COMMON THEMES FROM SIDGWICK TO EWING

Thomas Hurka

University of Toronto

The philosophers discussed in this volume – Henry Sidgwick, Hastings Rashdall, J.M.E. McTaggart, G.E. Moore, H.A. Prichard, E.F. Carritt, W.D. Ross, C.D. Broad, and A.C. Ewing – form a unified and distinctive school in the history of ethics. They all taught at Oxford or Cambridge in the late 19th or early 20th century, and their principal writings run from the 1st edition of Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* in 1874 through Ewing's *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy* of 1959. But their period of greatest influence was in the first four decades of the 20th century. Before 1900 (and perhaps for some time after) British moral philosophy was dominated by the Idealism of T.H. Green, F.H. Bradley, and Bernard Bosanquet; after the Second World War, logical positivism and ordinary language philosophy spawned new approaches to the subject that rejected the earlier school's ideas. But in the first third of the century theirs were the dominant voices in the field.

The school's members differed on many important topics. Sidgwick, Rashdall, McTaggart, and Moore were consequentialists, while Prichard, Carritt, Ross, and Broad defended versions of deontology. Sidgwick thought there is only one intrinsic good, pleasure; the others endorsed a plurality of goods, including perfectionist goods such as knowledge and virtue. Sidgwick and Moore thought the most reliable moral judgements are about abstract principles, Carritt and Ewing that they concern particular cases. But underneath these disagreements was a set of shared assumptions about what morality is and how moral theory should be pursued. These

allowed their disputes to arise on a common platform, so they were always substantive rather than tied up in methodology. They also distinguished the school both from earlier figures in the history of ethics such as Aristotle and Kant and from much present-day ethics. This paper will try to identify these common assumptions, show how they were shared, and comment on their merits.

1. Conceptual Minimalism

The first common assumption is what I will call 'conceptual minimalism,' the view that all normative judgements can be expressed using just a few basic concepts. Some members of the school recognized only one irreducible normative concept: for Sidgwick what one 'ought' or has 'reason' to do, for Rashdall and the Moore of *Principia Ethica* what is 'intrinsically good,' and for Broad and Ewing in certain writings what is 'fitting.' Others such as Prichard, the later Moore, and Ross thought there were two basic concepts, often 'ought' and 'good.' But the number of underivative normative concepts they employed was always very small.

This marks a contrast with much present-day ethics, which employs a larger number of distinct normative concepts and spends considerable time debating their relations. The Sidgwick-to-Ewing school were certainly aware of these concepts, but took either of two lines about them. One was to argue that they can be reductively analyzed using the basic normative concepts and some more or less determinate description; the other was to deny that they are normative. Either way they denied, of many familiar concepts, that they are both irreducible and normative.

Thus their basic normative concepts were all 'thin' concepts such as 'ought' and 'good' rather than 'thick' ones such as the virtue-concepts 'courageous,' 'generous,' and 'malicious.'(A

thin concept says nothing about what non-normative properties an item must have to fall under it, but a thick concept does. A courageous act, for example, must somehow involve facing danger or accepting the risk of harm.) Some present-day philosophers hold that thick concepts are irreducible to thin ones,[1] but our school held that they can all be reductively analyzed. To the view that the virtue-concepts do 'not admit of being stated in definite formulae,' Sidgwick replied, 'our notions of special virtues do not really become more independent by becoming more indefinite: they still contain, though perhaps more latently, the same reference to "Good" or "Well-being" as an ultimate standard.' And only if they do can we explain the difference between the virtues and their cognate vices, for example, between courage and foolhardiness or between generosity and profusion.[2] Others gave reductive analyses of the concept of virtue in general, which Ross, for example, took to involve a desire either for acts that are independently right or for states of affairs that are independently good.[3] And the general point that the school treated only the thin concepts as basic is surely uncontentious: the title of Ross's great book is not *The Courageous, Generous, Kindly, Dumpy, and Dainty*; it is *The Right and the Good*.

In addition, the school did not draw irreducible distinctions between uses of their thin concepts. They often distinguished between moral and non-moral goodness, for example, but moral goodness was just the same property of intrinsic goodness when had by a particular kind of object, say, an attitude to something independently right or good. (For Ross, therefore, moral goodness is just intrinsic goodness when had by virtue.[4]) Nor did they use the present-day concept of 'welfare,' 'well-being,' or what is 'good for' a person as distinct from what is simply 'good.' Rashdall and Moore defined 'my good' as that part of what is intrinsically good that is located in me, as did Sidgwick. For him 'my good' is what I ought to desire – his general

definition of goodness – 'assuming my own existence alone to be considered,' that is, considering only states of myself.[5] Sidgwick did accept a 'good for' concept that Moore did not, and used it to argue, as Moore would later deny, that egoism is internally consistent. But this was the concept of agent-relative goodness, or of what is good from a particular person's point of view, so he and perhaps only he ought to desire it. This is again not the present-day concept of 'welfare'; it is another that is reductively analyzed using Sidgwick's one basic concept 'ought.'[6]

If these are reductive analyses of normative concepts, Prichard took the alternative line with the concept of what is a 'good to' a person, which he said is not a normative or even evaluative concept, but makes just the descriptive claim that something will satisfy a person's desires or, more accurately, give her pleasure. Ross had a similar view about attributive uses of 'good,' as in 'good knife' and 'good liar'; these too make only the descriptive claim that something will be an effective means to some purpose, so there is againno genuine value-concept independent of intrinsic goodness.[7]

The school likewise made no irreducible distinctions between uses of 'ought,' for example, between moral 'oughts' on the one side and prudential or rational ones on the other. Since for them all genuine 'oughts' were categorical and, following Kant, all categorical 'oughts' were moral, the only genuine 'oughts' were moral. This view was reflected in Sidgwick's classing egoism as a 'method of ethics.' The conflict between it and utilitarianism is not, as many present-day philosophers would say, between morality and prudence or rationality; it is between two ethical theories making competing claims using the same concept of 'ought.' Or consider Prichard's and Ross's claim that there is no moral duty to pursue one's own pleasure.[8] They did not add that of course there is a prudential or rational duty to pursue one's pleasure, assuming

instead that where there is no moral duty there is no duty at all.

The non-moral 'ought' is often represented by Kant's hypothetical imperative, about which the school again took either of two lines. Sidgwick at one point suggested the 'wide-scope' reading of this imperative, on which it is not a hypothetical with an imperative consequent but a command to make a hypothetical true, namely 'make it the case that: if you have some end, you take (what you believe are) effective means to it.' On this view the hypothetical imperative is really a categorical imperative with a distinctive content, enjoining a kind of coherence between one's ends, beliefs, and acts.[9] But Prichard and Ross again took the alternative line, holding that the hypothetical imperative is not normative and therefore not an imperative at all, making only the descriptive claim a certain act is necessary for achieving some end.[10]

The view that there are no 'oughts' other than moral ones[11] helped ground the school's belief that it is a mistake to ask 'Why be moral?' or 'Why ought I to do what I morally ought?': if the only 'oughts' are moral ones, these questions cannot arise. Though most associated with Prichard, this belief was in fact widely shared. Moore said the question 'Why should I do my duty?' is 'puzzling,' since it reduces to '"Why is duty duty?" or "Why is good good?",' while Carritt wrote, 'If anyone ask us, "Why ought I to do these acts you call my duty?" the only answer is, "Because they *are* your *duty*."'[12] Sidgwick may seem to fall outside this consensus, since he said we ask 'Why should I do what I see to be right?' whereas we do not ask 'Why should I believe what I see to be true?' But his explanation was that in the first case we are torn between different substantive views about what is right and express our uncertainty by asking the question; this implies that if we had no doubts about what is right, there would be nothing to ask. And there can be nothing if the only 'oughts' are moral.[13]

Of course this view about 'ought' does not show that any particular moral claims, such as Sidgwick's consequentialist or Prichard's deontological ones, are true. But it does help defend these claims against skeptical attacks. Consider the instrumentalist view that what we ought rationally to do is always whatever will best satisfy our current desires, which skeptics say fulfilling narrowly 'moral' duties does not always do. Given the school's conceptual minimalism, the instrumental principle must be restated as a moral one, using the same 'ought' as consequentialism and deontology and saying that what we ought morally to do is satisfy our desires. But then the principle just seems false. If someone desires above all to get rich and knows the most effective way of doing so is to kill a relative and inherit her wealth, is it true that he ought simply to kill his relative or that he ought simply not to? Surely it is the latter.[14]

The school's shared minimalism did not mean they had no disagreements about the normative concepts; on the contrary, there were lively disputes about, for example, the concept 'good.' Moore and Ross thought 'good' a simple, unanalyzable concept,[15] whereas Sidgwick, Broad, and Ewing analyzed it reductively as what one 'ought' to desire or what it is 'fitting' to desire.[16] The ensuing debate was vigorous, but it took place against the backdrop of the shared view that, whatever exactly they are, the basic normative concepts are few in number.

This shared minimalism has several merits. First, it allows illuminating moral explanations that non-minimalist views cannot give. For example, if we analyze courage as involving, roughly, accepting the risk of harm to oneself for the sake of sufficiently great intrinsic goods, such as preserving one's nation, we can explain why the sacrifice of the Spartans at Thermopylae was courageous but refusing a robber's demand for 'A penny or your life' is foolhardy – something we could not do if courage and foolhardiness were irreducibly thick

concepts applied only by quasi-perceptual intuition.

Second, minimalism makes all normative questions substantive rather than conceptual. Imagine that we ask which life would be better for a child we are raising: a life with more virtue but less pleasure or one with more pleasure and less virtue. If this question can even arise, the pleasure and virtue must at some level have the same kind of value, and we are asking which in this case has more of that value. If we like, we can call the value of the virtue 'moral' and connect that of the pleasure to 'welfare,' but this does not change the core issue, which is the substantive one of which of two states has more of a common value. And the labeling only invites confusion, by suggesting that the issue turns somehow on conceptual questions about what 'moral goodness' and 'well-being' in the abstract consist in.

Or consider the conflict Sidgwick wrestled with, between a principle saying we ought to promote the pleasure of everyone and one saying we ought to promote only our own pleasure. This conflict again presupposes that the two principles use the same concept, now the same 'ought,' so the issue is which of two claims using that concept has greater weight. We could call the first principle 'moral,' given its content, and the second 'prudential,' but this would again suggest, misleadingly, that the issue turns on conceptual questions about 'morality' and 'prudence.' Minimalism again has the merit of treating a substantive issue as just substantive.

So the Sidgwick-to-Ewing school built their moral theories using a small roster of basic concepts, but what resulted often had a rich and varied content. Moore combined his one concept of intrinsic goodness with a principle of organic unities and recursive principles about, for example, the goodness of loving what is good to construct a highly elaborate account of the things that are intrinsically valuable; Ross had a similarly complex theory of what is right. Their

work illustrates what can be called the 'vinaigrette' approach to moral theory. It is well known that the key to a good vinaigrette is to be a spendthrift with the oil and a miser with the vinegar; in moral theory, it is to be a miser with moral concepts and a spendthrift with moral claims.

2. Non-Naturalism

The Sidgwick-to-Ewing school are best known for their non-naturalist metaethics, which combines the realist thesis that some moral judgements are objectively true with the autonomy-of-ethics thesis that they are neither reducible to nor derivable from non-moral judgements, such as those of empirical science, metaphysics, or religion. On the one hand there is moral truth; on the other hand it is a distinctive or *sui generis* truth. Let us consider these theses in turn.

Early in the school's history the realist side of non-naturalism seems to have been simply assumed. In the Preface to the first edition of *The Methods of Ethics* Sidgwick remarked casually that he would assume we can know ethical truths. The first sentence of Moore's *Principia Ethica* said, without feeling any need for supporting argument, that philosophical ethics is concerned with which ethical judgements are true, while Ross affirmed 'a system of moral truth, as objective as all truth must be.'[17]

The school were doubtless influenced here by the grammar of moral judgements, which parallels that of uncontroversially truth-apt judgements such as those of science. But they also seem not to have been aware of serious alternatives to realism, in particular non-cognitivist ones. One might think they had a non-cognitivist theory to hand in Hume, but they all read him as a subjective naturalist, for whom the claim that an act is right merely reports the psychological fact that the speaker or some group approves of the act. Having refuted that naturalist view, often at

considerable length,[18] they took themselves to have refuted subjectivism more generally.

When non-cognitivist theories began to appear in the 1930s, the school's members were initially hostile, accusing writers like A.J. Ayer of applying a general thesis about language to ethics without seriously considering whether it fit that case[19] and raising particular objections that were sometimes weak but sometimes, as in Ross's anticipation of the Frege-Geach objection, more telling.[20] But as writers like C.L. Stevenson and R.M. Hare began to ground their non-cognitivism in specifically ethical claims about the motivating power of moral judgements, some in the school became more sympathetic. Moore famously flirted with non-cognitivism in his 1942 'Reply to My Critics,'[21] Broad eventually found himself inclining toward it,[22] and Ewing incorporated non-cognitivist elements in the compromise metaethics of *Second Thoughts*.[23]

It is probably true that none of the school fully and permanently abandoned realism, but the fact that some considered doing so suggests that their realism, however much associated with them by later critics, was not vital to their overall ethical view. Much more crucial, I would argue, especially for their normative theorizing, was their belief in the autonomy of ethics, which the non-cognitivists shared.

If the school recognized no 'oughts' other than moral ones, their autonomy-of-ethics thesis was equivalent to a broader thesis about the autonomy of the normative from the non-normative: values in general are distinct from non-evaluative facts, and no 'ought' can be derived from an 'is.' Their principal argument for the claim was the 'open-question' argument, commonly attributed to Moore but, as many have noted, used earlier by Sidgwick, Rashdall, and others.[24] Moore's version of the argument was lengthier than the earlier writers', which helped give it more influence on later philosophy. It was also more combative in tone. Sidgwick had said

that since Bentham's equating of 'good' with 'pleasant' would turn the hedonist 'pleasure is good' into a tautology, Bentham ought to be read in some more charitable way; Moore pounded away at the error relentlessly.[25] Sidgwick's attitude was 'That would be stupid, therefore Bentham didn't really mean it,' Moore's was "Bentham meant it, therefore he was really stupid.'

The non-cognitivists grounded the open-question argument in the claim that normative judgements are intrinsically motivating whereas descriptive judgements are not – that is why the former cannot be derived from the latter. But this was not a major issue for the earlier school. Moore remarked casually that when we believe something is good we are usually motivated to pursue it, but he did not think it important to specify that claim further not did he connect it to his open-question argument.[26] More generally, the issue of moral motivation, or of internalism vs. externalism about moral judgement, was not one that much concerned the school or on which their views are easy to discern. (Though many of them seem to have been externalists, they often expressed themselves in what could be internalist language.[27]) For them the *sui generis* character of normative judgements was something one just sees or is led by argument to see, independently of claims about action-guidingness.

A common present-day response to the open-question argument is that it ignores the possibility of non-analytic property-identities. Just as water is identical to H_20 even though 'water' does not mean the same as 'H_20,' critics say, so goodness could be non-analytically identical to a natural property such as pleasantness even though 'good' does not mean 'pleasant.'[28] But Sidgwick, Moore, and the others could respond that the identity of water and H_20 depends on specific features of natural-kind properties that are not present in normative properties like goodness. The property of being water is the property of having that underlying

structure, whatever it is, that explains the behaviour of the stuff we find in lakes, rivers, and so on, but the property of goodness has no such inner complexity. It could be identical to a natural property only if it were analytically identical to that property, and the open-question argument shows it is not.[29]

Whatever its basis, the autonomy-of-ethics thesis was vitally important to the Sidgwick-to-Ewing school, and they spent a surprising number of pages combating naturalistic programs grounding ethics in evolutionary biology, empirical psychology – from associationism in the 19th century to Freudianism in the 20th – Idealist metaphysics, and religion.[30] For them it was crucial that ethical truths are a category apart, knowable only by distinctively ethical means.

These means were, of course, intuitive, involving the direct apprehension of moral truth, often as self-evident. The school's members regularly said, when some normative issue reached its crux, that the decision must be made by each person examining his own moral consciousness, or giving his own intuitive verdict on the question.[31] They did not say this with pleasure; they would have been delighted if there were some more reliable route to moral knowledge, or one less prone to unresolvable disagreements. But they thought there was no such route; all proposals for one failed. At the end moral judgement had to involve an immediate apprehension of *sui generis* truth.

That said, there were differences among them about which intuitive judgements are most trustworthy. Sidgwick placed most credence in judgements about highly abstract moral principles, such as the axioms of prudence and benevolence discussed in the 'Philosophical Intutionism' chapter of his *Methods of Ethics*. This was also Moore's official view, as stated in the Preface to *Principia Ethica* and reflected in his bald claim, in *Ethics*, that it is self-evident

that right acts always maximize the good. But it is hard to confine oneself to that approach, and another part of Moore's official doctrine did not. This was his claim that, to decide whether some generic state of affairs *X* is good, we must imagine a possible world containing only *X* and judge whether that world is good. Here a judgement about the value of *X* in the abstract is reached via a judgement about a particular possible world.[32]

The opposite view was taken by Carritt and Ewing, who thought the most reliable intuitive judgements concern particular cases, with general principles mere abstractions from them.[33] But Prichard, Ross, and Broad took a middle line. Unlike Sidgwick and Moore, they did not think we can know abstract principles by reflecting on them just as abstract principles; intuitions are elicited only in particular situations. But what we intuit in a particular situation is that an act's having some non-moral property tends to make it right or wrong, for example, that its being the keeping of a promise tends to make it right.[34] Though prompted by a particular situation, the intuition is implicitly general, since it implies that any act of keeping a promise is other things equal right. And this implication, though not equivalent to the principle that we ought other things equal to keep our promises, is sufficiently close to it that our grasp of the principle follows by a small step.

A common charge against the school is that their reliance on intuitive judgements made them dogmatic, announcing personal prejudices as universal moral truths.[35] A more subtle charge is that while Sidgwick recognized the fallibility of moral intuition, later writers such as Moore, Prichard, and Ross tended to dogmatism.[36] The latter charge may be fair against Moore in some of his moods, as when he simply announced that consequentialism is self-evident, but applied more broadly it is not.

Sidgwick laid down four conditions for genuine intuitions of self-evidence: aside from two requiring that the propositions intuited be clear and mutually consistent, the principal ones required us to test by introspection that what we have really is an apprehension of a proposition as apparently self-evident rather than, say, a reflex echoing of common opinion, and to check that other people share our intuition, so there is consensus about it.[37]

But these conditions were absolutely shared by the later writers. Moore too emphasized the fallibility of moral intuition, saying 'in every way in which it is possible to cognise a true proposition, it is also possible to cognise a false one,' and noting that others' dissent from a proposition we believe should lessen our confidence in it.[38] Rashdall, Ewing, and others insisted just as much as Sidgwick on distinguishing genuine apprehensions of apparent self-evidence from superficially similar psychological states, while Prichard said 'I don't think the apprehension of the self-evident easy to reach.'[39] Moreover, the reliance of many in the school on everyday moral judgements – on what Ross called the 'existing body of moral convictions of the best people,' which is 'the cumulative product of the moral reflection of many generations'[40] – reflects their acceptance of something like Sidgwck's consensus test. For them moral judgement was not so much a matter of what 'I' think as of what 'we' think.

In fact, this reliance on common-sense moral opinions generates another objection to the school that is harder to answer but that is in some tension with the charge of dogmatism: that the school were morally conservative, offering philosophical defences of the everyday moral views of their time but rarely proposing significant reforms to them. This charge is not entirely fair. A theorist who works within common-sense morality can note inconsistencies in its current application and propose reforms to remove those, as Sidgwick did when he urged extending our

concern with human pleasure to include that of animals; Ross allowed similar innovations.[41] But it remains true that none of Sidgwick, Rashdall, Moore, or Ross was a moral revolutionary, and their work might well have been more profound if they had considered more radical revisions to everyday moral beliefs. That they did not stemmed largely from their fallibilism, however, or their anti-dogmatic view that one's own intuitions need to be tested against other people's, since one's own may so easily be wrong.

3. Moderate Moral Theory

Though the school often started their theorizing with common-sense morality, they did not stop there, or think common-sense views are already in the best condition possible. On the contrary, they thought the task of moral philosophy is to theorize common sense, or reduce its many and conflicting judgements to a consistent and systematic whole, with a small number of fundamental principles explaining the rest.

There were differences about how far this systematization should go. Early in the school's history Sidgwick made very strong demands on theory. His requirements of clarity and consistency, at least as he interpreted them, amounted in effect to a demand for completeness, so an acceptable moral theory must yield a determinate verdict about what is right and wrong in every conceivable circumstance. Since he thought completeness impossible if there are competing principles or values, he concluded that the only acceptable theory is monistic both about the right, accepting just the one principle to maximize the good, and about value, with just one intrinsic good, pleasure.

Sidgwick's immediate successors, the ideal consequentialists Rashdall, McTaggart, and

Moore, retained his monism about the right but rejected his monism about value, accepting a number of other goods in addition to pleasure, including perfectionist ones such as knowledge and virtue. It is not the proper business of philosophy, Moore wrote, to 'search for "unity" and "system", at the expense of truth,'[42] and the truth is that there is more than one good. Even later, Prichard, Carritt, Ross, and Broad applied the same argument to the consequentialist principle: it is false to moral experience to restrict the basic duties to a single one. As Ross said, 'it is more important that our theory fit the facts than that it be simple,'[43] and the facts now included a plurality of grounds of duty, so an acceptable theory must pluralistic not only about the good but also about the right.

Even these later writers, though, were not radical pluralists. They did not recognize 327 fundamental goods or 84 underivative duties. Ross, for example, thought there were only four intrinsic goods and, though more tentatively, only six basic duties – even fewer if some are subsumed under a more general duty to promote the good. Though a pluralist he was a moderate one, committed like Sidgwick to making our moral judgements more systematic by connecting them to a few more general ones. Thus aesthetic appreciation and personal love were for him not distinct goods but reducible to the more fundamental ones of pleasure, knowledge, and virtue, while the duty not to lie was just an instance of the duty to keep promises.[44] And his central concept of prima facie duty served to show, as common sense itself cannot, how recognizing plural duties need not lead, as Sidgwick thought, to logical inconsistency. Though Ross did not follow the systematizing path as far as Sidgwick did, he was still very much on it.

What the later writers represent, therefore, is a moderate pluralism, one in between a strong demand for systematicity and precision like Sidgwick's, which allows only fully monistic

theories, and the anti-theory view of writers like F.H. Bradley and his fellow Idealists in the 19th century and some neo-Wittgensteinians today, according to which our moral judgements cannot be systematized at all, because they involve particularized perceptions of right and wrong just in particular cases.[45] And it avoids these extremes because it rejects an assumption common to them both: that morality can be theorized successfully only if it can be theorized completely, so its principles always yield determinate verdicts. (Sidgwick thought this goal can be achieved, the anti-theorists that it cannot.) Rejecting this assumption as unwarranted, Moore, Ross, and the others proceeded to partly theorize a moral reality they thought was partly (though not wholly) theorizable, or only partly capable of being made determinate. Ross, for example, thought we can have certain knowledge of the principles of prima facie duty, such as that we ought other things equal to keep promises, but can never be certain what our duty all things considered in a particular situation is, because we can never be certain how those principles weigh against each other.[46]

There is a question about where these philosophers thought the unavoidable indeterminacies lie. Are they in the moral truth itself or only in our ability to know it, i.e., are the indeterminacies metaphysical or merely epistemic? Ross seems to have thought that there is always a determinate truth about how good something is and about how its goodness compares with that of other things.[47] If he extended this view to right – and it is hard to see how he could not – he would hold that there is always a determinate truth about what our duty proper in a given situation is. It is just that neither we nor our best moral theory can say definitively what it is.

This moderation about moral theory is illustrated in the group's approach to the measurement of values. The Idealists were skeptical about such measurement, citing (surprisingly

for present-day readers) pleasure as the paradigm of a good that cannot be quantified. The writers after Sidgwick agreed that we cannot assign precise cardinal measures to pleasure and other goods, but insisted that we can nonetheless assign rough cardinal ones. McTaggart thought we can never say that two pleasures are exactly equally intense, but was certain that he got more than twice as much pleasure from a plate of turtle soup as from a plate of pea soup. Ross too thought we can say that one pleasure is at least twice as intense as another, while Rashdall and Moore made similarly rough cardinal claims, for example that aesthetic contemplation and personal love are 'by far' the greatest goods.[48] The fact that we cannot measure precisely is no bar to our measuring as far as we can.

4. Moral Explanation

A scientific or ethical theory can serve two functions. One is to discover new truths, which in ethics means using the theory's principles to arrive at moral judgements about particular cases that we could not otherwise make. The other is to explain truths we do know; here the principles tell us why particular moral judgements we already confidently make are true.

Sidgwick seems to have been most interested in the first function, about correct particular judgements. This is reflected in his emphasis on methods of ethics rather than principles, where a single method of determining right and wrong can be combined with different explanatory principles.[49] It also shows in his attitude to his 'dualism of the practical reason,' the conflict he saw between the egoist claim that we should pursue just our own pleasure and the utilitarian claim that we should pursue the pleasure of all. Sidgwick thought this dualism would be resolved if there were a God who rewarded right conduct in an afterlife,[50] but Moore and Broad disagreed.

Egoism, they claimed, says the one right-making characteristic is maximizing the agent's pleasure, utilitarianism that it is maximizing the general pleasure, and no merely extensional equivalence between the two can resolve this conflict about explanation.[51] But then Sidgwick's belief that the conflict *can* be resolved suggests that he did not see it as about explanation. He read the two claims extensionally, as saying that an act is right if and only if it maximizes our own or the general pleasure, and a conflict between extensional principles is resolved if their verdicts coincide.

Other philosophers of the period emphasized the second, explanatory function. The Idealists often accepted the consequentialist structure of hedonistic utilitarianism and allowed that utilitarianism yields broadly correct verdicts about particular cases. But they thought the vital philosophical question is what explains those verdicts, and the explanation, they insisted, is perfectionist. As Bradley put it, 'What we hold to against every possible modification of Hedonism is that the standard and test is in higher and lower function, not in more or less pleasure.'[52] Many members of our school had a similar view. Moore thought that most of the time we should follow a set of rules obeying which will preserve society and so promote overall good, and that these rules will be the same given any plausible theory about what is good.[53] But he nonetheless thought the central philosophical question is 'What is intrinsically good?', because the answer to that question explains *why* the rules are correct.[54] And his critique of hedonism argued that even if that view can capture our convictions about which pleasures are best, by considering their effects on future pleasures, it does not capture our convictions about why they are best, which concerns what they are pleasure in now.[55]

A similar emphasis appears in Prichard, Carritt, and Ross. They sometimes criticized

consequentialism for yielding the wrong results about particular cases, as when Ross said it tells us to break a promise if that will promote 1001 units of good rather than the 1000 that would follow from keeping it.[56] But their more common objection was that consequentialism gives the wrong explanations for its results even when those are right. Thus they asked whether the reason we ought to keep a promise is that this will help maintain an institution that will benefit people in the future or simply that we made a promise. Their insistence that the second is the right explanation was their main objection to consequentialism, and Prichard in particular gave it a striking form. He said that by deriving the duty to keep promises from a more general one to promote the good, consequentialism turns the duty to keep promises into a quite different duty to promote the good – if that is what explains the first duty, that is what it at bottom is. But this distorts the moral phenomena, turning what we recognize as one duty into something it is not; in trying to explain the duty to keep promises, consequentialism destroys it.[57]

This emphasis on the explanatory function of moral theory fits several other aspects of Prichard's and Ross's view. One was their faith in common-sense morality. If most people already usually know what is right, they do not need moral theory to tell them what is right; philosophy's task is instead to explain why it is right. Another was their moral epistemology. If the primary moral intuition is that an act's having a certain property, such as that of keeping a promise, tends to make it right, then the primary intuition is iself explanatory, and in testing moral theories against beliefs about explanation we are testing them against the most secure moral knowledge we have.

5. Inherent Explanations

Though the school pursued moral explanations, they also had a distinctive view about how those should proceed, proposing mostly what I will call conceptually 'inherent' rather than 'external' explanations.[58]

Inherent explanations explain common-sense moral judgements by connecting them to principles that are more abstract but use similar concepts, so they are continuous with the common-sense judgements and concern the same general subject. Because they are more abstract, the principles have independent appeal and can therefore both explain the judgements and increase our warrant for believing them. But they operate within the same circle of concepts rather than concerning some other, allegedly more fundamental topic.[59]

Thus Sidgwick grounded utilitarianism in the principles that one should not prefer a lesser good at one time to a greater good at another, or a lesser good for one person to a greater good for another.[60] These are principles of impartiality and unify many particular moral claims, but they are only more abstract versions of ideas about caring for the future and for others that are already present in everyday moral thought. While stating those ideas more explicitly and precisely, they do not replace them with something different.

The same holds for the account of virtue given first by Rashdall and then by Moore, Ross, and others.[61] It treats virtue as a higher-level intrinsic good involving morally appropriate attitudes to items with other, previously given moral properties. Thus one form of virtue is having a positive attitude, such as desiring, pursuing, or taking pleasure in, something else that is good, such as another person's pleasure. Another is having the negative attitude of trying to prevent or being pained by something evil, such as another's pain. Just as the positive attitude fits a positive value and therefore is virtuous, so a negative attitude fits a negative one. This account

of virtue is more abstract than anything in common-sense moral thought, but it also resonates with that thought, which can recognize in its less formal conceptions of benevolence and compassion the ideas of positive-to-positive and negative-to-negative concern or, as the children's book *Madeline* puts it, of 'smil[ing] at the good and frown[ing] at the bad.'

Or consider Moore's formulation of retributivism using his principle of organic unities. It says that while vice is intrinsically evil, as is pain, the combination of vice and pain in the same person's life is good as a combination, and sufficiently good that adding the pain to the vice makes the overall situation better.[62] This analysis illuminates the structure of retributivist claims and has important implications, for example, that while deserved pain is good as deserved it is also evil as pain, so the morally appropriate response to it mixes satisfaction that justice is being done with pain at the infliction of pain. But it does not ground everyday retributivism in some other, less contentious claim; it merely reformulates it more abstractly.

Likewise for Broad's treatment of what he called 'self-referential altruism.'[63] It holds, against utilitarianism, that our duty concerning others is not to treat them impartially but to care more for those who are in various ways closer to us, such as our family and friends. Broad's analysis unifies a variety of common-sense claims about loyalty or partiality and invites further inquiry about exactly which relations make for closeness of the relevant kind. But it does not justify partiality in other terms. On the contrary, it assumes partiality, saying each person should care more about his family and friends because he should care more about those who stand in special relations *to him*.

The contrasting external approach arises from dissatisfaction with merely inherent explanations, whose principles, it complains, are too close to the judgements they are meant to

yield to explain rather than just restate them. A genuine moral explanation, externalists say, must connect an everyday moral claim to one that uses different concepts and concerns some other, more fundamental topic.

The last half-century has been dominated by external (in this sense) projects in ethics. Some have tried to ground moral judgements, either as a whole or individually, in something outside morality itself, such as the language of morals (Hare), self-interest non-morally construed (Gauthier), the metaphysics of the person (Rawls, Scheffler, Parfit, Brink), or the demands of practical consistency (Gewirth, Korsgaard). Others have tried to ground particular moral claims in ones that, while still moral, concern some different topic. Examples include the justification of retributive punishment in terms of distributive fairness (Morris) or of our duty to benefit others in terms of our own good or flourishing morally conceived, as in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics (Anscombe, Foot, Hursthouse). But in every case the explanatory principles use different concepts from the judgements being explained and concern some other, allegedly more fundamental topic.

The grand exemplar of the external approach is Rawls. Denying that our everyday judgements about equality and rights are properly justified if taken on their own, he set out to show that they would be chosen by rational contractors in a specified 'original position,' using what he argued are the correct principles of rational choice. Since the specification of Rawls's original position depends on moral judgements, his justification is not extra-moral, like ones citing the language of morals or non-moral self-interest. But it is external in my sense, since ideas about rational contracting are far removed from everyday talk of equality and rights – they are nothing like what people have in mind when engaged in that talk – and in Rawls's view can

explain it precisely because they are far away.

The distinction between inherent and external explanation is one of degree rather than kind, and there can be in-between cases. Moreover the Sidgwick-to-Ewing school did sometimes give non-inherent explanations, as when Sidgwick rested the rationality of egoism on the claim that individuals are metaphysically distinct or Ross subsumed the duty not to lie under the duty to keep promises.[64] But their general tendency was to prefer inherent explanations, and this tendency had several grounds.

One was their faith in common-sense moral judgements. Externalism is often motivated by distrust of everyday intuition: if that is unreliable, then a persuasive justification for a moral claim can only be found elsewhere. But if one thinks common sense contains mostly true judgements, it is natural to think it also contains, even if implicitly, the materials for sound explanations of them. Those materials may need to be extracted and made more precise, but they are there.

Another was their belief that the more ambitious external approach does not succeed, for two familiar reasons. Its moral explanations do not in fact yield the results they are intended to, or do not unless they tacitly assume what they are meant to prove. And even if they did yield those results, they would give the wrong explanation for them.

Prichard took both these lines about instrumental justifications of morality that say we should promote others' happiness and keep promises because doing so will maximize our own happiness. He argued, first, that it is not always true that fulfilling these duties will maximize our happiness,[65] and second, that even when it is true, this is not the reason why we ought to fulfil them. Instrumental views turn the duties to benefit others and keep promises into duties to

promote our happiness, which is not what they intuitively are. Given his particular conceptual views, Prichard gave this last argument a radical form. Holding that the instrumental or hypothetical imperative is only descriptive, he said instrumental justifications of morality resolve the moral 'ought' into something that is not an 'ought' at all and so deny normativity altogether.[66] But even if the instrumental 'ought' is a real 'ought,' he could say that instrumentalism turns other-regarding duties into self-regarding ones and so distorts the moral phenomena.

Many in the school had a similar view about Aristotle's more high-minded egoism, which says we ought to promote others' happiness or keep promises because, if done with the right motives, this will manifest virtue on our part, which is an essential part of the *eudaimonia* or flourishing that is our one ultimate goal. Sidgwick attacked the conceptual underpinnings of this view, saying it fails to distinguish the questions 'What ought I all things considered to do?' and 'What will make my life go best?,' or assumes without argument that the answers to these two questions must always be the same.[67] Ewing thought the egoistic framework forced Aristotle into implausible claims, for example, that if it is all things considered right for a person to sacrifice his life, the excellence this courageous act will add to his life must be greater than the excellence of the thousands of other virtuous acts he could perform if he continued to live, so his act involves no real sacrifice.[68] But even apart from these difficulties, Aristotle's view gave the wrong explanation of our other-regarding duties, making them at bottom self-regarding. Prichard tied this charge to an implausible hedonistic reading of Aristotle, on which by 'good' Aristotle always meant 'conducive to the agent's pleasure.'[69] But his criticism can be separated from this interpretation, since whatever it is, my *eudaimonia* must be a state of me, and any view that grounds all 'oughts' in a state of me makes all 'oughts' ultimately self-regarding. And the school

found more specific egoistic elements in Aristotle's ethics. Sidgwick said Aristotle lacked the modern concept of benevolence, since the virtue closest to it on his list, liberality, is shown just as much in tasteful expenditure on a fine house for oneself as in spending on other people.[70] Others were repelled by Aristotle's description of the *megalopsychos* or 'proud' man, who takes pleasure in being more virtuous than other people and finds it beneath his dignity to give others small benefits; only when great things are at stake will he deign to act. Rashdall commented on 'Aristotle's revolting picture of the high-souled man (*megalopsychos*),'[71] while Ross said the description of the *megalopsychos* 'betrays somewhat nakedly the self-absorption which is the bad side of Aristotle's ethics.'[72]

The school had a similar view of Kant's attempt to ground the moral duties in the first formulation of his categorical imperative. This attempt is again largely external, since the question whether the universalization of a given maxim can be coherently thought or willed is remote from everyday thought about promoting others' happiness or keeping promises. But it again is open to two objections. One is that it yields the wrong results: it is not true, for example, that a world in which everyone makes lying promises cannot be conceived.[73] And even it did yield the right results, it would give the wrong explanation for them. Prichard wrote: 'No one could suppose that the reason why an act ought to be done consists in the fact that everyone could do it. Even Kant could not have supposed this. The difficulty escaped him because it didn't occur to him that his criterion of moral rules must express what, on his view, is their reason.'[74]

External moral explanations cannot be dismissed en bloc; each must be examined on its own merits. But the experience of the last half-century is hardly encouraging, as time and again external projects have been found to fail. This leaves the conceptually inherent approach of the

Sidgwick-to-Ewing school, which, while not as exciting as externalism would be if successful, can nonetheless be deeply illuminating. Sidgwick on impartiality, Moore on organic unities, Rashdall, Ross, and the others on virtue – these and analyses like them unify particular moral judgements under an independently plausible head while illuminating their internal structure. Everyday morality is subtle and complex, with more internal coherence than may initially appear. By working within that morality, inherent explanations can uncover that subtlety and coherence as externalists, in their eagerness for more grandiose justifications, too rarely do. While less ambitious than the alternative, inherent explanation is more likely to yield substantial results and in my view has a better record of doing so.

It is not that the Sidgwick-to-Ewing school gave every inherent explanation possible; there were aspects of common-sense morality they seem to have been blind to. Thus, most of them did not see how common sense permits us to care somewhat more about our own happiness than about other people's, and distinguished on that basis between acts of benefitting others that are strictly required and ones that are supererogatory. (Ross thought that when doing so will not violate any deontological constraint, our duty is always to maximize the good impartially.[75]) So they did not theorize that permission or the many fascinating issues it gives rise to. Nor did they always take inherent explanation as far as they could. Prichard and Ross thought the duty to keep promises cannot be analyzed further, but it can be if we see the act of promising as transferring a moral right, understood as a package of permissions for oneself and duties for others, to another person, by the exercise of a higher-level moral power.[76]

So the school's importance does not rest on their having given every possible inherent moral explanation. It is rather that by largely restricting themselves to that style of moral

theorizing they demonstrated its considerable merits.

6. Underivative Duty

If we ask for a single central belief of the Sidgwick-to-Ewing school, it is that some moral duties, the fundamental ones are underivative. If we ask why these duties hold, there is no other answer than that they do. They cannot have a moral justification, because they are morally basic, nor can they have an extra-moral one, because none of those succeed. But the claim that duty is underivative can be made at three different levels.

The first concerns the normative realm as a whole. Here the idea is that normative judgements are *sui generis*, neither reducible to nor derivable from non-normative judgements such as those of science; the 'ought' is in general distinct from the 'is.' The school usually combined this claim with normative realism, yielding their metaethical non-naturalism. But I have argued that what mattered most to their theorizing was the *sui generis* claim on its own.

The second level concerns moral judgements more narrowly. Here the school held that judgements about how one ought morally to act are likewise underivative, not only from non-normative judgements but also from any other normative judgements; there are no non-moral 'oughts' from which moral 'oughts' derive. They based this claim partly on the minimalist view that there are no other 'oughts' than the moral one, but also on the substantive view that no ought-statements other than those commonly called 'moral' are true.

Finally, later writers of the school such as Prichard, Ross, and Broad applied the idea of underivativeness to deontological duties such as to keep promises or make reparation. These duties, they held, do not derive from a more general one to promote good consequences; the main

reason we ought to keep promises or compensate those we have harmed is just that we ought to.

This last application was not shared by consequentialists such as Sidgwick, Rashdall, and Moore, but they did share the first two. If asked why we ought to promote other people's happiness or knowledge, they would have said there is no answer other than that we ought to. (The claim that happiness or knowledge is good either needs to be supplemented by the further claim that we ought to promote whatever is good – which claim is then underivative – or already includes an 'ought' in its content.) No less than the deontological duties of Prichard, Ross, and Broad, the supreme consequentialist duty holds just because it does.

Though in one sense modest, this view contrasts with vast stretches of Western moral philosophy, which have aimed precisely at explaining why we ought to fulfil basic moral duties. The Sidgwick-to-Ewing school rejected these attempts, holding that they fail to yield their intended conclusions and, even if they did, would give the wrong explanations for them. The only approach that avoids these pitfalls – that generates the right verdicts for the right reasons – treats some moral duties as underivative. This may not be an entirely distinctive view in the history of ethics, but no other group expressed it so clearly or used it as the springboard for such searching analyses of the moral judgements we actually make.

Notes

1. See e.g. John McDowell, 'Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following,' in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, ed. S.H. Holtzman and C.M. Leich (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 141-62, p. 144. For a reply to this argument, see Daniel Y. Elstein and Thomas Hurka, 'From Thick to Thin: Two Moral Reduction Plans,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, in press.

2. Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907), p. 392. Unless otherwise specified, all references will be to the 7th edition of this work.

3. W.D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 134.

4. Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 155. See also Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, 1st ed. (London: Macmillan, 1874), p. 93n; Hastings Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil* (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), vol. 1, pp. 138, 174-75; and A.C. Ewing, 'A Suggested Non-Naturalistic Definition of Good,' *Mind* 48 (1939): 1-22, p. 5. Note that much of Rashdall's book incorporates material from articles published as early as 1885; though I will cite this material from the book, it will often have been written earlier.

5. Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 2, p. 98n.; G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), pp. 98-99; Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 112.

6. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 420, 497-98. For a fuller defence of this reading of Sidgwick on 'good for,' see my 'Moore in the Middle,' *Ethics* 113 (2003): 599-628, pp. 611-12.

7. H.A. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, ed. Jim MacAdam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 172-76; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 65-67, and *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), pp., 255-57.

8. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp. 10n., 135, 171, 204; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 21, 24-

26, 151, and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 72-75, 129-30, 272-74, 284.

9. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 37. For more recent defences of the wide-scope reading, see Patricia S. Greenspan, 'Conditional Oughts and Hypothetical Imperatives,' *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975): 259-76; and John Broome, 'Normative Requirements,' in *Normativity*, ed. Jonathan Dancy (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 78-99.

10. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp. 54-55, 126-28, 135, 143-44, 166; Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 48.

11. What about epistemic or logical 'oughts' that say we ought to believe a conclusion given certain evidence or premises? The school did not discuss these but could have taken them to involve hypothetical imperatives, of the form 'If you want to believe the truth, believe this conclusion.' For Prichard and Ross this would mean the epistemic 'ought' is not really normative but says only that believing a given conclusion is an effective means to believing what is true.

12. G.E. Moore, *The Elements of Ethics*, ed. Tom Regan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 17-18; E.F. Carritt, *The Theory of Morals* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 29.

13. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 5-6. For the same reason, the school would have rejected as empty a question some present-day philosophers discuss: whether an act's being morally right gives us reason to perform it. For them talk of 'reasons' was just another way of talking about what we ought to do, and if the only 'oughts' are moral, the question reduces to whether an act's being one we morally ought to do makes it one we morally ought to do. The answer is no, but on entirely trivial grounds.

14. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp. 7-9, 18-20, 23-30.

15. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 6-7, 9-10, 17, 21, 37, and 'A Reply to My Critics,' in *The*

Philosophy of G.E. Moore, 2nd ed., ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp. (New York: Tudor, 1952), 535-677, pp. 554-81; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 75-78, 91-94, 131-32, and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 278-83.

16. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 92n., 112, 381, 388; C.D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1930), pp. 277-78; Ewing, 'A Suggested Non-Naturalistic Definition,' and *The Definition of Good* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), ch. 5.

17. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. vii; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 1; Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 15 (see also pp. 29-30).

18. See e.g. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 25-28, 31; Moore, *Ethics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), chs. 3-4; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 11, 80-104, and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 22-26; and Broad, *Five Types*, pp. 84-86, 259-64.

19. Carritt, 'Moral Positivism and Moral Aestheticism,' *Philosophy* 13 (1938): 131-47, pp. 132-33, 140; Broad, 'Some Reflections on Moral Sense Theories in Ethics,' in *Broad's Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy*, ed. David Cheney (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 188-222, p. 190, and 'Critical Notice of H.A. Prichard, *Moral Obligation*,' *Mind* 59 (1950): 555-66, p. 566.

20. Carritt, 'Moral Positivism and Moral Aestheticism,' pp. 133-34; Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 33-34.

21. Moore, 'Reply to My Critics,' pp. 544-45. The flirtation was, to be sure, temporary. After Moore's death Ewing wrote, 'I think I ought to mention that Moore completely retracted this statement [that he was 'strongly inclined' to accept a non-cognitivist view] in the later years of his life (and here Blanshard would confirm what I say). Moore told me orally that he still held

to his old view, and further that he could not imagine whatever in the world had induced him to say that he was almost equally inclined to hold the other view' (Ewing, 'G.E. Moore,' *Mind* 70 (1962), p. 251).

22. Broad, 'A Reply to My Critics,' in *The Philosophy of C.D. Broad*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (New York: Tudor, 1959), 709-830, p. 817.

23. Ewing, *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), ch. 2.

24. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 10-17; Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 26n., 109, and *Lectures on the Ethics of T.H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 145; Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 1, pp. 47-48.

25. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 26n.; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 17-20.

26. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 131.

27. For a careful analysis of Sidgwick on this issue, see Robert Shaver, 'Sidgwick on Moral Motivation,' *Philosopher's Imprint* 6 (2006): 1-14.

28. See e.g. David O. Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ch. 6.

29. I am indebted here to unpublished writing by Derek Parfit.

30. See e.g. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 31, 505, and *Lectures on Green, Spencer, and Martineau*, pp. 1-14, 60-79, 143-53; Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 2, pp. 189-413; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, chs. 2-4; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 12-15, and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp.12-17; Broad, 'Critical Notice of Julian Huxley's *Evolutionary Ethics*,' in *Broad's Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy*, 156-87, and 'Symposium on the Relations Between Science and Ethics,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 42 (1941-42): 100A-100H; Ewing,

Definition of Good, pp. 23-25, 73-74, 106-10, 134, and 'Symposium on the Relations Between Science and Ethics,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 42 (1941-42): 68-86.

31. See e.g. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 400-401; Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 1, pp. 59, 69, 70-71, 75, 78; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. viii, 59, 75-77, 92, 143-44, 197, and *Ethics*, p. 102; Prichard, *Moral Writings*, p. 2; Carritt, *Theory of Morals*, pp. 28, 72; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 39-40; Broad, *Five Types*, pp. 131, 233; Ewing, *The Morality of Punishment* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner & Co., 1929), pp. 6-7, 14, 17-18, 185-87, and *Definition of Good*, pp, 15-18.

32. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 379-86; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. viii, and *Ethics*, pp. 76-77; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 83-84, 91, 93-95, 187-88.

33. Carritt, *Theory of Morals*, pp. 30-31, 70-71, 84-85, 114-15, 138-39; Ewing *Morality of Punishment*, pp. 2, 119n., 160-61, 174-75, 179, 187-88, 202.

34. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp, 4-5, 13, 77; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 32-33 and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 84, 168-71, 184; Broad, *Five Types*, pp. 145-46, 177-78, 271-72.

35. See e.g. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981), pp. 14-19.

36. See e.g. Bart Schultz, 'Introduction: Henry Sidgwick Today,' in *Essays on Henry Sidgwick*, ed. Bart Schultz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-61, pp. 28-29, 59n84; and Robert Shaver, 'Sidgwick's Minimal Metaethics,'*Utilitas* 12 (2000): 261-77, pp. 263-66.

37. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 338-42.

38. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. x, 75-76, 143-44, and *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 163, 167-68.

39. Moore, *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 162-63; Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 1, pp.

211-13; Ewing, *Morality of Punishment*, pp. 185-87, 191; Prichard, "Letter to John Laird of July 30, 1938," Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Ms. Eng. Lett. C. 131 fols. 18-29, fol. 27.

40. Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 41.

41. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, p. 414; Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 39, and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 189-90.

42. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 222.

43. Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 19 (see also p. 23); Broad, *Five Types*, pp. 283-84.

44. Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 21, 23, 24-26, 140-41.

45. See e.g. F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 157, 193-99, and *Principles of Logic*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), pp. 269-70; also John McDowell, 'Virtue and Reason,' *The Monist* 62 (1979): 331-50.

46. Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 23, 29-32, 41-42.

47. Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 143.

48. J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), p. 117; Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 143, and *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 183; Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 2, pp. 49-50; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 188.

49. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 8-9, 83.

50. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 503-509.

51. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 102-04; Broad, *Five Types*, pp. 255-56.

52. Bradley, 'Mr. Sidgwick's Hedonism,' in *Collected Essays*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 97. On the frequent (though not exceptionless) extensional equivalence of Idealist ethics and utilitarianism see Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, pp. 138-41, and T.H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, ed. A.C. Bradley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883), secs. 332, 356.

53. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 155-64.

54. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 27, 77, 90-91, 138, 140, 158, 184, 189, 222.

55. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 94-95.

56. Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 34. See also Prichard, *Moral Writings*, p. 2, and Carritt, *Theory of Morals*, pp. 39-40, 108-109.

57. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp. 10, 29-30; Carritt, *Theory of Morals*, pp. 69-70; Ross, *Right and the Good*, pp. 17, 19, 24, 36-39, and *Foundations of Ethics*, pp. 65-69, 113, 187.

58. In earlier writings I have contrasted these as 'structural' vs. 'foundational' explanations, but the second of these terms in particular may be misleading. See my 'Moore in the Middle,' pp. 627-28, and 'Normative Ethics: Back to the Future,' in *The Future for Philosophy*, ed. Brian Leiter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004): 246-64, pp. 253-61.

59. It is not part of inherent explanation that the explanatory principles can be known only by reflecting on common sense. They can be self-evident in themselves, as Sidgwick and Moore held.

60. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 381-82.

61. Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 1, pp. 59, 63-65, 76, 137, 174-75, 214, vol. 2, pp. 41-42; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 203-204, 214-22; Ross, *The Right and the Good*, pp. 134-35, 163.

62. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 215-16.

63. Broad, 'Self and Others,' in *Broad's Critical Essays*, 262-82, pp. 279-82.

64. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 404, 498; Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 21.

65. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp. 26, 32, 180.

66. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, pp. 9, 29-30, 43, 116, 122-23, 143, 144-45, 150, 169, 183,

188-93, 236-30, 241.

67. Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, pp. 404-405.

68. Ewing, *Ethics* (London: English Universities Press, 1953), pp. 28-29.

69. Prichard, 'The Meaning of *agathon* in the *Ethics* of Aristotle,' in *Moral Writings*, 102-13.

70. Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 5th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 62, 122.

71. Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. 1, p. 205. See also Carritt's remark about 'the egoistic self-righteousness of Aristotle's *philautos*,' in 'An Ambiguity of the Word "Good",' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 23 (1937): 51-80, p. 69.

72. Ross, *Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1923), p. 208.

73. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, p. 60; Carritt, *Theory of Morals*, pp. 79-82; Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, pp. 130-31; Ross, *Kant's Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 29-33, 45-47.

74. Prichard, *Moral Writings*, p. 59. Thomas E. Hill, Jr. has recently made the same criticism, saying that if we ask why slavery is wrong, the claim that a world in which everyone acts on the maxim of a slave-owner and none on that of a slave is logically impossible is not the right answer; see his 'Kantian Normative Ethics,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, ed. David Copp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 480-514, p. 488.

75. Ross, *Right and the Good*, p. 39.

76. See H.L.A. Hart, 'Are There Any Natural Rights?', *Philosophical Review* 64 (1955): 175-91.