



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Mind Association

Mr. Sidgwick on 'Ethical Studies'

Author(s): Henry Sidgwick

Source: *Mind*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (Jan., 1877), pp. 122-126

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Mind Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2246979>

Accessed: 17/09/2009 09:23

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=oup>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Oxford University Press and Mind Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Mind*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

identifying new with synthetic, old with analytic cognition. These being the alternatives, the question is already answered: synthetic processes precede analytic. Pure transcendental forms of the Understanding, the Categories, enable us to frame concepts which are afterwards (through the medium of the Schematism of the Judgment) combined or explicated by the synthetic or analytic judgment-faculty. The Understanding is the faculty of rules, the Judgment that of subsuming cases under rules.

The conclusion, then, that I come to is, that the distinction between old and new knowledge, which is all that is really contained in Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, and which, so estimated, has a high expository value, is made to carry a fictitious one by being supposed to be a distinction between essentially different kinds of judgments. Old and new cognitions are the same in point of kind; and all, whether they are concepts or whether they are judgments, have a prior condition on which they are based, namely, the chain of perceptions which is continually passing through consciousness. In that chain, percepts are originally combined, come to us in a certain combination originally. Concept-forming and Judgment are merely the re-combination of the parts of this chain, breaking up the first combinations and forming the parts afresh into new ones. There is no reason to suppose any synthetic forms of thought requisite for effecting this. What Kant called the principle of Contradiction, better perhaps the Postulates of Logic, is quite sufficient. And if there is any 'necessity' in the judgments or in the combinations effected by them, other than this, it must be sought in the percepts which are their material and their condition; for it is only a metaphysical theory of this nature, and not one which maintains pure synthetic forms of thought, that can be brought into harmony with the facts of psychology.

SHADWORTH H. HODGSON.

Mr. Sidgwick on 'Ethical Studies'.—In the last number of *MIND*, Mr. Sidgwick did me the honour to review my *Ethical Studies*. His remarks were on the whole welcome to me, for they showed clearly the necessity there was, and is, for some work of the kind. I am not surprised that my reviewer did not *see* that necessity: that he *felt* it I think his article shows. "Really penetrating criticism, especially in ethics, requires a patient effort of intellectual sympathy," and I am sorry that such an effort should be made in vain. But that in this instance it has been so I should like to be allowed to show. I am prepared to go through the article point by point, but cannot ask from the readers of *MIND* so much space for matters partly personal. Indeed if the reviewer had confined himself to remarks of a personal or generally depreciatory nature, I would not have trespassed on their forbearance at all. As it is I must ask leave to correct some misunderstandings which are calculated to prejudice my views by representing them to be other than they are.

And (1) I must impress on the reader that I disclaimed the attempt

to solve the problem of individuality in general; and in particular that of the origin of the Self in time, and the beginning of volition. But so far as I have said anything, I will endeavour to show that it is not incoherent, as soon as objections against it are distinctly formulated. I can not do so before. However, I may say that I have no quarrel with Determinism if only that view will leave off regarding the Self as a collection, and volitions as 'resultants' or compositions of forces, and will either reform or cease to apply its category of cause and effect. The problem, as Mr. Sidgwick states it, on p. 46 of his *Methods of Ethics*, I consider to involve a false alternative.

(2) The fact that when I speak of self-realisation "we naturally think of the realisation or development into act of each one of the potentialities constituting the definite formed character of each individual" is not surprising, until we have learnt that there are other views than those which appear in the *Methods of Ethics* (p. 72 foll.). And this we very soon do if we proceed. I have written at some length on the good and bad selves (Essay VII.); and on p. 146, I have repudiated distinctly Mr. Sidgwick's understanding of the term. I thought that I had left no doubt that characters might be partly bad, and that this was *not* what I meant by self-realisation, as = end.

(3) "We may at least say that a term which equally denotes the fulfilment of any of my desires by some one else and my own accomplishment of my duty, will hardly avail us much in a definition of the Highest Good." Perhaps. But I emphatically repudiate the doctrine that the mere bringing about by some one else of anything desired by me is my self-realisation. If the reviewer wishes the reader and myself to believe that I put this forward, he owes us a reference. If it be meant as a *deduction* from my premisses, he owes us an argument. He has given us neither; and as I think, nothing but a sheer misunderstanding.

(4) Mr. Sidgwick must be aware that I have endeavoured to define self-realisation, as = end. He proceeds to remark, "the question then is whether we gain anything by calling the object of our search 'the true whole which is to realise the true self'". I think we do: but then I have not left the matter here as my reviewer seems to indicate. That point of view is reached on p. 67, and the whole remainder of the discussion down to p. 74 is quietly ignored by him. I call particular attention to this.

The passage on Hedonism which follows I will take hereafter.

(5) I do not know whether in what is said about Kant there is an objection to my views, nor, if so, what that is; but when the reviewer says of me, "he accepts a merely relative universality as a sufficient criterion of goodness," I must remark that this is what I do *not* say. I say relative *and* absolute, (p. 174); and this appears even from my reviewer's next page.

(6) "Mr. Bradley, I think, has not clearly distinguished this view from his own; and the effectiveness of his argument against Individualism depends chiefly on the non-distinction." The view is "the old doctrine . . . that the individual man is essentially a social

being". But (a) if my view is partly the same as another, what is that against it? (b) If Mr. Sidgwick will point out confusion, I will admit it or answer it. I cannot do either until he does. (c) At any rate, "that the individual man is essentially a social being" is my view, and is *not* my reviewer's. If it be "a vague and barren ethical commonplace," yet in his book he must be taken to deny it, for he finds the end, and, I suppose, the essence of man by examining a supposed "single sentient conscious being" (p. 374).

(7) "He allows . . . even that 'open and direct outrage on the standing moral institutions which make society and human life what it is,' may be 'justified on the plea of overpowering moral necessity.'" Here I must earnestly beg the reader to consult the context in my book (pp. 204-5). I cannot ask for space to quote it. The question I was discussing was the extent to which *in theory* we must hold that collisions may proceed (*cf.* p. 142). On p. 143 I distinctly denied that 'moral theory' is 'meant to influence practice' (*cf.* p. 205 foot-note). And I do think this ought not to have been ignored.

(8) My reviewer continues—"But here he plainly comes into conflict with 'unsophisticated common sense': and surely, if that authority be thus found *falsus in uno*, it must be at least *fallibilis in omnibus*: and thus we have still to seek for some criterion of the validity of its dictates". First, I must ask for a reference for 'unsophisticated common sense'. It is given as a quotation from me, but I do not recognise it. Next, I have maintained that I do *not* really come into collision with common morality, but, when understood, am at one with it (p. 204, *cf.* 142-3). And my reasoned exposition, ignored by the reviewer, may stand I hope against his "plainly". Thirdly, he argues, What is *falsus in uno* is *fallibilis in omnibus*. The falseness in this one thing I deny. Next, if I admitted it, I should like to see the steps by which the conclusion follows. Next, I have never hinted that the moral consciousness is *not* fallible in particulars. Mr. Sidgwick really should give references for what he attributes to me. Next, I deny that it is fallible in all points. Lastly, even if it were false throughout, I say we have *not* "to seek for some criterion of the validity of its dictates"; for none is possible.

This is all I think it necessary to say in answer to that which my reviewer has urged against the doctrine I have put forward. The rest which I have not noticed, I must not be taken to admit. And now, seeing that a large part of my book was directed against Hedonism in general, and one or two pages even against Mr. Sidgwick in particular, I naturally hoped for some discussion of the matter. This is all I can find. "The notion of Maximum Pleasure is certainly sufficient for systematising conduct, as it gives us a universally applicable standard for selecting and regulating our activities. But it does not give us an end which can ever be realised as a whole, in Mr. Bradley's sense, that is, all at once: for obviously there is and can be no moment at which a 'greatest possible sum of pleasures' can be enjoyed."

First, as was said above, the reviewer ignores my interpretation of self-realisation. Next, he suggests that my argument against Hedonism is that pleasures cannot be enjoyed all at once. True; that is *an* argument; but is it possible that Mr. Sidgwick can really believe that in other respects Maximum Pleasure answers to my conception of the end? This is so wholly at variance with the doctrine I hold that I confess I was not prepared for it. Thirdly, that the notion of Maximum Pleasure can systematise conduct and give a standard, is a proposition I have formally contested. Mr. Sidgwick not only gives me an assertion for an answer, but by the way he introduces the assertion suggests to the reader that I believe it myself.

I can find no other defence of his opinions but the (unsupported) charge against me that I use rhetoric for argument, and that my apprehension of the views which I assail "is always rather superficial and sometimes even unintelligent". Those views I think should be securely founded, if they are to bear being defended in this way.

F. H. BRADLEY.

[Mr. Bradley seems to be under a strange impression that, while professing to write a critical notice of his views on ethics, I have been or ought to have been—defending my own. I entertain quite a different notion of a reviewer's "station and duties". In criticising his book (or any other) I put out of sight my own doctrines, in so far as I am conscious of them as peculiar to myself: and pass my judgments from a point of view which I expect my readers generally to share with me. Hence the references in his reply to my opinions would be quite irrelevant, even if he understood those opinions somewhat better than he does. I passed lightly over his attack on Hedonism in Essay III. for the simple reason—which I gave—that I thought it less interesting and important than other parts of his work. Much of it, as he must be perfectly aware, either has no bearing on Hedonism as I conceive it, or emphasises defects which I have myself pointed out: the rest consists chiefly of familiar anti-hedonistic commonplaces: the freshest argument I could find was one with which I had made acquaintance some years ago in Mr. Green's Introduction to Hume. This, as stated by Mr. Green, I have taken occasion to answer in the course of an article in the present number of this journal. The attack on my book appended to Essay III., though not uninteresting to myself, is far too full of misunderstandings to be profitable for discussion. It is criticism of the kind that invites explanation rather than defence: such explanation I proposed to give in its proper place—which was certainly not my notice of Mr. Bradley.

On the special points which he raises, the very briefest reply will suffice.

(1) (2) (3) He scarcely attempts to answer my charge of 'want of clear coherence' in his exposition of 'Self'. He does not deny that the 'self' presented in Essay I. is dropped without explanation when we pass to Essay II., and other accounts are given of the same notion. Among them is the statement that "all we can desire is self"; from which I drew the immediate inference that the fulfilment of any desire is a kind of self-realisation: if he did not intend this inference, pp. 61, 62 are confusing and somewhat irrelevant.

(4) The discussion on 'finite' and 'infinite' (pp 68-73) is a part of the metaphysics of which, in general terms, I notified my omission. I

thought, and think still, that it was comparatively unimportant to the ethical discussion. A critical notice does not profess to be a table of contents.

(5) He misunderstands my 'relative universality'. I say that the social organism, of which the individual in Essay V. is explained to be essentially a part, is a *relative* and not an *absolute* whole. That is, it is not the universe: and we have no reason to identify its will—granting this to be real and cognisable—with the universal or Divine Will to which our wills should conform.

(6) I did not absurdly complain that he combined in his *positive* doctrine the common view of society as a natural organism with his peculiar view of this organism as possessing a reasonable will: I criticised him for not distinguishing them in his polemic against Individualism. The result of the non-distinction is that much of this polemical argument—as far as I can trace it through its folds of rhetoric—is directed against an individualism which will find no defenders: the individualism, namely, to which the 'Social Compact,' belongs, and to which Utilitarianism long since gave the *coup de grâce*.

(7) (8) I still maintain that the non-theoretical unreflective person who is exalted in Essay V. as furnishing the moral standard will be considerably startled to find his encomiast justifying, with whatever qualifications, "open and direct outrage on the standing moral institutions which make society and human life what it is". He will regard Mr. Bradley as almost a "thinker," and at least "on the threshold of immorality". And I doubt whether he will be quite consoled by learning that this justification is not "meant to influence practice": though I admit that the consolation is well adapted to the average philosophical capacity of the non-theoretical person.

But I need not press this point: because Mr. Bradley, as I understand, admits the possibility of a conflict between common sense and his private moral consciousness; and is prepared, in case of such conflict, to rely entirely on his own particular moral intuition, allowing no appeal to any express principle or external standard. If this be so, his apparent reference to an external standard in Essay V. is found (as I said) to be devoid of precise meaning or scientific value.

To sum up, then, I have nothing to retract or qualify on any of the points raised by Mr. Bradley—except a pair of inverted commas which were accidentally attached to a phrase of my own. But I should prefer to part from him in a friendly manner; and therefore I am glad to find something to concede to him in the phrase in which I characterised his style as over-rhetorical. I still dislike the quality of his rhetoric, whether it be satirical, pathetic or declamatory; and I think it is sometimes introduced, at important points, so as to interfere with the closeness of his reasoning. But I find that the sentence in which I combined these two judgments was too strongly worded: and am glad to substitute for it the milder phrases just given.

HENRY SIDGWICK.]

Mr. Hodgson on 'Cogito ergo sum':—Assuming that Descartes' first principle really means what Mr. Hodgson (MIND IV.) says it does—that my being and my consciousness are one, that my being *is* my consciousness and my consciousness my being—what are we to make of a sentence like the following?—"If the true sense of '*Cogito ergo sum*' is what I contend, *My existence means my consciousness*, we can go on to generalise this in application to other things: their existence