiltrating ever into our most "noble" emotions which goes by the name of "altruism" such as "kindness", "generosity", "affection" and so on. It is here that the mechanism of self deception links up and operates with the ego. The mutual complementarity of the ego and self-delusion
is depicted most remarkably in some of the literary works of fiction associated with the classical writers such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky, William Shakespeare, Tolstoy and so on. Perhaps a rewarding way of treating such works is to think of them primarily as explorations of distortions in one's perception of the reality of oneself and others owing to the involvement of the ego. In actual life just recollect the times one realizes with a start, the mistakes one commits in one's assessment of oneself in relation to others, or vice versa, because of the distorting influence of one's ego.

Despite the literal difference in expression 'distorting another person's reality' and 'distorting one's own reality' are really two variants of the same process. Thus, the ego-generated illusions keep not only the other person's reality out of reach of one; but they must, simultaneously distort one's relaity as well; since the primary motive behind misperceiving the other's reality is "the aggrandizement - no doubt in its multiferous variety - of one's own ego; and such aggrandizement can succeed only by not being recognized as such by oneself. The latter, as it were, is a condition of the former."\(^4\)

\(^4\) Ibid.
Thus, the ego, being the prime generator of illusions, both about oneself and also about others, how does one overcome this obstacle? Perhaps the only solution lies in the practice of ahimsa in Gandhi's sense of the term. Generally, the term ahimsa "is taken merely to mean "non-violence". However, a more accurate translation of the word seems to be "non-injury"; and non-injury includes not just physical non-injury but moral non-injury as well. It is quite inconceivable therefore, that ahimsa could be somehow compatible with the demands of the ego. So how can one count as practising ahimsa if in doing so, one is merely serving the interest of one's, as Iris Murdoch puts it, "big fat ego"? For in 'practising ahimsa', thus, one would indeed make a mockery of it. For by using the other person for the gain of one's own ego; and to use another person this way is to do him moral injury. An ahimsa, so called of this kind, is no ahimsa at all. The "way of ahimsa" is the way of gradual overcoming of the ego, which therefore is the way to the truth of being. As Gandhi defines it: "It may entail continuous suffering and the cultivating of endless patience. Thus step by step we learn to make friends with the world; we realize the greatness of God - or Truth. Our peace of mind increases in spite of suffering; we become braver and more enterprising; we understand more
clearly the difference between what is everlasting and what is not. Our pride melts away, and we become humble. Our worldly attachments diminish, and so does the evil within us diminish from day to day". (from YARWADA MANDIR p. 10).

So what has been conveyed so far is the idea that ahimsa is the antithesis of ego-centricism, and can thus safely be equated with "egolessness", which is just another name for "selflessness". Now the idea of "love" in its most profound, absolutist sense has, as its main characteristic the notion of selflessness exemplified concisely in the expression "love for mankind" as concretised in the lives of Christ and Gandhi. This idea of love transcends all particularities and yet is inclusive of all of them. Contrast this with the kind of love associated with consumerism and adolescent romantic involvements. The latter two are instances of the ego-generated activities, and are thus, in the absolute sense, no love at all. For at the basis of these involvements is the attempt to satisfy the "I" or the ego, which, as it were, draws everything upon itself with the intent to possess, and so is diametrically opposed to what the Bible or ahimsa exhorts. This is a clear illustration of love being the opposite of egotism. Hence, it might be claimed that "love" is the positive mode of ahimsa; for
to have loved someone is to have conquered one's ego in relation to that person.

We might justifiably ask now, 'what is the connection of all this to morality?' The answer to this is already implicit in what has been said so far. Firstly, the notion of "selflessness" is related directly to the notion of the moral life. And selflessness or the overcoming of the ego is a pre-condition of the moral life. Secondly, the idea of "justice" is also central to morality; not merely in the sense in which one's assessments of one's fellow human beings must be capable of justification, but more importantly, in the sense in which one's own perception and the assessment of another must do justice to him. To do this successfully, what definitely seems to be a necessary condition, even if it may not be a sufficient one, is the removal of all traces of the ego from one's perception and assessment. Thus it can now be safely proclaimed that the idea of truth-of-being — and ahimsa are central to an adequate conception of the moral life, that is, of the phenomenology of morals. What, if any, is the role of God in all this? God is the very epitome of the moral life— the very embodiment of moral perfection as evident in such concepts as "total selflessness", "omiscience" (absence of self delusion) and the master of "loving justice". It can be said
that in a fundamental sense, God is beyond the life of morality, for an essential aspect of the moral life involves a continual striving towards perfection, and in God there is necessarily no such striving. This being the case, it is impossible to find, in real life, a totally indubitable example of the morally perfect person. Mention may be made here that for Christians, the life of Christ on earth, in human form exemplifies precisely the idea of a morally perfect life. Hence to them, in Christ the metaphysical and the moral come together. The idea of God for morality is essential because it ensures that the ideal of perfection that the conception of the moral life involves is not merely a conciliatory (and therefore illusory) ideal.

Perhaps another way of illustrating the centrality of the Gandhian trio of concepts - God, Truth and Ahimsa, to a conception of the moral life is as follows: A moral life must be one where all the so-called virtues are realized and won over, the vices, as it were. It is a life where all the virtues come together in a unified whole. So moral life is a life of a unity of virtues. Virtues in isolation, do not, by themselves contribute to the moral life. Take for instance, the virtues of courage, intelligence and temperance. Both courage and intelligence can be
put to most effectively immoral and evil uses. Just reflect the abundance of these qualities in a Godse or a Sobraj. As for the other virtues mentioned, that of "temperance"; unless this is expressed in the vital unity of the moral life it is perpetually vulnerable to degenerate into mechanistic ritualism. So we may quite legitimately ask: what is it that infuses moral life into the virtues? It is the all comprehensive unconditional love, embodied in the word ahimsa. It is only when virtues are rooted in a life free from self deception that they really form a part of the truly virtuous life. It is truth thus "that gathers the virtues into the vital unity of the moral life, it is love that is the surest way to the truth"; for love is the antithesis of the ego; and to repeat it, it is the illusions generated by the ego that are the most stubborn obstacles in the way of the knowledge of truth - of one's being, Where we can ask again, does God feature in this explanation of morality? The very idea of God embodies the unity of the moral life in its absolute perfection, and thus logically ensures the reality of this unity. One important feature of the concept of morality, or more precisely, that of moral goodness is the inclusion of the idea of transcendence within it. This perhaps is not quite in the sense in which G.E. Moore talked about "good" being a non-natural property, but in the sense in which goodness always transcendence any
embodiment of it in space and time. This means simply that however perfect an example of goodness a particular person might be, there is something more to goodness than the exemplification of it. That is why, as suggested earlier, it is impossible to find a human being who embodies moral perfection in its absolute totality. Moral perfectability as an ideal must, perhaps paradoxically, for ever remain an ideal for a human being. As Gandhi commented that one can always be more perfect than one is. Hence the self-refuting character in the expression "I have now achieved moral perfection" is apparent enough. So pointing out the earlier dilemma that if total perfection is not an achievable ideal; is it the case then that the idea of morality is merely an illusory one? And if this is recognized as such, then does this not confirm the validity of what has been characterized as our modern moral self-awareness? For a religious person however, what saves morality from being an illusory pursuit is the absolute reality of God.

Let us now attempt an analysis of the notion of a moral life of whether it could be taken to mean a "rational" human activity. The effort might highlight whether or not, as it has been shown as claimed in certain quarters that the idea of morality is mainly an illusory concept. This task will involve first of all an exposition of, what is understood by the concept of 'morality' rationality.'
It is perhaps rightly claimed that the concept of 'rationality' is not a unitary or generic concept. This seems to be quite an incontestable claim as the criteria of rationality may vary quite radically, if not quite from one context to another, at least from one "form of life" to another. Of course it is another matter what is actually meant by the expression "form of life" has not been made very clear. It is claimed for instance that the "form of life" of scientific investigation is different from the "form of life" of religious rituals, and that, correspondingly, the idea of rationality informing the one is different from the idea of rationality informing the other. Understandably the entire discussion leaves one rather uncertain about how best to construe the concept of a "form of life". This vagueness is matched by an equal unclarity about the difference in the "concept of rationality supposedly involved in the different "forms of life". Although this idea of the non-unitariness of the concept of rationality is admittedly unclear there are some distinctions between different kinds of reasoning and therefore, presumably between different kinds of rationality. These distinctions such as that between deductive and inductive reasoning – in spite of the unity – seeking attempts at reducing one kind to another, the distinctions between them is generally acknowledged; and that between theoretical and practical
reasoning. Perhaps it can be said that the acknowledgement of these distinctions does not necessarily commit one to a view about the non-generic nature or the non-unitariness of the concept of rationality.

In this chapter, the question of the unitariness, or otherwise, of the concept of rationality is ignored. What has been attempted instead is the exploration of the idea that there may at least be different levels of employment of the notion of rationality in the sphere of what has been called practical reasoning — that is, reasoning which has to do with our actions rather than with theoretical thinking. It is expected that this endeavour will shed some light on the significance of the means-end distinction in the understanding of human action.

It is usually felt that in the sphere of "praxis" there is a central area where the means-end distinction is crucial in the determination of the rationality (or otherwise) of human actions. Indeed it is frequently believed that the means-end distinction is the only basis there is for making the distinction between the idea of rationality and irrationality in this sphere of human behaviour. Take the account of Harvey Mullane in *Psychoanalytic Explanation and Rationality* about the rationality of a piece of human
behaviour. Thus "A piece of human behaviour" is rational only if the agent is justified in believing that what he does: (a) is likely to achieve, or (b) is one possible way (which in certain circumstances may be a very unlikely way of achieving what he wants to achieve, and (c) it is not likely to bring about other consequences more undesirable than the prospective desirability of what is intended to achieve.

In this account of the rationality of an action, it will be noted that the words "means" and "ends" have not been actually mentioned; however, it is clear that the distinction between what a person "does" and what he pursues "to achieve" is precisely the distinction, between a "means" and a corresponding "end". Thus from this account the distinction made between them is quite inescapably linked with the assessment of the rationality of any action. From this account of rationality one might feel justified to make the following comments:

(1) It does not require one to think that every action is either rational or irrational. It can thus admit the possibility of actions which are neither rational or irrational; such actions could be called non-rational.
(2) It does not require one to think that the rationality/irrationality distinction must be applied for every possible end for an action. The crucial point here is that, for the distinction to apply at all the action which is the means must be linked up with the end via the agent's belief that his action is likely or not likely to bring about the end in question in a required way (these two considerations rule out what are ordinarily called reflex, non-voluntary and involuntary actions from the class of actions which may be either rational or irrational, or perhaps, more or less so. For none of these aforementioned types of actions is done in the belief that will achieve a particular end even if it indeed does so).

(3) The account of rationality given here, seems to require that a rational action is consequent upon a deliberation about whether or not the action has the right kind of relation to the end for which it is a means. However, it needs to be mentioned that actual deliberation need not be involved in every case, as long as the agent can enter upon a deliberation when the occasion demands, in justification of his belief that the action has the right kind of relationship to the end intended to be achieved by its means.
(4) Finally, the rationality of an action is necessarily dependant upon it being conceived by the agent as a possible means to a particular end. That is, the rationality/irrationality distinction, on this account be understood except by reference to the means-end distinction.

The main problem with this account of rationality seems to be its rigidity. That being so, it can be considered too restrictive. In the normal course of things there are so many actions which are not deliberated at all about their suitability for their achievement of particular ends; and yet it would be totally absurd to place them outside the ambit of the rationality/irrationality sphere. It can be mentioned that apart from most habitual actions such as eating, walking, playing etc. they would also include what might be called "spontaneous" actions such as enthusiastically greeting a friend whom one has not met for a considerable length of time, or helping an old person across the road, or giving a coin to a beggar by the road side, helping up a fallen child and so on. It can be said, of course, actions such as these are rational, but their being rational requires that they are capable of being justified, and that their justification would require the agent to relate them suitably to ends either after or before the action in question. Though this account of rationality might save it from
being too narrow and therefore restrictive, there would still be other class of actions which even by this less restrictive account of rationality would still have to be treated as either irrational or quite outside the purview of the rationality/irrationality scale altogether. By this is meant the class of actions which are so uniquely distinctive of human beings that it would be quite incredible to treat them as either irrational or non-rational — actions which usually are labeled as "artistic activity". And so people who engage in such activities as poets, sculptors, painters, musicians and so on with various kinds of ends in view, e.g. attracting other people's admiration and earning a livelihood and so on. However, frequently, they may engage themselves in these activities without any end in view at all; so that the only justification on the part of such artists or perhaps more technically, agents of such an action may be to say that it was done purely out of pleasure. The expression: "I simply felt like doing it, and that is all there was to it", just about sums it up. Yet it would be absurd to think of such an action as irrational or non-rational. A person recognizing his own poetic skill might undertake to write a poem without any end in view further then merely that. And yet perhaps there cannot be anything more deliberate than writing a poem; only this effort may
frequently not be that of the consideration of ends to be achieved by the action, "nor even of any ratiocinative process as ordinarily understood. Reflect on the following passage from Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago: "After two or three stanzas and several images by which he was himself astonished, his work took possession of him and he experienced the approach of what is called inspiration. At such times the correlation of the forces controlling the artist is, as it were, stood on its head. The ascendancy is no longer with the artist or the state of mind which he is trying to express, but with language - his instrument of expression. Language, the home and dwelling of beauty and meaning itself begins to think and speak for man and turns wholly into music, not in the sense of outward audible sounds, but by virtue of the power and movement of the inward flow. Then like the current of the mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movements, the flow of speech creates in passing, by the force of its own laws, rhyme and rhythm and countless other forms and formulations, still more important and until now undiscovered, unconsidered and unnamed". (Dr. Zhivago, Tr.: Max Hayward and Manya Harare, London, 1958, p. 105). And yet, as mentioned already writing a poem must certainly count among the most rational of man's actions.
Hence, though it might be claimed that one writes a poem because of the satisfaction that it might bring to one, such an assertion unfortunately renders the means-end distinction rather useless for an understanding of the concept of rationality. For such a justification, namely, of the form, "I do this because it brings me pleasure", will in principle, be suitable for any action whatever that a person might do; and thus all actions would then be rational — which simply would render the concept of rationality as no longer legitimate to distinguish one class of actions from another class. Without this function the concept would simply be empty.

Perhaps a more hopeful line of defence for the account of rationality under consideration might be found in the following arguments: although most artistic activity may not have any conscious or "pre-conscious" ends, they always, according to Freud, have ends that are deep in the unconscious. In such cases their rationality gets revealed when the so called "unconscious ends" are brought to the surface to the level of consciousness (with the help of psycho-analysis). Thus think of Freud's account of some of the paintings of great artists such as Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci. It is interesting to note here that, despite the agents apparently aimless activity, there
exists, from Freud's account powerfully persuasive arguments for the existence of motives (or ends) which although they might lie concealed in the unconscious are nonetheless pursued. Even though for the purpose of this paper a detailed analysis of the Freudian theory may not be required, it may at least be mentioned by way of illustrating, as a paradigm, the difficulty encountered in the previous explanation of rationality with regard to artistic activity.

Freudian theory offers an explanation, in terms of unconscious motives not just of artistic activities, but indeed, centrally, of the activities of the neurotic. An acceptance of the Freudian theory of explanation of neurotic behaviour would place such behaviour firmly in the class of behaviour that is rational. Thus according to the Freudian theory, not only would artistic activity conform to the criteria of rationality (according to the account of rationality that we are considering), but neurotic behaviour would also be considered as rational. The situation then confronting one is, if neurotic behaviour were just a good an example of rational behaviour as artistic activity, would there be any clear example of irrational behaviour left at all? Thus an appeal to unconscious ends in trying to explain the rationality of some actions which are so obviously rational, or even paradigmatically rational, might result in the obliteration or near obliteration of the distinction between the
rational and the irrational and might thus self-defeatingly preclude the whole purpose of a theory of rationality.

Now continuing with this account of rationality there is yet another fairly large class of actions which would, or so it seems, have to be treated as either irrational or non-rational. This is the class of actions which may broadly be classified as religious rituals. Many indeed treat behaviour associated with religious rituals as irrational - supposedly attributing such activities to neurosis, superstitions etc. Such views of religion are held usually by those who advocate the "cause of rationalism", "the scientific outlook" and so on. Despite however, claims to the contrary such people unilluminatingly show some reluctance to brand behaviour so uniquely characteristic of human beings such as rituals, as irrational or even non-rational.

Likewise, if Kant were right about the morality of an action not consisting in any considerations of ends that it might or might not achieve - and to be sure, Kant's moral theory is not merely a quaint intellectual exercise — all moral actions qua moral acts ones would indeed be seen as non-rational, if not irrational, on this account of rationality. But it would, however, be another matter what Kant
considers actions which are clearly moral, on his criterion of morality, to be the supreme example of the exercise of rationality.

The difficulty of this theory of rationality might be expressed thus: The theory totally ignores the rationality of ends. Apart, however, from the classes of cases that have been considered, there is also the traditional idea of the proper or correct end of human life. There have been different approaches for such an end. In traditional Indian life, one notes for example, the notion of dharma or the virtuous life, moksa or happiness, wisdom and so on. The idea which is crucial here, is that in so far as the method for the "proper end of human life" is conceived merely and purely as an end, and also not as a means to a further end (that is, an "end-in itself" as traditionally expressed) its justification cannot, quite obviously, consist in citing any end to which it might be a means. (Without some such notion of an "end-in-itself" the argument concerning whether or not the end justifies the means indeed becomes unintelligible). On the other hand, one cannot fail to notice that much of traditional moral philosophy consists in attempts at justifying, or at least advocates for the "proper end" of human life. Therefore, from the traditional point of view of morality, the idea that ends (in-themselves,
if one wishes) being excluded from the bounds of rationality must be taken to be, if not absolutely unintelligible, at least strange indeed.

In our modern philosophy in its linguistic or existentialist mode, as the works of people such as Sartre, who represents the Existentialist mode of thinking or as evidenced in the ideas of linguistic philosophers such as Hare, Hampshire and Sartre testify, the 'self', or rather the real agent, stands, as it were, over and against the world of facts, that is, over the world of knowledge, both theoretical and practical. There is also the widely held belief that rationality in practical matters, as opposed to theoretical matters, is really a matter of matching of means to ends, which may, in their turn, be means to further ends. Here the real agent is, as it were, a tiny spark of freedom whose very being consists in making choices which transcends all considerations of rationality.*

This idea, as has been mentioned already, in the earlier parts of this chapter, is derived ultimately from Kant. But Kant made a serious attempt to show that the self in the exercise of its freedom, can be either rational or irrational. On the other hand, in the existentialist-linguistic mode of thinking, the moment the process of

rationality begins, the 'self', as a result of that, enters into the web of knowledge and of calculations which bind or ensnare its freedom. In its original, pristine and unfettered state, the self simply makes choices which are as it were, uncorrupted by the calculus of rationality. It is this state of freedom of the self which, most of these philosophers like to claim, is the most "authentic", (whatever the word might mean here) state for a human being to be in. Therefore, it is claimed, man's ultimate choices of ends, his ultimate principles of actions, are beyond the bounds of rationality. However, this perhaps does not make them irrational, although some might say it does, but at least it makes them non-rational (not perhaps in the same way as a reflex action is non-rational).

Let us, for a little while dwell on some speculative intellectual history here; this modern turn in what might be taken to be the central debate in traditional moral philosophy is, interestingly, really the point where several currents of contemporary thought and practice converge. Here are some of them: (1) there is the idea following Strawson, that the only intelligent (and, therefore, rational) attitude to take towards nature as well as human action is the "objective" attitude (as opposed to the "reactive" or "participatory attitude". Now morality, which deals with the
possibility of goodwill or ill-will is dependent on the legitimacy of the "participatory" or "reactive attitude".*

(2) There is the idea that the belief that there are absolutes in matters of morality is an illusory one (hence the notion of a "permissive society").

(3) The rationality that man exercises in matters of theory and practice can, in principle, be just as well exercised by machines if not better; yet the machine is not "free" (perhaps precisely because it is so rational, or "logical" as it is sometimes put) though one might conceive of machines going out of control and turning "destructive".

(4) There is also the lurking anxiety that devoid of freedom man loses his special unique status.

All these ideas about man, in modern philosophy quite naturally, generates the debate about ultimate ends. Man is declared as, indeed, free; but this freedom in the sense it is meant is thus only possible of being exercised "in an intellectual vacuum". Therefore paradoxically, man's humanity might be saved only by allowing him to transcend, in his most authentic being, his intelligence. The tension, as

*This has also been dealt with in Chapter 2.
again Strawson puts it, between are "humanity and our intelligence" is resolved by "freeing", as the argument goes, the former from the latter. Thus from the standpoint of modern moral philosophy, rationality is ruled out from any genuine exercise of his freedom by man; and consequently ends, if they are the result of any genuine choice, are not rational even if, for that reason, they might not be irrational.

Now, we might thus ask that if our ultimate ends are not rational, or at least, are neither rational nor irrational can they, then be moral or immoral? or are they indeed beyond the morality/immorality distinction as well? One common answer to this - which is quite typically modern - has been that the notion of the morality of ends is indeed a legitimate one; but however, what endows the characteristic of morality to our ultimate ends is precisely the facts that they are totally ungrounded. That is, they are the result of the unfettered exercise of man's freedom. A logical consequence of this is the much quoted existentialist dictum "man creates his own values" - literally creates, ex nihilo, God like - it is quite clear that morality and irrationality - or at least non-rationality from this account of man's absolute freedom, are to the modern mind, very close logical associates.
Instead of dwelling on the crucial difficulties with this modern vision of moral life and the pursuit of ends, let us, more profitably, at least for the purpose of this discussion, look for an alternative vision of the moral life where rationality, and not non-rationality or irrationality, is the inalienable concomitant of the moral life and pursuit of proper ends.

What would be considered the central idea of this vision is that the discrimination between ends is not ultimately a matter of man's ungrounded choice; it is rather, as the argument goes, man's general search for truth. And an end might be a moral end, not because it is the result of "free" choice (in the sense of the existentialist - linguistic mode of thinking) but because it is known or recognised as such. Thus the vision of morality puts the moral ends firmly within the class of ends which it is rational to pursue. The moral end is justified because it is the moral end quite independently of any exercise of my freedom, and its rationality is guaranteed by the fact that it is known to be moral.

The rationality of the moral endeavour is, however, not just a matter of one's knowledge that the end one is pursuing is the moral end; it is also, much more significantly, a consequence of the fact that the moral pursuit is,
in its essence also an epistemic endeavour. One of the various ways of explaining this, as we have had the occasion to note earlier, may be as follows: let us say, the moral end, consists in achieving justice in relation to others. Here the term "justice" minimally means justice in one's evaluation of one's fellow beings. To be just in this sense also means not only to be justified in one's assessment of another person, but perhaps more importantly also to do justice to him. This could be explained thus: one is justified in one's assessment of another person in the same way as one might be justified in making a claim to know that p. Whatever p might stand for. Hence, for one to be justified here is for one to be able to give a sound justification of one's assessment. But to do justice to the other person involves the idea which is much more than being merely justified in one's assessment of him; what is of paramount requirement is that one has ensured that one's ego has not, in its multifarious subtle ways clouded one's assessment, one's ego uses these ploys to deceive oneself in relation to the other; and to have done justice to the other person is also to have conquered to the extent possible, one's self deceiving ego. Here it will be wrong to think that whatever might lend rationality to the moral end, the rationality of the pursuit of the moral end is still a matter of calculated matching of the means adopted towards achieving this end. (Removal of self-deception as the most
suitable means, in the required sense, towards achieving justice to the other person). Here, from the phenomenological point of view, "the end" is inconceivable "apart from this means". How can one be sure that one has done justice to the other person, if there is the slightest possibility that in one's assessment of him one has only self-deceivingly served one's own ego? In such an eventuality, it will be absurd to talk about the 'means' as the "best" or the "most suitable", since given the "end", the "means" is quite inescapable. Indeed, the very idea of a means-end distinction is totally inappropriate in this context. In the phenomenology of morals, justice and freedom from self-deception are related to each other in a way in which a "means" and an "end" ordinarily do not. For example, doing physical exercise is a means to good health, but the two are not bound to each other as a "moral end" is bound to its means. Thus, the very process of achieving justice towards another person is the very process of attaining freedom from self-deception.

Think now of the moral end as the achievement of the virtuous life. A virtuous person is not merely one who possesses the so-called virtues such as courage, intelligence, temperance and so on. Though this argument has been offered earlier, let me dogmatically repeat some of the
central points about what constitutes a virtuous life. A moral life is one where the virtues come together in a mutually enhancing unity. In isolation and taken singly, the virtues need not, in fact very often do not, form a part of the moral life at all. Mention has been made, as an example of Godse who has used the virtue of courage for a most immoral purpose: that of killing a human being, thereby ignoring the other virtues such as "kindness", "tolerance", "forgiveness", and so on. And similarly with the virtue of "intelligence". As to temperance, "if it is untempered by the vital unity of the moral life it is forever in danger of degenerating into soulless ritualistic disciplining of oneself". The question now is 'what makes these so called virtues an inseparable part of the idea of the moral life?' It is truth and love (or more modestly, perhaps, ahimsa). Truth once again in the sense of freedom from self-deception. And here, as already mentioned earlier, it is never enough that one speaks the truth only occasionally; one must, indeed, live the life of truth. Once again, we invoke the idea of Wittgenstein who declares that, for one who has not mastered himself, is in no way possible to speak the truth; not because such a person is not clever enough yet, but because the truth can be spoken only by some

one who is at home in it - not by someone who, despite living in falsehood on occasion reaches out to the truth, and as we have been groping so far to explain, the life of truth can be hoped to be achieved, only through love, or at least through the practice of ahimsa - Not in a sense of non-violence but more correctly, in the sense of non-injury. For the idea of "non-injury" to others must include desisting from using the other - in however self-deceiving and devious a way - in the service of one's own ego. As has been maintained, ahimsa may occasionally flower into love; and love perhaps much more than ahimsa is the opposite of egotism. Gandhi declares that love is the positive mode of ahimsa. Thus to have loved someone is also to have conquered one's ego in relation to that person. At the heart of the idea of love is the idea of total selflessness - which is just another way of expressing the idea of ego-lessness.
So, the idea of love here carries with it the responsibility of the perpetual need to suppress the ego. It is an ever gnawing consciousness of the easily compromisable effort to slacken its vigilance and defeat the whole purpose of even the most altruistic of our actions. What we might call love is therefore, no love at all, if its metaphysical truth is unrecognised or ignored. Thus the crucial point to remember here in this regard is the fact that love is reflexivity.
The reason why many fail to achieve this notion of love is because of the fear of the challenge it poses. Hence, very often, our metaphysical timidity quashes our moral aggression.

Thus, the rationality of the moral end is once more guaranteed by the fact that the moral pursuit is at the same time, the pursuit of truth. So, by now, if one apprehends the notion of the moral life in the sense expressed here, it will be wrong to think of truth, ahimsa and love as the "means" to the achievement of the goal of the virtuous life. As it were, they are at the heart of the life of the virtues. Hence, the virtuous life can, as conceived traditionally 'move and have its being' in the vital matrix of truth, ahimsa and love.

From this account of morality, or the vision of moral life, it is clear that "freedom" here cannot mean the freedom which creates, ex nihilo, moral values, because of the plain fact that moral values are not created at all. Nor can the idea of freedom be a matter of completely ungrounded decision. Of course, decisions to act one way or another may indeed in that narrow sense be ungrounded. But this has nothing to do with the concept of morality. Thus, free action, when it is also a moral action, must on the other hand, have its legitimacy on prior knowledge. When I have
unself - deceivingly known the other in love and ahimsa, my action towards that person springs from this knowledge, and freedom consists precisely in this spontaneous flow of action from knowledge.

The notions of any society is bound to generate insufficient knowledge, or worse still, a wrong idea of the workings of that institution, if its relationship with other institutions is excluded. The result would be a report based on a warped perception. It is obvious therefore, that 'religious' concepts cannot be studied in isolation. Part of the understanding of what may be called the "spirit" of a religion consists, it seems to me, in one's being able to relate the religion to other institutions and spheres of life of the society in question. Take for instance, the Christian notion of God as "Father". It would naturally be absurd to accept that in such anthropomorphic literality. But then, however, it is also more than merely metaphorical in its use. The meaning of such usage would emerge only against the background of a form of life which encompasses much more than what may narrowly be understood as the "religious", and one's understanding of the concept becomes richer through progressive exploration of the concept in an indefinite variety of contexts and also against the background of an equally indefinite and unpredictable variety of
experiences; or examine the notion of the popular dictum: "Love thy neighbour as thyself" which appears to be the central core of Christianity. It is seemingly an exhortation, to transcend one's egocentricism, and instead practice 'humility' — similar to the Gandhian 'ahimsa'. This ideal of total selflessness may never be attained as has been discussed, by anyone, considering human frailties, but the morality nevertheless, lies in the effort. The point however, is that this is the profound meeting point of the concepts of religion, morality and society. A progressive exploration of this idea is, at the same time, an exploration into the nature of religion, morality and human society. One must not, however commit the fallacy of assimilation while thinking about other religions. Certainly a dialogue between the representatives of different religions is possible, but each must understand the other in the context it is presented in. In a similar fashion, when one's attention is directed towards the study of a society as a whole, one must be cautious that the various institutions form the ensemble of that society, and thus, to study one institution to the total exclusion of the others would lead the observer in acquiring an impressionistic view of the rituals/practices which may at best understandably appear to one as absurd. For the native,
however, the co-ordinated functions of all the various institutions, such as the 'political', 'social roles', 'religion' and so forth, determine his social reality.

The idea of God, as I suggested earlier, guarantees the non-illusory character of the moral pursuit. It is not as though a non-religious person cannot be convinced of the authenticity of the moral life. However, for the religious person nothing can be clearer than this. It now seems to be necessary that we have some understanding of the idea of the religious in the context of the phenomenon of the plurality of religion.

We have already made the point that there is a particularly intimate connection between a religion or a form of life and its language. Clarity about the concepts of a particular religion cannot be achieved except by relating them to the language in which they "live and have their being", and the form of life which this life embodies. This however does not entitle us to draw a relativistic conclusion about the relationship between different religions. Although the concepts of different religions may vary from one another according to the form of life in which they play their specific roles, yet the suggestion that the concepts of one religion may frequently throw light on the concepts of the other and vice-versa, is not at all unsound,
but it is also a fact that there are clusters of concepts which in spite of their differences in their specific normal settings, are easily recognizable as religious concepts, that is concepts which, as it were, transcend the bounds of any particular religion and somehow enter into the idea of religion as such. Such are the concepts, for example, of surrender to a non-human intelligent power, of prayer, of meditation, of the search for the spiritual as opposed to the merely material, and the idea that there is much more to this world than what can be perceived merely through the senses. These ideas may be differently spelt out in different religious languages and they may be embodied in activities which may be substantially different from one another. Thus think of the concept of prayer and worship, and imagine the enormous differences between activities which are connected with these concepts in different religions. Even within the same religion there are differences. But in spite of such dissimilarities it can hardly be doubted that one can talk about the concept of prayer and worship in relation to religion as such, and not just as always specific to a particular religion.

Perhaps one might fruitfully make use of the Wittgensteinean concept of "family resemblance". One might say that we have the concept of religion at all, not because there is
a network of criss-crossing similarities among all the activities which go by the name of religion. One must however be cautious in accepting such a position. There have been people who have, for instance, talked about the essential unity of all religions, and when such claims are made it is some particular feature that they have in mind and not just a network of similarities. However, such claims are usually not purely descriptive but rather normative in character. (This might however raise the interesting question as to whether philosophy when it is concerned with either religion or morality can be completely value-neutral. I shall however leave this question aside for the purpose of this present work). One can say the following about the claim of the essential unity of religions.

1. That it is not obviously odd or nonsensical.
2. That it may itself be the product of a profound religious insight.
3. That there is nothing absurd in the suggestion that the claims might at some future time be taken seriously by all religions and be incorporated into their respective forms of life. In other words, an inter-religious dialogue is not an incoherent concept and the consequences of such a dialogue might well be the realization, on the part of all the protagonists, of the basic unity of all religions.
Given this caution, however, the idea of family resemblance is a useful one in thinking about the phenomena of religion. It is useful because there are not only genuine differences between religions and religious practices, but, even the similarities that they exhibit are always, or almost always, similarities — to put it paradoxically — with a difference. There are for instance obvious similarities between the devout Hindu's total self-surrender to say, Krishna, and the devout Christian's total self-surrender to Christ. But the phenomenologies, as it were, of these self-surrenders are different, and an access to these different phenomenologies can be afforded only by a grasp of the two different religious languages and their corresponding 'forms of life'.