

TEXTES SÉANCE 4:

(1) The concepts which are relevant to ethics may, for the purpose of a first approximation, be divided into three main groups. To the first group belong *value*-concepts. The most important member of this group, which is of interest to ethics, is the concept *good* (and its opposites *bad* and *evil*). Concepts of the second group I shall call *normative*. Here belong, in the first place, the notions of an obligation, a permission, a prohibition, and a right. To the third group of concepts belong the notion of a human *act* and the notions which are relevant to action, such as choice, deliberation, intention, motive, reason, and will. Closely related to them are the notions of desire, end, need, and want. Concepts of the third group are sometimes called 'psychological'.

(2) It is a widely entertained opinion that value-concepts are intrinsically normative notions. This opinion is reflected in a certain philosophic jargon, which tends to confuse or to mix value-terms with normative terms. When, for example, some writers insist upon the value-free nature of science they often give as a reason that science can tell us how things *are* but not how they *ought to be*.

(3) Which is then the alleged normative nature of value? When one tries to give a clear answer to the question, one immediately runs up against difficulties. To say that the good is something which ought to exist or ought to be pursued, is not only very vague but can easily be seen to be an untenable opinion, unless stated with heavy qualifications. Ought apples to be good? Ought good apples to be eaten? Must one choose the better of two instruments? Whom and in what way does the goodness of a good runner oblige? A supporter of the idea that goodness is intrinsically normative would perhaps, when faced with these questions, wish to qualify his opinion and restrict it to 'moral' goodness only. Are morally good acts then morally obligatory? This is not at all obvious. It may, on the contrary, be argued that moral goodness is 'over and above' obligation and that no man is or does good merely on the ground that he does not neglect his moral duties.

Georg Henrik von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*, 1963.

1/ Traduction :

- Etablir un lexique anglais-français comprenant les termes les plus difficiles, puis traduire soigneusement les trois textes en français.

2/ Questions :

- Quelles raisons Von Wright donne-t-il pour séparer nettement les concepts évaluatifs (*value-concepts*) des concepts normatifs (*normative concepts*) ? En quoi les partisans de la neutralité axiologique de la science (*value-free nature of science*) font-ils une erreur selon Von Wright ?