

TIME, MORALS, AND MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that aspects of time are crucial to morals. Recognising that there are several bases for moral judgement this paper proposes that time is one important element. Busy managers need timely assistance with complex moral problems, and dealing with the various Codes of Conduct that abound in professional and commercial work. The use of moral argument provides a set of basic principles which promote essential consistency without which we cannot properly function. It is recognised that there are some substantial psychological and personality variables at work in the formation and exercise of moral judgement, but these are not the subject of this paper. What is being addressed is that the time aspect of morality has received relatively small attention. The temporal aspects of moral values are discussed: among them are amounts of real time, sequencing, and consistency over time. In forming moral judgements, and in interpreting Codes, it is concluded that a consideration of temporal aspects is another valuable reference point.

INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that our concepts of time are intimately bound up with human values. Our human reach is across time as well as across space. The expression of customs changes, but what they represent does not. Every period has its own characteristic way of expressing fundamentals, but their forms of expression may change. It is a truism that bears repetition: morals is a long-term entity. Conscience is a temporal entity: one in which our concerns and decisions have a time element ('I regret what I did', 'I could not live with myself if I ...', 'She should have thought about it before taking that course of action').

We do not accord moral judgement to the very young, largely because they do not have the experience to draw on. The stages of moral development set out by Kohlberg are ones of developing time perspective. Times may change but some basic ideas do not. For example, one might conceive of the holy day of the year as not Easter, but rather the end of the financial year (confession time). Accountants are the priests, the tax office the main church, and the Commissioner of Taxes the ecclesiastical luminary. Against this we might consider under which conditions we should judge historical events by modern standards. For example, the use of press gangs, of putting young boys up chimneys as chimney sweeps, and of industrial exploitation. Our continuity in time is an essential of who we are. As William James (1890 [1950]) so aptly put it:

“When Peter and Paul wake ... and recognise that they have been asleep, each one of them mentally reaches back and makes connection with but one of the two streams of thought which were broken by the sleeping hours. ... so Peter's present instantly finds Peter's past, and never by mistake knits itself on that of Paul. Consciouness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described”.(p 237-8)

This smooth sense of temporal identity is the continuity that gives us our unique selves. When Heraclitus said that no man steps into the same river twice we note that he still allowed man a temporal identity even though it is denied to the river.

CYCLES AND TIME

Time may considered to be cyclical in nature, uni-dimensional, as sequential, or as special occasion. The cyclical view of events and behaviour require long time-perspectives. The obvious instance of cycling is the diurnal cycle. Monthly cycles, yearly cycles, the 19-year lunar Metonic cycle, the recurrence of Halley's Comet, the Chinese characterisation of years by animal symbolism, and business cycles (such as the Kondratieff Cycle) are all illustrations.

To observe longer-term cycles one must necessarily have long-term information, and it is no surprise that ancient cultures and good record-keeping nations excel. The length of a human life does not permit the accretion of such knowledge, but the observations and records available to later generations do permit it. Just as one accumulates observational knowledge so too does one accumulate moral perspectives. The relatively recent attention to triple bottom line reporting is an example of the moral consequences of certain forms of corporate behaviour. The consequentialist insights are now part of the modern corporate fabric.

This accumulated knowledge, and the moral insights that derive from it, may or may not be used as a basis for modern judgements of historical events and policies. Thus the policies and practices of feudalism may be abhorrent now but one could ask whether or not they should be viewed with the reprehensibility that we now feel. The use of harsh punishments, the absence of civil liberties, and practices such as *droit de seigneur*, are instances that we debate as being

morally wrong at any time or in any place – or we could consider them to be instances of their time and not to be judged by modern views.

Our biorhythms are time matters, as are our views on the cyclical nature of larger scale events (such as the night-day, the lunar cycle, the seasons, sunspot activity, and the Metonic lunar cycle). In politics there is the cycle of the rise, consolidation, and decay of mighty empires; in economics there is the alternation of bull and bear markets, of regular fluctuations in commodity prices. Art, mood, and fashion all have their cycles; and thus are sequence-bound (Huff, 1965).

It is not so much time that is the issue but, rather, the processes that occur in time: one might say that time heals all wounds but we might more accurately say that the processes of healing require time for them to operate. The issue of timeliness is so poetically given in Ecclesiastes:

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up [that which is] planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:2 – 3:9: King James Version).

SEQUENTIAL TIME

The crucial point here is that of the order of events. For example, a student giving a gift to an academic before an examination might be considered as behaving dubiously: that same gift after a student has passed (or not passed) the course, however, is viewed as a courtesy. In the professions one is enjoined not to have professional relationships with friends or relatives. Such a relationship lacks the arm's length criterion. One of the knottier problems for, say, a lawyer, psychologist, or medical practitioner is when such a professional relationship might be sufficiently distant as to not be an issue. Both the sequence of whether a professional relationship precedes or postdates a personal one, and the length of time and the closeness of that relationship, are all critical.

As an illustration of the importance of sequences we might consider places where formal rules require a proper sequence. Courts of law are a good example. The identification of the protagonists, the charge, the evidence, the rebuttal arguments and evidence, and the cross-examination all appear in a certain order. It would be nonsense, for example, to have the defence precede identification and the charge.

That point is graphically illustrated by what happens when a person becomes demented. The loss of temporality takes them out of relationships with both the physical world and with their social and familial relations. Toda (1983) has even given consideration to the notion of future time as being evolution-related, while also being related to biological information systems, and to evolved intellectual capacity. Some languages have terms that distinguish time from sequence. In Italian, for instance, the word for time is *tempo* but the term of occasion of sequence is *volta*. Previous events in our lives have an effect, and sometimes a salience. In other instances the past is seen as an outside entity: time is another country. As Marlow put it in *The Jew of Malta*, 'but that was in another country: and besides, the wench is dead'.

Some of the great stories are ones of sequences out of joint. Thus the story of Bizet's *Carmen*, and the story of *Romeo and Juliet* are instances of relationships occurring at times out of sequence: Carmen's attraction to Don Jose is reciprocated too late when Carmen has formed

a new attraction towards Escamillo, leading to Carmen's murder by Don Jose: Juliet's feigned death deceives Romeo who then suicides leaving Juliet bereft, thus leading to her own self destruction. Alibis are time statements; cause and effect is inferred from temporal sequence; and our judgments of others are partly dictated by the sequences that they have undergone (as in judgments of maturity, of worldliness, and of recency of political experience).

One of the underpinning values is that of equity. We rightly admire equity as it is both courteous and fair. In professional relationships, for example, a client gives confidences. Equity is maintained by the governing of professional work by a Code that enjoins preserving confidences. The extraordinary power we have over our children is balanced by an extraordinary affection for them; court procedures ensure that a balance is kept between the rights of the accusers and the accused. Part of maintaining equity is that of the sequence in which we do things. For example, courts hear allegations and evidence before a charge and evidence is cross-examined. It would be bizarre to proceed to a finding in court before the charge and evidence is heard.

An aspect of equity of morals is that of constancy. Twin aspects of moral behaviour are not only that it promotes consistency of response but does so from a moral standpoint. One manager once said to the author that consistency was even more important to him than the underlying values. His earthy way of expressing it was that he needs to know what is going on, and said that he would '... rather deal with a consistent bastard than a capricious angel'. From all of this we conclude that the sequence of events is of crucial importance - and that point applies with force in the moral realm.

QUANTITIES OF TIME

The amount of time devoted to something is certainly an indication of interest, and may also be evidence of courtesy. One could not imagine an enchanted youth, enraptured by a new girl friend, excusing himself from attention on the grounds that he was busy with something else (like cleaning his shoes). How much time is devoted to something is an indication of interest; thus having a house guest arrive to be given only a perfunctory greeting and then left to their own devices is to devalue them.

In our instance of courts the amount of time devoted to a trial bears some relationship to the seriousness of the case. Courts do not spend weeks hearing a case about riding a bicycle without a rear light. Indeed, one might ask if it makes sense not to have an upper limit on the amount of time a trial may take. Trials that go on for years not only takes up scarce resources but also make it difficult for those involved to keep continuous track of evidence and argument.

Another instance of courts and time is captured in the notion of 'justice delayed is justice denied'. To bring a charge and have it delayed unconscionably is to wreak upon the charged person a stress that is both unnecessary and a denial of the right to prompt determination. All of this amounts to the proposition that the amount of real time is an indication of both importance and of value.

CULTURE: THE ENCAPSULATION OF OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE.

There is the complementary view that nations need to forget in order to move on: thus how could a proud nation such as the French recover from the humiliation of their prompt capitulation to the Germans in WWII; the British from the early excesses of colonialism; and the Japanese from the atrocities they committed within the last 80 years. There are, however, recoveries from shamed memories, an example being the recovery from the Nazi era, a self-conscious recognition of wrongs, and a determination to prevent a recurrence. Indeed, their new Constitution (the *Grundgesetz*) is a model one.

From this it is clear that events are dominated by their temporal context. There is an excellent illustration of this in a story about the Saturn rocket. The story records that the

company which made the rocket did so in their well-equipped factory and then had to have it transported to the launch site. As it was a heavy piece of equipment it was thought that the best way to transport was by rail, which was what was done. On the route there was a tunnel so constructed as to carry the standard American railway gauge. It was the transition of that tunnel that determined the width of the Saturn rocket.

The railway gauge was based upon the older concept of roads and that older concept of roads dates from the Roman Empire where a chariot with two horses side-by-side was the standard width. The road ruts that they made had to be reinforced, and thus the road gauge was determined. As an earthier colleague of the author put it, 'the width of the Saturn rocket was determined by the width of two Roman horses' arses'.

One of the earliest bases of morals was that of Confucianism which were ones not of prudence, but rather of behaviour appropriate to relationships. The essence of Confucianism is the respect for tradition and the preservation of traditional relationships. In the Confucian Analects the first step in morality is that of filial piety – an expression that corresponds to the Mosaic Commandments; for example, 'Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee' – all illustrations of the importance of our temporal heritage.

Genealogies are recited in many cultures (such as Maori or Amerindian). In the King James Version of the Bible, Genesis 4:18 onwards there is a recitation '... and unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusela: and Methusela begat Lamech', and so forth ... (sometimes known as the 'begats'). Kahlil Gibran wrote, in *The Prophet*, of our children as being our connection to the world through time, but not as being ours in personal ownership.

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts,
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit,
not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

INTERGENERATIONAL DEBT

One of the most engaging ironical analyses of over-attention to historical wrongs is that by Boorstin (1970). Taking the basic proposition that early facts are the most important (as the twig is bent, so the tree is inclined) Boorstin has given us a significant question to address in his book *Sociology of the Absurd*.

It is interesting to note that several Western nations regard heritage as more important than they do character or achievement. Questions about hereditary nobility - 'What was your father's occupation?', and 'which school did you attend?' - are seen as important questions. *Hidalgo*, the Spanish word for nobleman, is derived from *Hijo de Algo* (son of something), ie, lineage rather than personal achievement. The social advantages and debts that we have incurred may be seen to require balanced restitution.

The application of this approach across generations is the issue addressed by Boorstin: his approach is, at once, lightly written, but serious and significant. Our ethnic background may

be one of advantage or disadvantage. In order to follow the principle of equity Boorstin proposed that our ethnic background (or ethnic quotient - EQ) be calculated and recorded – as one records a social security number. In order to be both fair and precise one needs to quantify. The use of various criteria such as skin pigmentation, cephalic indices, DNA tests would be used and an identification given. Thus someone might be AS65; S15; N20 (65% Anglo Saxon, 15% Semite, and 20% Negro).

From this Boorstin suggests that an appropriate time would be spent with teachers with appropriately balanced backgrounds, given an appropriate proportional diet (steak, spaghetti, coconuts, cous cous, breadfruit, raw seal, etc). The religious celebrations and times each would have to be in their cultural heritage (half of Easter, quarter of Ramadan, etc). Could one do half a pilgrimage? A quarter of a particular marriage ceremony? Three quarters of a funeral service? Learn five Cantos of Shakespeare compared to ten percent of comparable work by Goethe? Just proportions of Beowulf and the Upanishads?

Boorstin also proposed a Merit Quotient (MQ) which has a maximum of 100. The great issue used to be the rewards of after-life. That has now changed to a consideration of the present one. All past injustices are to be not only dispensed with in this life, but also rectified. The privileged must now compensate so that the historical equation now equals zero, being a form of temporal Benthamism. Any ancestral pleasures now have a negative influence on the individual; and ancestral pains a positive one. The measures of pleasures and pains must include both duration and poignancy.

One wonders how far back in ancestry one needs to go. Should it have measure by generation? Does a father's pleasure count for half; and grandfather's for one quarter; a great grandfather for one eighth – and so on? If that were so everyone would need an extensive family tree. Boorstin even proposed a formula in which the equation includes the variables of T = time; S = suffering; and P = pleasure. The EQ and the MQ are fixed. Such a formula properly applied should remove allegations of discrimination in issues such as job selection and promotion, it will save time and money, and reduce paperwork.

This approach is akin to the doctrine of signatures in homeopathy (the preventive hair of the dog that might bite you); and may be used as a form of social inoculation. Hatred, discrimination, and dislike could be administered to all as a means of developing social antibodies against those issues that divide and separate (come in at 9.30 on Tuesday to have your tincture of hatred!).

Could a person who imported something that was not quite acceptable, and who kept the receipts, have their descendants sue the overseas company for wrongdoing two centuries later, and collect the damages (indexed for inflation and with interest added)? Accepting that native peoples were maltreated by white colonialists does it follow that the crimes committed by the indigenous peoples should also be the subject of reparation claims (you ate my great great grandfather, please apologise and make financial restitution).

One recent twist on the notion of intergenerational debt is that of an American university that gave entry points to historically disadvantaged groups thereby raising their entry score to the university, and giving them an advantage over better academically qualified majority group applicants. The University of Michigan had a race-based admissions policy. A former ruling by an American judge (Justice Lewis Powell) held that a race-based admissions policy could be used narrowly, and was used as a justification in this instance. The issue was the subject of a court challenge and, in June 2003, the Supreme Court of the US ruled that the 'affirmative action' program was unlawful as it discriminated against white and Asian applicants.

This principle, and the counterarguments of its critics, show that debate remains. In the inconsiderate, and sometimes villainous, treatment of others does the passage of time lead to an erosion of enormity and thus allow us to weasel out of responsibility for intergenerational debt? Is this a new shift in the argument for collective versus personal responsibility. One would hope

that such a psychological calculus of past wrongs were banished, but it seems that is improbable. At best we can see that while such views endure we should be alert to the ridiculous lengths to which such views might lead.

One might say that hatreds and animosities are regrettably often inculcated in the young: the love and care we give our children is most often repaid by their care for their children. One might also say that intergenerational debts are handed on rather than handed back.

TIME AND SOCIETY

News includes the attribute of timeliness as well as drama. Not all crises are reported on the 7 o'clock news, and the reporting of news items is, of its nature, highly selective. The death of 3,000 in the New York World Trade Centre was reported about as extensively as it could be. The death of ten times that number in an earthquake in Asia, or the victims of a famine elsewhere, are not seen as equally newsworthy. Perhaps the reporting of those places where mega-deaths are commonplace has exhausted our emotional empathy so that we no longer relate to them as human problems.

News, by its nature, is a high-turnover enterprise: hyperbole is the order of this day, and every other day. Wars on the Horn of Africa, famine in Pakistan, fighting in Afghanistan become so commonplace that we feel inured to them. The wrecking of the Berlin wall, Israeli tanks at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and a balloon flight around the world have novelty. While most news is of the woe and tragedy kind there are numerous instances of positive humanitarian acts, commentaries on the oddities of life, and the occasional positive assertion – even if only symbolic. On a brighter and positive note it is pleasing to see that the Council of European Ministers meeting in Strasbourg in 1972 adopted the Beethoven *Ode to Joy* as the anthem.

It is interesting to note that we call our common past 'culture' but have no word for our common future. While it is so that different cultures have differing attitudes to time, that might be better exemplified by considering those who have internalised two cultures, as is the case with the children of migrants. It would require them to 'time-switch' depending upon the context of their social interactions: are they 'clock-oriented' or 'sun-oriented': is it a 'make-it-happen' culture or a 'mañana' culture? Pride in precision in one culture may be an unacceptable obsession in another.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TIME

As alluded earlier, when dementia takes its toll of a person it is the absence of sequence as well as memory that is distressing – at least to their family and friends. Another common observation of early senility is the clear recollection of early memories with little memory for recent events, and thus the psychological processes have lost the salience of recency.

In psychology one of the significant contributions to this idea was put forward by Hearnshaw (1956) whose work on temporal integration was a landmark. His main thesis was that the capacity to integrate ideas and perceptions through time is crucial. Our sense of our past and how things came to be, and how they progress, is an indispensable attribute of our humanity (as a Sri Lankan colleague of the writer aptly observed, 'You can take the lady out of Sri Lanka but you cannot take Sri Lanka out of the lady'). Hearnshaw's work gave rise to a test of temporal integration, and one could foresee a time when such a test might be used as an early indicator of cognitive dysfunction.

To many, the way in which history is written is critical to the way it is understood. Social histories and theme oriented histories seem to be appealing, particularly when they illuminate one's understanding of one's own social being. The battles-dates-and-kings accounts give more of a sense of seeming 'facts' but themes may be more appealing. For example, one might look at the *Rats, lice, and history* (Zinsser, 1996), or the *History of*

sacerdotal celibacy (Lea, 1932). Good examples of the social histories are books by Basil Willey (1972), which take an era (eg, the eighteenth century background).

One of the fundamental issues in memory is not so much its capacity but, rather, the selective nature of memory. One possible explanation of the problems in Northern Ireland is that of selective recall. Battles of centuries ago and recollections of injustices might well outsway the pride in a common culture, and the beauty of the countryside. One might hold that the French readily forget their ready capitulation in the Second World War and take an inordinate pride in their firm belief that they are a courageous and cultured nation. Part of national memory may be previous political affiliations, some of which may sit well and others not so well. Thus Austria was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, a grouping that may not seem 'natural' to some.

ACCELERATION OF PROGRESS

We might consider the compression of time and achievement that is characteristic of our era. It is only about 100 years ago that the first powered flight by man took place. In the intervening period we can now travel faster than sound, carry hundreds of people in comfort across the world at an altitude of six nautical miles, and can watch films and have gourmet meals while doing so. There are people alive today who were witness to the development of photocopying, modern anaesthesia, plastics, the Pill, anti-biotics, AIDS, frozen foods, contact lenses, radar, credit cards, television, dishwashers, electric blankets, hoola hoops, and computers. Alvin Toffler wrote a book in which one of his main theses was not that change occurs, and may be dysfunctional, but that the rate-of-change is the disturbing thing. His term for it was 'future shock'.

Our perspective on time is probably quite different from that held by (say) 10th Century people. One perspective on that idea is provided by Danziger & Lace (1999) who outlined what life was like to Britons in the year 1,000. They concluded that, given the circumstances of the time, it was remarkable how brave, enduring, and philosophical they were. As those authors noted, just because we know more does not make us wiser, or display more humanity. More recently there was an illustrative story, probably apocryphal, about Chairman Mao being asked for his opinion of the American War of Independence: 'Too soon to say' was his reply. It is almost a truism that our perception of time, and our perspectives on it, are partly determined by our chronological age.

Time may seem to pass more quickly for the older than for the younger because their days are not filled with new and engaging experiences, thus creating a feeling of drawn-out time where one day is much like another. If one is five years old, however, a year is a fifth of one's life: at 50 years of age it is only one fiftieth. This is one among several hypotheses that might account for the seeming differential passage of time. Draaisma (2004) has written an account of why life speeds up as one gets older. He subtitled this 'some thoughts on autobiographical memory'. That account also contains, amongst other things, a wide ranging account of the memorial process.

One aspect of some cultures is their capacity not to forget and not to forgive. Ancient wrongs, hatred of particular religious groups, remembrance of battles fought and lost from hundreds of years before, and vendettas are all manifestations of this notion.

Given our life span, and the fixity of early educational experiences it is apt to remind ourselves that the institutions we see in current time are relatively evanescent. Conquering nations was the way to economic imperialism; now economics has been added as a means. The extinction of sovereignty may be by any one of several changing means; union, conquest, economic power, agreement, or civil war. The notion of secession (as, for example, from the European Union) is given new meaning, and sovereignty is a constantly changing concept.

For the purposes of this analysis time has two aspects: time passing, and the sequencing of events. One of the classic comments of someone recovering consciousness after trauma is ‘what happened, where am I’. This need for reorientation in time and space seems to be fundamental.

Our personal history, our family history, and our culture, are all part of our orientation. Time is both objective and subjective: our notions of time and space are inextricably entwined. We seem to see time with reference to our own being, but it is not so for all. As one of the Dalai Lama’s monks said to him, ‘As your Holiness will recall saying 200 years ago’.

More recently there has been a serious study on our attitude to time as a personality variable. Zimbardo & Boyd (1999) have given us a measuring scale that expresses our attitude to time. Such time perspectives may be considered along five dimensions: past-negative, past-positive, present-hedonistic, present-fatalistic, and future. For example, a person with a ‘future’ orientation works for future rewards at the expense of present pleasures (like the long-run hedonist). Their present ‘reality’ is subjugated to the future ‘reality’. Unlike the little piggy, they are unlikely to build their house of straw. Their attitude to risk is quite different from, say a present-fatalistic.

One might even take that analysis a step further and look at political risk analysis, as is done by the PRS Group. Their analysis is presented in the Handbook of Country and Political Risk Analysis, with its main focus being upon how international businesses ‘... identify and analyse country risk’ (Howell, 2003). They do not use the Zimbardo & Boyd analysis, but could well incorporate it.

There is another interesting observation concerning animal learning. Studies of maze learning in animals eventually led to the development of a temporal maze (as distinct from a spatial one). In such a maze an animal is trained, usually through food reward, to run the maze. The simple choices are to turn left or right, but the sequence of the turning is critical. Thus the correct solution might be to go up the run and turn right, coming back to the starting point; at the next run it might be to turn left; and on the third run to turn right – and only then to get the reward (thus the sequence is right-left-right).

To learn successfully animals need to understand sequencing, and to remember where they are in that sequence. It will be clear that higher order animals are better at this task than are ones not as elevated in the evolutionary hierarchy. Using this analysis one might conclude that the capacity to sequence is indicative not only of what we might loosely call intelligence, but also is an indicator of psychological functioning.

Our use of language is one that evolves through time and carries our cultural expectations. ‘W H Auden learned that ... the truth of a word ... is not synchronic (here and now) but diachronic (covering the whole stretch of its history). If silly once meant holy (as it does still in ‘Silly Suffolk’), in a poem it may carry a flavour of the antique meaning. The word buxom, as Auden discovered, has a background of Anglo Saxon *bugan*, meaning to bend, and to mean not merely plump and comely but yielding and pliant. It may be said that the OED, stirring the imagination through words, is as much a poem as a source of poems, and hence the longest epic ever written’ (Burgess 1998: p 353).

TIME AS OCCASION

There is another sense in which time is of importance: a notion of the ceremonial time. We are enjoined not to speak ill of the dead (they are out of time); religious ceremonies are not the occasion for rudeness (and if it does occur this is regarded as a gross solecism). We recognise that there are times for events. As was mentioned earlier, the writer of Ecclesiastes noted that there is a time for every purpose. Here we are saying that the occasion warrants due ceremony: seriousness, pomp, and the absence of criticism.

Another approach is to look at decisive events rather than ceremonial events. Such an approach is exemplified in Creasy’s (1996) book *The fifteen decisive battles of the world*.

Written originally in the 1850s it included battles then known; now it would probably include other battles; Marathon through Hastings to Waterloo might now be modified to include such battles as the Tet Offensive and the Battle of Britain. It is noted that battles are not always important (except to those wounded or killed), but there are some which are so definitive as to give a change of direction to world history. It is interesting to note that battles, and other significant events, are remembered as such – but not always what they were about. As Southey wrote in 1800 in his poem *The Battle of Blenheim*:

And everybody praised the Duke,
Who this great fight did win.
But what good came of it at last?
Quoth little Peterkin.
Why that I cannot tell, said he,
But 'twas a famous victory.

Among such questions one might pose are: Who were the main protagonists in the Trojan war, and what was it about? Why did Guy Fawkes try to blow up the British Houses of Parliament? Which nations were represented at the Treaty of Versailles, and what did they conclude? What was the point at issue in the Boxer Rebellion?

CONCLUSIONS

Our conception of values is bound with several variables, one of these being the critical one of time. Time is seen as a factor in the expression of values, time may be used to express courtesy or rudeness, time pressures may militate against reasoned value judgement, and time frames may determine our sense of appropriateness.

One does not always do what is morally right in the present moment since the time for doing what we plan is not yet: the moment is not matured. Thus our sense of fitness is determined by our time frame: the long-term planner has a different outlook on the world from that of a short-run hedonist. Morals is, amongst other things, about long-term outcomes. It is rarely about short-run pleasure seeking or instant gratification. Just as there is intellectual power (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) so too might there be chronological intelligence. This hypothesised personal quality gives its bearer insight into long-term consequences. If that disposition is combined with a commitment to benefits the combination may be regarded as a description of the moral person.

That time is a factor in moral behaviour: it finds expression in events and processes being accorded due time (as in the provision of a proper and respectful amount of time for a process): of being aware of the proper sequencing of events (a gift before a decision may be viewed as a bribe, whereas afterwards it may constitute a courtesy): being alert to the ways in which time may be misused to express a discourtesy (such as being kept waiting unnecessarily): the time of proper occasion may be misused and thereby become a breach of values. Time may be used in political double-speak (as in 'The Minister will report to Parliament when the inquiries are complete' – meaning we will delay, hoping the event will become a stale non-issue).

Being mindful of the moral dimension of decisions one might then turn that into specific principles. Among such would be mindfulness of the allocation of time; be aware that the sequence of events may be a crucial moral issue; and that events and occasions have their own demands. In all of this one hopes that a full measure of time would be given to essential moral conditions.

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