INTRODUCTION.

Welcome to the third edition of Pv-P, a little slimmer, it seems, for Lent.

I am grateful to all contributors to this term's magazine, to David Owens for the dashing about he did, and to Tina Gatton for her assistance with an initially uncooperative Clare stencil machine. I would also like to give special thanks to Declan O'Dempsey who, in addition to having made several contributions to the magazine has done ALL the typing this term; without his help the present issue might well not have appeared. If you are able to type, your help for next term's would be most appreciated (please contact either D. O'Dempsey, (Clare) or P. Griffiths (Trinity Hall)).

Any articles for the next effort to Antonia Feuchtwanger (Jews) by the first week of the Easter term. please.

Lent Editor: Ian Jakes (Fitzwilliam)

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MORE REMARKS ON THE UNBORN.

There are a few points concerning Ion Jakes' article "Remarks on the unborn" (Fv-P No 2.) which presumably through lack of space, were not made explicit.

The first is the fact that the two senses of 'moral' which are proposed do not, jointly or separately, have much in common with the way anti-abortionists may use, and are likely to use the word. At least, an anti-abortionist who employs the word in both or either of Mr. Jakes' sense is giving a great deal away. For it appears to me that organisations like LIFE and their supporters and allies are more inclined to deny their opponents to deny that there is something special about human life (at any of its stages). This is normally expressed in terms of a principle of the sanctity of human life: there is no consideration, which I could be adduced to make the taking of human life morally acceptable. There can be no trade off against the evil of a death. So far as I can see, the reasons for holding to such a principle can be divided into three categories. (1) It might be argued that life has intrinsic worth by virtue of being miraculous, whether or not one accepts the theological baggage that term carries (note how some feminist literature treats the mystery of procreation as a phenomenon of passing importance). (2) Some anti-abortionists claim that we embark on a slippery slope in allowing foetuses to be done away with, and that, once it is started, there is no stopping the relentless machinery of a eugenics programme. Therefore, since the final term of the regression from abortion, through infanticide and voluntary euthanasia to compulsory death for defective or undesirable specimens is unacceptable, we must not allow any stage to be considered legitimate. And (3) The foetus is to be protected because it is highly likely to become the sort of creature to which we do attribute the right to life (in the sense of a right not to be killed). It has at the very least, potential rights and we must protect the potentiality, though perhaps the requirement to protect it grows as the foetus develops.

Argument (1) supposes that, even if the foetus is not (in Mr Jakes' rather imprecise formulation) a human life, it does have some special characteristics. (2) is agnostic on this point, but argues from the consequences of supposing that a foetus does not have the special characteristics we attribute to things very much like it. (3) is compatible with the denial that the foetus is, in utero, alive.

There is a fourth argument which is not quite so straightforward but involves a decision on a particular sort of case. A pregnant woman may be carrying a child which cannot be performed unless a caesarean is performed. But, if it is performed there are other medical reasons why the woman will die. And if it isn't performed the woman can be saved by crushing the child's skull. Thus of the mother and the child, one must die. And the considerations which are customarily regarded as relevant are the following. (A) that the child's death would be as a result of a killing, as opposed to a letting die. (B) that the child is an innocent. (C) That the mother, in conceiving took the risks of child bed upon herself (assuming pro tem, that she had a choice in the matter). And (D) that the mother has the right to decide about her own body (which, at that time, included the foetus).

Now if we distinguish the moral worth of killing and letting die, A will be a reason for letting the mother die. Some people, of course, would deny the asymmetry, thus making the consideration irrelevant. I assume that no one would suppose that letting die is more damnable than killing. If we think that innocents have some special status and must be protected, B will lead to the conclusion that the mother's death is preferable. C, however, is not so univocal, since it can be argued, cogently in my view, that, in conceiving, the woman did so in the belief that, if aid were available to her, it would be given. The fact that she took the risks upon herself doesn't imply that the risks to be beed be any greater than is unavoidable. A victim of a car-accident isn't refused treatment on the grounds that she took the risks of a road journey oh herself or that he was culpably negligent in producing the accident.

But it is D which seems to me to be at once the strongest and the most contentious claim. If the foetus is regarded as part of its mother, she may choose to treat it rather as a sick man might an perforated appendix, or a cancerous tumour. Its excision would be a matter of reducing the likelihood of long-term suffering physical or economic) or of death. And, in my view, this analogy, though radical,
is sound. Those who deny it must assert not only that the foetus has life, but also that it has a life independent of its mother's. In which case, an abortion would consist in making that independence explicit. This argument goes through irrespective of whether the foetus can be expected to survive after the separation. The problem is that in the most common form of abortion currently practiced, vacuum aspiration, the foetus is, if previously alive, killed by being sucked along the canula. The same goes for the craniotomy.

The second point which Mr Jakes elides, arises when he says "if anyone does not regard the fact that they (sic) has life with indifference, they cannot, without inconsistency, hold that abortion is morally right." By 'moral' he means that which is right after the application of the so-called 'Golden Rule'. The rejoinder which Mr Jakes supposes as open to the pro-abortionist involves claims about the non-identity of any person with any creature able to reply to the question 'How would you like it'... as done to you?'.

But this seems unduly circuitous and loaded with unpalatable conclusions about personal identity over time. The sort of reply I would advocate is more direct, though perhaps not all people would find it in their hearts to give it.

I am not indifferent to life. But I do not think it would have been an evil had the foetus from which I developed, been aborted. This doesn't imply that I now wish to die. I am, however, confident that there are many cases in which I am prepared to do so. Had I been aged between 13 and 45 between the years 1939 and 1945, it would not have been wrong for me to have died in the struggle against Nazism (though no other war in which Britain has ever embroiled itself would have been worth it). Equally, if certain sorts of dictatorship were to arise in this country, I think that in spite of my love of life if my death or actions involving it, would materially destabilise the government of the day, I would be prepared to make the sacrifice.

This doesn't mean that I am burning to die in a good-cause - I had much rather live for one. What if does mean is that somethings are worth a death, even if that death is my own. And one of the things which I think is worth this much is a woman's right to choice over her body. Had my mother aborted the foetus which in fact came to term on 14th August 1959, she would have been exercising what I regard as the legitimate prerogative. Anything worth this much is the reduction of the number of people who come into the world either unwanted or to a station in which they cannot be adequately sustained by e.g. their parents, the state, or the land in which they are to live. I claim that this suffering of starvation is greater than the harm (which I could admit) of abortion, and I claim that a pregnant woman has both a right and a duty to do what she thinks fit for the foetus she is bearing.

R. DAVIES (TRINITY)
A LITTLE SPACE ON TIME.

In this piece I wish to refer to Sue Romero's two articles on backwords causation: BIZZARRE CAUSAL LOOPS in Pz-Pmo1, and THE WITCH DOCTOR PROBLEM in No2. By pointing to the drawing out the peculiarity of going back in time and killing someone and of trying to change things which have already happened Romero has certainly discredited the believability of stories which purport to be about such things. She says that 'there is nothing we would recognise as backwards causation,' (No2 P9), and that 'the occurrence of a causal loop is unintelligible' (Nol p7). While fully endorsing the substance of her conclusions, there is one point I would like to query. And that is the need for her polemical method in arriving at them.

In the earlier paper, she describes four cases in which one goes back in time and kills someone. In the last case, the person killed is the earlier self of the killer. Romero says that this case is the 'strongest possible' (ibid). What I doubt is that anyone of the cases adduced is stronger than the others. Presumably, Romero's reason for saying what she does about the relative strengths of her cases is based upon the difficulties of imagining their coming to pass. In this sense, her assertions are matters of psychological fact.

Equally, in her later paper, Romero appeals to our difficulty in understanding what the chief is up to in doing his dances, to convince us that something is awry.

My point is simply this: let us imagine space-time as divisible into regions, or points, specifyable by an ordered quadruple. For each region, or point, (A,B,C,D), there is a proposition, p, which is true. Now if p is true of (A,B,C,D), -p cannot also be true of it. For the contradiction p & ~p would be true of the state of affairs at (A,B,C,D). And this is manifestly impossible.

Now if p is true when Romero's grandfather is unmolestedly doing the lawn at t, (or on the other story, true when Tribesman A is showing cowardice in the face of a lion at t') and q is true when Romero is plunging a knife into his grandfather, at t (or likewise, true when Tribesman A is showing pluck before the lion at t'), both p and q cannot be true, i.e. of the same story. q is an instance of ~p. Romero expresses this by saying that if the event desired by p happened, q couldn't happen because it didn't happen (Nol p6). And it will be quickly seen that this is ambiguous, since it can be taken to mean that q is impossible because unactual. She explains by saying that if you contrive to do q, when p was in fact the case, 'you switch yourself into another possible world' (Ibid). Though I am not quite sure what this means, it is probably more congenial than the belief that q is impossible because p took place.

This leads me to think that the question of whether we can bring an event in the past which did not occur reduces to a question of logic. Therefore, there is no real need for the narrative with which Romero supplies us, nor yet for any of the speculation on how to act rationally to achieve our desiderata. What I think can be proven by a appeal to the contradiction is that if there were actions which affected the past, or time-travel (i.e. Backwards), they would not be very interesting, since the consequences whih Romero entertains (however briefly) could not arise from them. The original supposition from which the bizarre follows is a contradiction, which cannot be seriously supposed in the first place. So we could travel back in time and do things only if the past already included our travelling back to it, and doing things; and we can affect the past only in the (nil) sense that we have no effect on it. I.e. the past is not altered by our actions.

Romero will probably agree that there is room for doubt about the properties of causation and about the properties of time. These are notions with epistemological leeway. But there is no debating over an obvious contradiction. So, she might do better to argue from the indisputable truths of logic. But this would make her articles shorter.

R. DAVIES

(TRINITY)
The Twins.

1.
In form and feature face and limb
I grew so like my brother,
that folks got taking me for him
and each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
it reached an awful pitch,
for one of us was born a twin,
yet not a soul knew which.

2.
One day (to make the matter worse)
before our names were fixed,
While we were being washed by nurse
we got completely mixed;
and thus it was by fate's decree,
or rather nurses' whim,
My brother John got christened me,
and I got christened him.

3.
This fatal likeness even dogged
my footsteps when at school,
and I was always getting flogged
for John turned out a fool.
I put this question hopelessly
to everyone I knew —
What would you do if you were me
to prove that you were you?

4.
Our close resemblance turned the tide
of my domestic life,
for somehow my intended bride
became my brother's wife.
In short, year after year the same
absurd mistakes went on;
and when I died, — the neighbours came
and buried brother John.

H.S. LEIGH. (NFA?)
The contentious premise in Ian Jakes' argument seems to me to be the following: 'If potential life is regarded as sacrosanct, any objections we make against abortion on this basis could make equal validity be made against contraception and even chastity, seeing as these we lead to the wasting of potential human life'. He needs this premise in order to get from the fact that we all agree that we are now pleased (in a universalizable sense) that the foetus from which we grew was not aborted to the conclusion that we are all committed to increase the population up to the point where we are no longer pleased that we were not aborted. It is the absurdity of this conclusion which necessitates the procreation (six) of a new sense of the word 'moral'. But the point of this sense is precisely to deny the premise that we are pleased that we were not aborted, in the full universalizable sense of the word 'pleased', and this on Jakes' own admission is something that we would not wish to deny. Jakes has surely rejected the wrong premise of his reductionist absurd argument.

Our expression of pleasure at not being aborted can have a different justification from an expression of pleasure at the fact that we were conceived, even if the justification of the former brings in ideas about the duty to cultivate potential human life. To ascribe rights to actual individuals with the potential of becoming actual human beings, is not at all the same as ascribing rights to possible individuals, who, if they existed, would have the potential of becoming human beings. An obligation to cultivate an actual being's potential is not at all the same as ascribing an obligation to bring into existence possible beings with such potential. My position is that actual beings may have rights grounded in their potentialities, whereas possible beings have no rights at all. To ascribe rights to possible beings is strange, if not nonsensical.

One source of this non-sensicality may well be the difficulties which stand in the way of individuating these possible beings. Presumably, if we are sensibly to ascribe rights to them, we must be able to individuate them. To put this another way: someone who thinks that he has a right to be conceived should consider whether it is conceptually possible for scientists to pick out the being that is him from all the other possible beings, and bring him into existence. Advances in technology may enable him to create a baby satisfying any given set of descriptions, however precise; but this doesn't mean that they could create a baby which was his; that they could actualise them. But if this is beyond their powers as a matter of logic, then it is nonsense to talk of anyone having duties towards possible beings.

Perhaps the reasoning underlying Jakes' premise can be restated without scribing rights to possible beings as follows. If it is good for something to become a human being, then surely the more human beings there are, the better the total state of affairs is. But if this recast argument is to avoid the objection, then it must employ a notion of good which is not related to any identifiable set of interests. Otherwise, in order to get the actual people to realise the population of a Malthusian level, Jakes must force them to consider the interests of the possible, and possible beings more have interests than they have rights. It may be sensibly said that if it is in the interest of a foetus to become an actual human being. Future beings, it seems, do have interests. We are prohibited from doing things which will adversely affect the health of future generations. But in so far as we attribute interests to future beings, we must regard them as actual, not possible beings; actual that we we think of them as now having a spatio-temporal history in the future. Thus, we can individuate them by such descriptions as 'the baby which will be born on xya etc... The fact that possessing life is in the interests of those who is (atemporally) doesn't mean that it is also in the interests of those who will ever exist - they have no interests.

The problem with the recast argument is to give a clear sense to the phrase 'a better total state of affairs'. Certainly, there will be a greater number
of people with their interests (in being alive) satisfied, as opposed to a smaller number of people with these interests satisfied but the number of people with their interests unsatisfied in this respect will be the same, i.e. zero, (ignoring the irrelevant complication of the dead). Now do we sum up the quantity of satisfied interest in order to determine the goodness of the state of affairs? We must surely ask in whose interests it is that this quantity should be greater than less. It will cease to be in the interests of the actual long before we get to a Malthusian population level. So either it is in the interests of the actual and the possible, or we have an interest-independent notion of good. The former is ruled out above, and in order to take the latter alternative, Jakes must make sense of of statements which describe states of affairs as good and bad even when those states of affairs have no effects on the interests of any being whatsoever. I do not think that he can do this.

In conclusion, I note that what we are left with is a resurgence of faith in morality in general, and an interesting argument for the immorality of abortion.

DAVID OYINS (JOHNS)

SHIRLEY'S CRUTCHES (THE BUBBLE GIRL PHIL)

SHIRL AND THE FAILED REFERENCE.
Shirl's first date was with Chuck, the local grocery boy. However, it did not last long. Scene, outside SHIRL'S house.

CHUCK: Oh come on Shirl, just one bit of failed reference... that's all it was!
SHIRL: That's all it may have been to you, Chuck Blinis, but my momma told me I should never do that so anyone I was going steady with.
CHUCK: You mean we're going steady?
SHIRL: Na, I was only thinkin' about it earlier.
CHUCK: Ah, Shirl, Hey, waitaminute! Your mother's dead, you don't have one...
Yippee, you're going steady with me!!
SHIRL: WAITAMINUTE MEASHEAD! I used, you will note, a temporally indexed voib, so the fact that she don't exist no more doesn't matter.
CHUCK: Oh but Shirl, can't I say "The man in the moon loves ya honey"?
SHIRL: Sure Chuck, sure...
CHUCK: The man...
SHIRL: STOP RIGHT THERE CHUCK BLINIS! I said you could say QUOTATION MARKS
The man in the moon loves ya; END QUOTATION MARKS; that would be a sentence name.
CHUCK: Oh but Shirl it would be meaningless...
SHIRL: YEP.
CHUCK: But Shirl, I want it mean something to ya.
SHIRL: Then make it mean something... with reference!
CHUCK: Now Baby, baby, you know everyone else takes sentence names to mean what's in the quotes, why can't you?
SHIRL: I don't have to... I can stipulate...
CHUCK: Ya want to break my heart doncha?
SHIRL: But...
CHUCK: You're no fun since you took that philosophy course!
SHIRL: Goodbye Chuck, that's it, we're through. EXIT IN TEARS
CHUCK: DAMMIT! The most beautiful girl in the world, and I blow it... Hey I did it again; she's left me to fail on my own... I think I'll become a rock star...

NEXT: SHIRL AND THE SEMANTIC TRUTH GAPS: (What will shirl do when a group of evil dentists try to make her say an undecidable sentence; Don't miss, thrills and spills.) (Parental guidance necessary).
G O I N G  O N  B E I N G  A B L E  T O.

One of the temptations to adopting a notion of personal identity based on spatio-temporal continuity comes, I think from thinking of 'continuity' as being fundamentally a feature of material objects. Clearly it makes sense to say that someone continues to be able to see while they are sleeping, but since this capacity is intrinsically associated with certain parts of the body - the eyes, optic nerve, visual cortex, etc - we might want to conclude that to say that someone continues to be able to see is simply to say that they go on having these things. On the other hand, it would seem we cannot replace propositions containing one sort of term ('events') with ones containing an apparently generically distinct sort of term ('objects') - unless we deny the existence of capacities and want to replace statements assuming their existence with ones about objects.

Anyone who trusts induction, and wants to be able to give any sort of coherent justification for this trust, cannot in fact deny their existence; this is because a prediction about future events must have as its basis a statement about matters past and present, our senses having as they do access: to these only, not to what is future. More specifically, any introduction of prediction must be of the form: 'The object A has behaved in such-and-such a way in circumstances Q a sufficient number of times in the past for me to believe that A has manifested a general disposition to behave in those circumstances'. This is the only way we can step from statements about the past and present to ones about the future, and the objection that we cannot step deductively from statements about occurrences of events to ones about tendencies of those events to occur, if it is an objection at all, it is an objection to induction itself, only if we are willing to scrap our belief in induction (as opposed to our psychological compulsion to think inductively) can we scrap our belief in dispositions; but I rather think the anti-inductivist's position is as threatening as that of the unbeliever in the external world - that is, not very.

Assuming that capacities do exist then, the question arises whether they merely amount to certain manifest material features. It is possible to substitute for 'the ball is bouncing' the proposition 'the ball has such-and-such an atomic structure'? In short, there are objects and events, as I said above, generically distinct? Events, it is true, are constituted partly by objects: within the concept of 'bouncing' is the concept 'that which bounces'. But there are two other essential constituents, namely spatial position and passage of time. And while it may be that we can include the first in the description of a thing's material properties we can certainly not include the second. Thus any replacement of a proposition about events (in the context of capacities) by one just about 'that' about objects will necessarily leave out essential information conveyed by the former - in fact, it will not be an adequate substitution.

After all, what we are doing in moving from 'the capacity of an object A to just certain smaller scale constituents of object A' is really to shift the question of capacity onto those smaller scale constituents. In explaining a ball's bounciness by its atomic structure we are merely bringing up the further question of the dispositions of atoms to behave in certain ways when arranged in certain structures. Any explanation of this in terms of particles smaller than atoms brings into the picture the dispositions of those particles; and if the process is finite: we are left with some dispositions at the end of the chain conjoined to some object, while if it is infinite we can reduce the initial predicate, 'bounciness', to nothing at all, let alone a merely st structural feature.

In explaining dispositions by reference to manifest physical properties, we are not explaining what we mean by talking of dispositions, but are rather giving what manifest physical features are necessary conditions for things having these dispositions. But 'there is no logical priority of manifest physical features over dispositions implied here: for we can quite easily give examples of necessary conditions. .
for manifest features in terms of dispositions. For example, a thing's being able to conduct electricity is a necessary conditions of its having the atomic structure of copper, but not vice versa.

The significance of all this for the problem of personal identity, which flitted across these stage at the opening of this piece, is that one should not be suspicious of definitions relying on continuity of some sort of disposition or dispositions (for example, rationality, capacity for consciousness, etc.) as opposed to spatio-temporal continuity. It may seem difficult to grasp exactly what is continuing to exist when a capacity is continuing to exist latently, but this difficulty stems from our deep-rooted habit of imagining things as always objects. But there are plenty of things other than capacities to convince us that things are not always objects; for instance, the vast class of things known as relationships.

We can perhaps best sum up the continuity of a disposition by equating it with the continued truth of a conditional proposition in which the implications derives from (alleged) causal necessity of the type 'if I open my eyes and light impingings on them, I shall see'. This is in contrast to the continuity of a manifest feature constituted by the continued truth of a simple present-tense indicative proposition, such as 'The sock has a hole in it'. What I hope I have shown, in effect, is that the one cannot be reduced to the other.

R. TEICHMANN (TRINITY HALL)

ALL THE UNBORN.

A foetus is not an actual person from the moment of conception. Someone who think that it is simply fails to understand the word 'person'. At some stage the foetus becomes a person, but before this it has no special status among potential persons. "The first person to result from my sexual act with you next Thursday", is as well individuated as the person that will result from a specific foetus. If a special status is claimed for the foetus on the grounds that nature is deterministic enough to make a person largely the result of his genetic structure, then in such a deterministic world, the genetic structure will be fixed by that of the sperm and ova, and their meeting by the laws of fluid mechanics! If the individual's character is determined by history then it is fixed from time immemorial, not merely from conception.

Once the sophisticated restrictions on the class of potential persons are removed, a very strong, general; argument against abortion, contraception, and even incest can be stated.

"Are you now pleased that your parents allowed you to come to existence?"

If you answer 'yes' to this question and accept the principle 'do as you would be done by' then you surely wrong any potential person you fail to create. If I wear a contraceptive on Thursday night, or even if I merely roll over and go to sleep, I wrong the person(s) I would otherwise have created, since if I create them they would thank me for it. In fact, we are under an obligation to have children at full pelt until the world is so 'full' crowded that they would wish never to have been born!

But whether we would choose to go on living is not the same question as whether life is worth living. The existence of a termite heap 'w': world as an evil, though everyone in it would undoubtedly fight for life. If we think of the future, when we are dead and so freed from considerations of self-interest, we can see that only a world that progresses away from the blind struggle for life is worthy of existence. If the world is to be as Orwell feared, a jackboot stamping on a human face, forever, then that calls for despair. Shelley, considering
utter barbarism, declared:

"The world is weary of the past
Oh might it die or rest at last!"

Something is wickedly wrong with the doctrines of the fool-adored pope,
and every other quantity-over-quality merchant.

The unborn are said to have rights as potential persons.
There is only one way in which they can be personified, and that is
by their coming to be. Only persons can have their rights infringed,
and it follows that we can only harm the unborn if we allow them to
come to existence. If we put people into the subsistence world
we do them, the future inhabitants of the world, the wrong of putting
them into a world which is worse than the alternatives. If however,
we limit the size of future population the people we wrong are those
whom aren’t going to exist. But this is absurd. It is only possible to
wrong actual people, and by creating the optimal future population, we
do the best by the actual people.

So it would be wrong to aim for a future population greater
or smaller than that which promises to create the highest quality of
life. But this information is of no use to an individual deciding
whether or not to have a child. The arguments for abortion are entirely separate,
and failure to observe the distinction has been a source of confusion.
If someone regrets a particular child not being born they regret the
loss of the relatively happy life that child might have had as a member
of the actual world, with its actual population. They are not regretting
that millions of extra births aren’t plunging the child into
poverty and disease. The particular and general issues are quite separate.

Since we ought to aim for an optimal population, in most societies
birth-control and abortion are desirable (abortion being less desirable than
birth-control for obvious reasons). This allows us to decide individual
cases on common sense criteria which we all possess, and which are often
inappropriately applied to justify abortion and birth control in the
general case. Once we show that only part of our potential for having
children should be utilised, it would be absurd to suggest that we should
choose and other part than that with the best chance of human flourishing.
Common sense dictates who should be born, vis; those who are wanted and will
be provided for.

PE GRIFFITHS (Trinity Hall)

PROTOCERATIATUS.

Eing Berliner hat das selbsame an sich, das ihm sein
Inhalt noch wesentlich stalt als seine Form.

Lw

(Discovered by E. Craig.)
RICHARD DAWKINS: THE SELFISH GENE

'The Selfish Gene' examines the biology of selfishness, and explains the unnaturalness, if not the impossibility of altruism. It could provide material for reductivist accounts of all human behaviour, and as such makes it interesting reading for philosophers in search of scientific material for onslaughts on moral objectivism. The scientific material is skillfully popularised and easily assimilable, and subtle ideas based on mathematical analysis are expounded with clarity, and a use of metaphor - such as that of the genetic bostrich - that is genuinely witty.

Dawkins shoots down bibliologists who look at evolution in terms of 'the good of the group', a misconception that in part arose through the euphemistic use of 'perpetuation of the species' for 'reproduction'. Instead he sees the gene (loosely defined as 'a piece of chromosomal material with the potential to last for many generations') as the basic unit of natural selection. Individual organisms are merely containers or vehicles for these units; they are their 'survival machines'. Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' is simply a special case of the general law of the 'survival of the stable.' For some of the molecules in the primeval soup the tendency towards stability was a tendency to make copies of themselves, and those that lasted a long time, or replicated rapidly or with a high degree of fidelity became more numerous than the rest. However, small mistakes in copying were important, for if the new molecules thus produced were more stable than before, or reduced the stability of rivals, for example, by breaking them down chemically, and using the remains as building blocks for themselves, such molecules became more plentiful. Those that formed walls of protein around themselves in defence became the first living cells; and of these molecules, the ones in which the cells were differentiated survived better than their rivals. Thus organisms became more and more elaborate, and developed into the millions of life forms we find all over the earth - all designed for the preservation of the replicating chemical DNA. This goes for the human faces too, and it is, Dawkins says, the ultimate rationale for our existence.

Looking at biology in terms of gene selection throws up some interesting theories, from a possible explanation of why we die of old age, to why seemingly pointless courtship ceremonies and virtual fights develop among animals, and even some interesting thoughts on the value of sex. Since, however, the way genes control physical and behavioural characteristics is so complicated - there are a vast number to control a factor like skin colour - it will be a long time before we can predict, let alone affect their action to any great degree. Nor can the theory explain everything about human nature now. For example, the evolution of the capacity to simulate (build models of possible outcomes, a kind of vicarious trial and error) culminates in consciousness, because the brain's ability to simulate the world must include a model of itself. However, this involves an infinite regress - why not have a model of the model etc - so here, Dawkins says, we are faced with 'the most profound mystery of modern biology'.

All the examples are deliberately taken from the animal world; only, but their implications for our view of ourselves are startling. Sexual partnership for example, is seen as a relationship of mutual distrust and mutual exploitation, and the language of purpose and conscious motives is daringly used - 'the child should cheat and exploit its parents' for 'natural selection will tend to favour children who act in this way' - but it is meant descriptively rather than prescriptively. The author believes that since this is how we are, we will need to work harder to learn altruism, rather than expect it to be part of our biological nature. Because our reason enables us to see that cooperation produces the maximum possible benefit for everyone (not because there are objective values that demand unselfishness) we will be able to resist the temptation to exploit others for the immediate benefits to ourselves, or rather, to our genes. The intelligence evolved to serve us brings us in the end to understand the desirability of altruistic behaviour, and thus we can throw off their rule.

ANTONIA FREUTHAWANGER (JESUS)
ON CULINARY. These were found on loose bits of rice paper in the
author's biscuit tin, and constitute the remnants of
a coconut-whirl feast. (ed)

1.

1. Moore said 'Here is a pound of flour'; Alright show me where the flour is
and I'll make doughnuts. That there is flour is yet to be shewn.

2. How do I know there's a sick man lying here? Well, I can grab him,
make him vomit, steal his doughnuts...(Then you don't like him? No, I do
(A note on philosophical examples))...I could in short make him avoid dough.

3. "But here is a form of life": well, if you will leave the milk out of
the fridge all night, what do you expect? (This was a source of puzzlement
to Moore)

4. "What you say if cows started producing doughnuts?" There would be
nothing to say, our job would be over. There would be no point in going
to the Job Centre, if cows could make doughnuts, then they could do other
things too. We would not know what to do.

5. "Wittgensone, what are you going to do with this dough?" Leave the
bloody thing alone! It isn't a real question, you are just trying to
ingratitude yourselves when you talk to me. (I want to say 'yes', if
I do, will anyone hit me? (A note on the need for self defence in Philosophy)).

6. I have seen better philosophy on the end of a spatula.