

Late Utilitarian Moral Theory and Its Development

Sidgwick, Moore

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Henry Sidgwick taught G.E. Moore as an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge.¹ Moore found Sidgwick's personality less than attractive and his lectures "rather dull."² Still, philosophically speaking, Moore absorbed a great deal from Sidgwick. In the Preface to the Trinity College Prize Fellowship dissertation that he submitted in 1898, just two years after graduation, he wrote "For my ethical views it will be obvious how much I owe to Prof. Sidgwick."³ Later, in *Principia Ethica*, Moore credited Sidgwick with having "first clearly exposed the [naturalistic] fallacy" – a fallacy putatively committed when one defines naturalistically or super-naturalistically "good" – which was one of the book's main ambitions (PE, p. 39; also pp. 17, 59).⁴ It is therefore unsurprising that Moore remarks in the intellectual autobiography he wrote years later that "From ... [Sidgwick's] published works ... I have gained a good deal, and his clarity and his belief in Common Sense were very sympathetic to me."⁵

This influence did not, however, prevent Moore from registering disagreements with Sidgwick, the sharpest of which concern the viability of egoism and the nature of the good. The disagreements between Sidgwick and Moore speak to many important moral theoretical issues arising both within and without the utilitarian tradition in ethical thinking. Because the two share much in common, a critical comparison of them on a range of moral philosophical questions proves instructive. It will tell us in particular something about the general direction of ethical thinking in the utilitarian tradition at the dawn of the twentieth century.

This chapter has four parts. Part I compares the versions of utilitarianism to which Sidgwick and Moore subscribed. Part II examines the arguments each provides for the view. Part III discusses their conflicting theories of value. Part IV sums things up.

I

Sidgwick and Moore share a commitment to some version of utilitarianism. It is against this shared background that their disagreements occur. Sidgwick endorses the classical utilitarian view: “the conduct which, under any given circumstances, is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole; that is, taking into account all whose happiness is affected by the conduct” (ME, p. 411). By “greatest amount of happiness” he means “greatest possible surplus of pleasure over pain” (ME, p. 413).

This view is divisible into two main parts. Sidgwick and Moore agree normative ethical investigations tell us what things are non-instrumentally good (or evil) and what we ought (or ought not) to do (ME, pp. 2–3; PE, p. 142ff.). Sidgwick’s view is that all and only pleasure has non-instrumental value and all and only pain has non-instrumental disvalue and that one’s only basic obligation is to maximize surplus pleasure for the aggregate of sentient beings. He tries to work out a consistent version of this view. He does so in part by distinguishing it from the versions of classical utilitarianism found in Bentham and in Mill.

Bentham and Mill agree that all and only pleasure (pain) has non-instrumental value (disvalue); however, they differ over the dimensions of pleasure relevant to determining its value. Bentham holds that the value of a pleasure when considered alone depends exclusively on quantitative considerations: the more pleasure the better.⁶ The view has counter-intuitive implications. Compare two lives: (i) An average-length human life that is rich in a surplus of the pleasures of achievement, unified and general understanding, and long-standing and deep relationships. (ii) The life of a primitive sentient creature that is rich in a surplus of only very unsophisticated bodily pleasures. Bentham is bound to hold that if the latter life contains on balance more surplus pleasure (say, because it is very long), it is the better life.⁷

Mill balked at this implication. He argued that a hedonist could resist it with consistency by arguing that the value of a pleasure depends on quantitative *and* qualitative considerations. Mill argued in specific that some kinds of pleasures (e.g. of the intellect or of the imagination) are better in themselves.⁸ On this basis, he argued that the former life is better. It contains pleasures that are of higher quality, and hence better in themselves as pleasures, and these outrank the primitive or lower pleasures present in the second life.

Sidgwick sides with quantitative hedonism. He gives Benthamite reasons to favor so-called “higher” pleasures (ME, p. 94). Sidgwick rejects Mill’s qualitative view on the grounds that the introduction of the dimension of quality is inconsistent with the main tenet of hedonism: that the value of a pleasure depends exclusively on its pleasantness. If we introduce factors other than pleasurable for the purpose of valuing pleasure, we “are clearly introducing a non-hedonic ground of preference,” and this involves abandoning hedonism (ME, p. 95). Moore agreed (PE, pp. 79–80).

But Sidgwick does not accept Bentham’s view *en bloc*. The latter argues that the value of a pleasure when considered alone is determined by its intensity, duration, certainty, and propinquity (or location in time). Sidgwick agrees that intensity and duration matter to the value of a pleasure (ME, p. 124). He rejects without argument the claim that propinquity is directly relevant: “*proximity* is a property which it is reasonable to

disregard except in so far as it diminishes uncertainty” (ME, p. 124n1; italics in original). For Sidgwick, it is self-evident that “the mere difference of priority and posteriority in time is not a reasonable ground for having more regard to the consciousness of one moment than to that of another” (ME, p. 381).

It is not clear that Sidgwick rejects Bentham’s claim that certainty matters to the value of a pleasure. He holds that if intensity and duration are commensurable with each other, we may, once we are clear how certain a pleasure happens to be, determine how it affects the “value” of a pleasure (ME, p. 124n1). This suggests that certainty, like intensity, affects the value of a pleasure itself rather than, for example, the rationality of action taken to secure it. That certainty affects the value itself is inconsistent with hedonism, however, since the value of a pleasure is then affected by something in addition to pleasurable-ness.

Sidgwick does not, then, succeed in working out a completely consistent quantitative hedonism. As he notes, “consistency requires that pleasures should be sought in proportion to their pleasantness; and therefore, the less pleasant consciousness must not be preferred to the more pleasant, on the ground of any other qualities that it may possess” (ME, p. 121).

It is not difficult for him to achieve consistency, however. He simply has to reject Bentham’s claim that certainty and propinquity make a difference to the value of a pleasure on the same grounds that he rejects the appeal to quality: as making pleasure’s value depend on things other than pleasantness. This is anyway a more plausible way to dispose of the parts of Bentham’s view that seem to conflict with quantitative hedonism.

There is another way in which Sidgwick deviates from Mill and Bentham. In outlining utilitarianism, Mill and Bentham suggest that the morality of actions depends on what has or appears to have a tendency to promote surplus aggregate happiness rather than on what in fact maximizes surplus aggregate happiness.

In *Utilitarianism*, Mill says that: “Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to promote the reverse of happiness.”⁹ In the *Introduction* Bentham says that “By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question.”¹⁰

Sidgwick’s version of utilitarianism makes no mention of tendencies. This is likely in part because an action might have a tendency to promote a good outcome and fail to do so. For Sidgwick, this means it is wrong. What he cares about is an action’s actual results, not what appear to be its results (or tendencies). In addition, he embraces the maximization of happiness rather than merely its promotion or augmentation. Something might promote/augment but not maximize happiness.¹¹

Sidgwick may not consistently embrace the utilitarian view of rightness. He notes that there are cases in which there is more than one way in which the same quantity of happiness might be distributed to the same number of people (ME, p. 416). This leads him to wonder which of these distributions is most desirable. It might seem strange for him to wonder this; surely for Sidgwick the answer is that the most desirable distribution is that which maximizes surplus aggregate happiness. The difficulty with this response is that there exist cases where, because of the indefinite nature of hedonistic

calculations, it cannot be determined with “mathematical precision” which of one’s options maximizes surplus happiness for the aggregate (ME, p. 416). It will appear in such cases that two or more options produce equal quantities of surplus happiness; it is difficult in such cases to decide what to do simply by reference to utilitarianism. In these cases, “it becomes practically important to ask whether any mode of distributing a given quantum of happiness is better than any other” (ME, p. 416).

In reply, Sidgwick says utilitarianism must be supplemented by “some principle of Just or Right distribution” (ME, pp. 416–417). The most plausible such principle is that of “pure equality” (ME, p. 417). This is the principle most utilitarians accept and it requires “no special justification” (ME, p. 417): “it must be reasonable to treat any one man in the same way as any other, if there be no reason apparent for treating him differently” (ME, p. 417).

The view is that in the sort of cases that concern Sidgwick the more equitable distribution is considered better. To illustrate, suppose one faces a choice between the following two distributions. (The letters stand for individuals and the numbers in brackets stand for their surplus happiness level.)

O1:	A (6)	B (6)	C (6)
O2:	A (14)	B (2)	C (2)

Sidgwick says that O1 is the more desirable of the two distributions. We ought, then, to produce it.

This suggestion might be problematic. If Sidgwick endorses a principle of equality and a principle enjoining “seeking the greatest happiness on the whole” (ME, p. 416), his will be a pluralistic view. This leaves open the possibility that the two principles might conflict in practice. He might suggest that no such conflict arises as the principle of equality is confined to cases in which the quantum of happiness of two or more options appears equal. However, to some, this appears “arbitrary and doubtful.”¹² Why think that equality matters only in cases of this sort? In addition, it is not clear that Sidgwick is right that the principle’s use requires no justification. There are, after all, other principles we might use – e.g. flip a coin. If so, Sidgwick’s endorsement of pure equality lacks a (specifically utilitarian) justification.¹³

Sidgwick has three replies. First, he provides an argument for utilitarianism that involves appeal to certain philosophical intuitions, that is, self-evident propositions that are abstract and universal (ME, p. 379).¹⁴ He argues that the first principle of utilitarianism may be inferred from two such propositions. One of these is that:

the good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view (if I may say so) of the Universe, than the good of any other; unless, that is, there are special grounds for believing that more good is likely to be realized in the one case than in the other (ME, p. 382).

Sidgwick might appeal to this for justification of “pure” equality rather than the Benthamite dictum that “everybody to count for one, and nobody for more than one” (ME, p. 417).

On one reading, this intuition holds that concern for each individual's good is equal, or there are quantitative differences between the goods that justify unequal concern.¹⁵ In the case that Sidgwick is considering there are no "special grounds for believing that more good is likely to be realized in the one case than in the other" (ME, p. 382). His are cases in which there is "no *cognizable* difference between the quantities of happiness involved in two sets of consequences respectively" (ME, p. 416; italics in original). In such cases the axiom appears to warrant equal concern. Since this axiom plays a role in grounding (or providing a rational basis for) utilitarianism (ME, pp. 387, 388), Sidgwick has in his grounding a solution to the problem he confronts. This principle seems to justify equal treatment in these cases. It does so in a way that avoids the charge that invoking the principle only in these cases is arbitrary, for it is only in these cases that there are no "special grounds."

Second, Sidgwick might note the connection between equality and utility, or rather the connection in practice between inequality and disutility. If this connection exists, there is reason for utilitarians to favor equitable distributions of happiness in the sort of case that Sidgwick discusses and more generally, that is, even in cases where it is not hard to tell which of two or more options maximizes aggregate happiness. Sidgwick seems to think that the commitment to equal treatment is part of common-sense morality (ME, p. 447).¹⁶ Since he believes that the morality of common sense is unconsciously utilitarian (ME, pp. 424, 463), and that adherence to it is useful for the purpose of promoting utility over the long run (ME, p. xxiii), it would be reasonable for him to appeal to equal treatment in the case that he envisages, among others. He is, after all, thinking in that case of how to reason in *practice* (ME, p. 416).

Third, Sidgwick notes that a utilitarian is not able to construct a completely new system of moral rules *de novo* for individuals in the current order, for such individuals already have a morality. Instead, the utilitarian has to work with this existing morality:

[the utilitarian] must start, speaking broadly, with the existing social order, and the existing morality as a part of that order: and in deciding the question whether any divergence from this code is to be recommended, must consider chiefly the immediate consequences of such divergence, upon a society in which such a code is conceived generally to subsist (ME, p. 474).

If the "pure equality" that Sidgwick accepts is part of this code, one can see why he might advocate it at least initially and retain it in cases where there are no reasons to reject it. As he notes, men have "a disinterested aversion to unreason ... [and] to any kind of inferiority to others" (ME, p. 447). This might provide some justification, in any case, for adopting it.

Moore accepts what in his time was referred to as ideal utilitarianism.¹⁷ He rejects hedonism (PE, pp. 74–96; E, p. 123ff.). He thinks it is in flagrant conflict with common sense.¹⁸ He can then (with consistency) accept that there are higher pleasures (PE, pp. 94–95; E, pp. 23–25, 123–124). He thinks there are a plurality of goods and that they are all complex organic unities (PE, p. 189; E, pp. 129–130). The value of these wholes is not equivalent to the sum of the value of the parts of the wholes (PE, pp. 27–30, 93, 184; E, p. 124ff.). Among the most valuable of these wholes are aesthetic enjoyment

and personal affection (PE, pp. 188, 189). He argues (at least in *Principia*) that there are three great evils: loving what is bad (as in lasciviousness and cruelty), hating what is good (as in contempt and envy), and consciousness of pain (PE, pp. 207–214). These are all organic unities (PE, p. 208).

On the question of what we ought to do, broadly speaking, Moore agrees with Sidgwick. Early in *Principia*, Moore states that

to assert that a certain line of conduct is, at a given time, absolutely right or obligatory, is obviously to assert that more good or less evil will exist in the world, if it be adopted than if anything else be done instead (PE, p. 25; also PE, p. 147).

Later, he distinguishes between right and duty/obligation. To say that an action is right is to say it “will *not* cause *less* good than any possible alternative” (PE, p. 148; italics in original; also E, pp. 14–15). Moore thinks it is possible that in some cases more than one action is right. This happens, for example, when two or more actions open to one produce equal quantities of surplus value and all other actions produce less surplus value (E, p. 14). To say that an action is one’s duty or what one ought to do, on the other hand, is to say it “will cause more good to exist in the Universe than any possible alternative” (PE, p. 148; also E, pp. 14–15). In *Ethics*, he urges that “it must always be our duty to do what will produce the best effects *upon the whole*” (E, p. 121; italics in original; also pp. 33, 99).

Moore is, then, clear in his commitment to maximization, he rejects all talk of tendencies and he thinks that the morality of actions depends on their actual rather than their expected or apparent results (E, p. 99). In these respects, he agrees with Sidgwick. Following him, Moore expresses the canonical form of what is now called consequentialism.

Note that in making the distinction between ought and duty and right, Moore avoids puzzling over the kind of scenario (vexing to Sidgwick) in which two actions appear to produce on balance equal quantities of surplus happiness (or value). In the case of such ties Moore says no action is one’s duty. Instead, both actions are right (or appear so) and so taking either course of action is permissible. One’s duty is to do one or other of the actions. Moore does not feel the need to appeal to extra considerations to decide what to do.

Moore was not, however, always consistent in his embrace of utilitarianism. In the *Appendix* to the Trinity College Prize Fellowship dissertation that he submitted in 1897, Moore took aim at Sidgwick’s hedonism and his definition of pleasure.¹⁹ In an earlier version of the *Appendix*, Moore attacked classical utilitarianism more generally.²⁰ His attempt was to show that its verdicts about particular acts conflict with common-sense morality.²¹

He considers a case in which a man and a young boy are capsized at sea. There is a very low probability of either being saved. The man might “slightly” increase the boy’s chances of being saved by lifting him up. This would, however, lower his own chances of survival. (Moore does not say by how much.) He supposes that the man refuses to help the boy in order to keep his chances of survival as high as possible. Both, Moore says, end up drowning. He holds that the man’s refusal is judged harshly by common sense: “Common sense would ... judge that the man had behaved just as wrongly, as if he had refused to help the boy, in a case where there was a very strong probability that, with that help, both might escape, where his refusal was witnessed, and where he himself escaped easily.”²²

Moore suggests that classical utilitarianism can capture the harsh judgment of common sense in the “strong probability” case (SP). The classical utilitarian can appeal to a number of consequences to justify harsh condemnation of the man who does not help: the loss of the boy’s life, the bad example it would set for others witnessing the man, and the “weakening” of his “disposition to act morally.”²³ The difficulty, Moore says, is that the classical “Utilitarian calculus” cannot capture the common-sense judgment that the man is to be condemned just as harshly for not helping in the case where he and the boy are capsized at sea (CS). Moore thinks that classical utilitarianism will condemn the man less harshly for failing to aid in CS because there is a low probability that by helping he will save the boy, set a good example and maintain his resolve to do the right thing. This conflicts with common-sense morality, according to Moore, for it does not vary the harshness of the condemnation across the two cases. His worry is that, on classical utilitarianism, the harshness of the condemnation varies with the probability of securing the best outcome.

This is a very puzzling case. It is not clear that classical utilitarianism would vary the condemnation in the two cases based on the probability of the consequences “ensuing.”²⁴ However, it might vary the judgment in the cases based on the expected or actual effects of passing it. Suppose, then, Moore is right that common sense judges the man equally harshly in both cases and that classical utilitarianism fails to capture this. If this is the worry, it appears to stand when one accepts ideal as opposed to classical utilitarianism. Moore’s criticism appears to hold even if one rejects hedonism. If classical utilitarianism conflicts with common-sense morality in this case, it is likely that ideal utilitarianism does, too, for the latter is at least open to varying judgment based on actual or expected value. Therefore, Moore’s utilitarianism conflicts with common-sense morality.

Like Sidgwick, Moore was not, then, always consistent in embracing utilitarianism. Fortunately, Moore left this example out of the final version of the 1897 dissertation. This might be because he noticed the conflict. However, this is only one reason why he might have done so. It is worth pointing out that Moore’s account of the common-sense reaction in his case is open to question. It is not obvious that common sense will automatically “reprobate” the man equally harshly in both cases for not helping.²⁵

In his careful analysis of common-sense morality, Sidgwick notes that we distinguish between what we ought to do (or refrain from doing) and what we ought to be blamed for doing (or failing to do) (ME, p. 221). The standards, he notes, are “laxer” in the latter case.²⁶

To illustrate he mentions two cases. The first involves those “in which we refrain from blaming others for the omission of acts which we do not doubt that we in their place should have thought it our duty to perform” (ME, p. 221). Whether the other is blamed in such cases depends, Sidgwick remarks, on “what men ordinarily do, and by a social instinct as to the practical effects of expressed moral approbation and disapprobation: we think that moral progress will on the whole be best promoted by our praising acts that are above the level of ordinary practice, and confining our censure – at least if precise and particular – to acts that fall clearly below this standard” (ME, p. 221).

Applied to Moore’s case one might reason that, because not helping in SP involves clearly falling below the standards of ordinary practice, blame is apposite and likely to be effective. Since not saving in CS does not involve clearly falling below ordinary

practice (since helping apparently involves some sacrifice) it is far from clear that censure is appropriate or likely to be effective. Common sense might hold, then, that the harshness of censure of the man varies across the two cases.

Sidgwick's second case involves actions which "we cannot lay down definitely that they ought or ought not to be done or forborne, unless we have the complete knowledge of circumstances which a man commonly possesses only in his own case, and not in that of other men" (ME, p. 221). It is likely that common-sense morality denies that the morality of the Moore's two cases is clearly the same. In SP there is no or low cost to the man and the benefits great. It is obvious that he ought to help the boy. This looks like a case of what we might call, following Sidgwick's account of common-sense morality, "strict duty" (ME, p. 492). In CS there is (unspecified) cost to the man and some benefit (unspecified) to the boy. It seems unclear that he ought to help and so unclear that he ought to be harshly censured. Indeed, helping in this case looks like an instance of what, following Sidgwick again, we call the "admirable" or ideal (ME, p. 492).

Sidgwick thinks that classical utilitarianism can capture these aspects of common-sense morality. He notes that though a utilitarian

must hold that it is always wrong for a man knowingly to do anything other than what he believes to be most conducive to Universal Happiness ... it seems practically expedient, – and therefore indirectly reasonable on Utilitarian principles, – to retain, in judging even the strictly voluntary conduct of others, the distinction between a part that is praiseworthy and admirable and a part that is merely right: because it is natural to us to compare any individual's character or conduct not with our highest ideal – Utilitarian or otherwise – but with a certain average standard and to admire what rises above the standard; and it seems ultimately conducive to the general happiness that such natural sentiments of admiration should be encouraged and developed. For human nature seems to require the double stimulus of praise and blame from others, in order to the best performance of duty that it can at present attain: so that the 'social sanction' would be less effective if it became purely penal. Indeed, since the pains of remorse and disapprobation are in themselves to be avoided, it is plain that the Utilitarian construction of a Jural morality is essentially self-limiting; that is, it prescribes its own avoidance of any department of conduct in which the addition that can be made to happiness through the enforcement of rules sustained by social penalties appears doubtful or inconsiderable. In such departments, however, the aesthetic phase of morality may still reasonably find a place; we may properly admire and praise where it would be inexpedient to judge and condemn. We may conclude, then, that it is reasonable for a Utilitarian to praise any conduct more felicitic in its tendency than what an average man would do under the given circumstances: – being aware of course that the limit down to which praiseworthiness extends must be relative to the particular state of moral progress reached by mankind generally in his age and country; and that it is desirable to make continual efforts to elevate this standard (ME, pp. 492–493).

If classical utilitarianism can capture a plausible common-sense view of Moore's case, he is wrong that this is a case in which common-sense morality conflicts with the verdicts of the utilitarian calculus.

It is interesting that Moore tries to impugn classical utilitarianism by noting conflict with the deontic judgments of common-sense morality. It is not typical of him to seriously consider cases in which common-sense morality renders deontic verdicts

conflicting with utilitarianism. This might in part explain why he took it out. (That is, he might have noted the conflict but been unmoved.) In general, he is quite hostile to such common-sense attitudes.

He notes that the very opposite of his utilitarian view “has been generally prevalent in *Ethics*. ‘The right’ and ‘the useful’ have been supposed to be at least *capable* of conflicting with one another, and, at all events, to be essentially distinct. It has been characteristic of a certain school of moralists, as of moral common sense, to declare that the end will never justify the means” (PE, pp. 146–147; italics in original). Moore is thinking here of views, like Immanuel Kant’s, on which it is sometimes one’s absolute duty to do less than the best. On such views, it is, for example, wrong to make a false promise even if by making it one could produce on balance greater surplus value. In *Principia*, he dismisses this view as false by definition (PE, p. 147): for to say that X is one’s duty just is to say that X will produce on balance the best outcome. In *Ethics*, he considers the view that it is sometimes wrong to do what is best (as in justice may be done though the heavens may fall). He says that such a view is “commonly held” (E, p. 90). He rejects this view as self-evidently wrong (E, pp. 93–94).

Moore’s lack of regard for common-sense intuitions about right and wrong might be traced to the fact that he considers only very extreme rivals to consequentialism, views on which there are absolute duties. He was not yet aware of Ross’s view on which there exist only defeasible constraints on promoting aggregate good.²⁷ (This is also true of Sidgwick.) That you have made a promise is only in some cases a decisive reason to keep it even if by breaking it you can produce on balance more surplus value for the aggregate. In some cases, you might be required break a promise on grounds of beneficence. Nevertheless, the short shrift he gives to deontic common-sense intuitions – intuitions about what one has a duty or one ought to do or forbear – contrasts with this treatment of common-sense intuitions about axiological matters. Moore is quite liberal in his appeal to intuitions in defending views about non-instrumental value (disvalue).²⁸ He attacks hedonism on the grounds that it runs contrary to common sense (PE, p. 95; E, pp. 123–124). In his support of his own view he frequently appeals to common sense or what “we” think (e.g. PE, pp. 224, 188).

This puts Moore in an unstable position. There seems on the face of it little reason to be liberal and accommodating of common-sense morality in the case of defending one’s theory of value but not in the case of defending one’s theory of rightness.²⁹ There is at least something here that calls out for explanation.

By contrast, Sidgwick is less dismissive of common-sense views about rightness, partly because he thinks utilitarianism gains some kind of support from coincidence with common-sense morality (ME, p. 419ff.).³⁰ and partly because he relies on the practical “guidance afforded my Common Sense” as a remedy for the “practical imperfection in many cases of the guidance of the Utilitarian calculus” (ME, p. xxiii).

In their commentary on Moore’s example, Thomas Baldwin and Consuelo Preti note it is “not as decisive as it needs to be” against utilitarianism.³¹ They provide a distinct explanation for its lack of success and possible exclusion from the final draft of the dissertation, namely, that it is “not clear how far the duty to help others extends to a duty of potential self-sacrifice, and ‘common sense’ surely refrains from reprobation in situations of this kind.”³² They note that nevertheless Moore’s “underlying point, that utilitarianism conflicts with common sense morality, seems right.”³³

It is not clear whether Baldwin and Preti mean to say utilitarianism or classical utilitarianism. Moore, of course, is an exponent of a variety of utilitarianism. If their point is that Moore is wrong that common sense would not reprobate the man harshly in CS because it holds that there are limits on self-sacrifice, they have a point, but it is not one that Moore seems keen to recognize.

Indeed, recognizing that there are limits on self-sacrifice hurts Moore. Suppose that it is true that common sense places limits on the self-sacrifice that morality can exact from an individual and that this is why it is not clear that in CS the man ought to help the boy and why failure to help might not be followed by reprobation. This would suggest, perhaps, that common-sense morality includes, as Sidgwick notes, reasons of beneficence (ME, p. 238ff.) and of prudence (ME, pp. 7, 119, 419, 498; cf. 500). Common sense might affirm that in CS there is a reason to help the boy, but that it is outweighed by reasons of prudence. It might be possible for utilitarianism to accommodate this thought in the way Sidgwick suggests above. But there are going to be clear cases in which utilitarian conclusions conflict with common-sense views about the limits of self-sacrifice and where it will be hard for common sense to agree that one ought to sacrifice one's own happiness.

Sidgwick is alive to this worry:

Suppose a man finds that a regard for the general good – Utilitarian Duty – demands from him a sacrifice, or extreme risk, of life. There are perhaps one or two human beings so dear to him that the remainder of a life saved by sacrificing their happiness to his own would be worthless to him from an egoistic point of view. But it is doubtful whether many men, 'sitting down in the cool hour' to make the estimate, would affirm even this: and of course that particular portion of the general happiness, for which one is called upon to sacrifice one's own, may easily be the happiness of persons not especially dear to one (ME, p. 502).

Moore is not moved by egoistic considerations. His discussion of self-interested reasons occurs in his discussions of egoism, the view that "My own greatest happiness is the only good thing there is" (PE, p. 97). He contends in *Principia* that egoism is self-contradictory (PE, p. 98ff.) This argument turns on the claim that if something is good, it is good absolutely, and if it is good absolutely, *all* rational agents have reason to promote it. If the egoist contends that each person's good is the only thing they have reason to promote, the view is self-contradictory: for if each person's happiness is in fact good then every rational agent will have reason to pursue it. The problem is that the egoist says that only she has reason to pursue her happiness and that her happiness is good, but if it is in fact the case that her happiness is good, it is good absolutely and therefore others have reason to pursue it, too. So the egoist is saying that only she has reason to pursue her happiness and that not only she has reason to pursue it (since it is good).

Moore's argument that egoism is self-contradictory is not successful. One might avoid it simply by avoiding talk of goodness in articulating egoism. It is not implausible to claim that the fact that something makes me happy gives me a reason to advance it or that I ought to promote all and only my own greatest happiness or my strongest desires. In this case the egoist can avoid reference to goodness.

It may not be plausible to avoid talk of goodness. It might be hard to see a reason to advance one's happiness or interests if these are not thought of as good. Perhaps the right

response to Moore's argument is, following Sidgwick, to reject Moore's idea of absolute goodness. The egoist might argue that his happiness is good only from his point of view:

If the Egoist strictly confines himself to stating his conviction that he ought to take his own happiness or pleasure as his ultimate end, there seems no opening for any line of reasoning to lead him to Universalistic Hedonism as a first principle; it cannot be proved that the difference between his own happiness and another's happiness is not *for him* all-important (ME, p. 420; italics in original).

Moore seemed to give up his argument that egoism is self-contradictory after *Principia*. In *Ethics*, he considers the egoistic view on which "it can never be the duty of any agent to sacrifice his own good to the general good" (E, p. 119). He maintains that it is impossible to prove that a person who maintains this is wrong. However, Moore says, it is self-evident that the person is mistaken: "It seems to me quite self-evident that it must always be our duty to do what will produce the best effects *upon the whole*, no matter how bad the effects upon ourselves may be and no matter how much good we ourselves may lose by it" (E, p. 121; italics in original).

But like his argument that egoism is self-contradictory this argument is unlikely to convince anyone who is of the view that there are at least some prudential reasons that limit self-sacrifice to some extent. A position weaker than any of the egoisms that Moore discusses might hold that one has at least a reason to give one's own good or happiness greater weight in one's reasoning about what to do. It is hard to think that such a position is self-evidently wrong.

Sidgwick does a better job of making sense of prudential reasons. If there are limits on self-sacrifice, this undermines his attempt to defend utilitarianism. He is all too aware. He gives expression to prudential reasons in his dualism of practical reason, on which both utilitarianism and egoism are equally justified but deliver conflicting verdicts in practice (ME, p. 496ff.).³⁴ On his account, egoism is the view that "regards quantity of consequent pleasure and pain to [oneself] ... as alone important in choosing between alternatives of action; and [demands that one] seeks always the greatest attainable surplus of pleasure over pain – which, without violation of usage, we may designate as ... [one's] 'greatest happiness'" (ME, p. 95).

To justify egoism, Sidgwick relies in part on the idea of a non-absolute notion of goodness (something may be good from one's own point of view alone) and in part on claim that is connected to it about the metaphysical distinction between persons:

the distinction between any one individual and any other is real and fundamental, and that consequently "I" am concerned with the quality of my existence as an individual in a sense, fundamentally important, in which I am not concerned with the quality of the existence of other individuals: and this being so, I do not see how it can be proved that this distinction is not to be taken as fundamental in determining the ultimate end of rational action for an individual (ME, p. 498).

It is hard to take this seriously as an argument for egoism. Suppose one accepts that there is some plausible (rational) transition from claims about metaphysical distinctness to claims about one's reasons for action. It is not plausible in this event for one to think that separateness is enough to justify exclusive concern for oneself.

At best, it might justify giving some preference to one's self. But even this is unlikely for it is unlikely that most people arguing for views rival to egoism deny the separateness of persons.

But even if we are not moved by Sidgwick's argument for egoism we might be moved by some of the other considerations that he puts forward in its favor. These might move us to a weaker position that there are some prudential reasons.

In a paper addressing some of the main themes in the *Methods* Sidgwick remarks that support for egoism might be found in the intuition that "it would be irrational to sacrifice any portion of my own happiness unless the sacrifice is to be somehow at some time compensated by an equivalent addition to my own happiness."³⁵ He notes that the distinction passage above supports this. There might be something to this, though it is more likely that separateness is necessary to get this thought going. If we take this principle or something like it to be one among many, it might serve as at least a partial account of the common-sense view respecting sacrifice. It might be read as saying that there is a reason not to make uncompensated sacrifices.

This seems enough in any case to make sense of the common-sense view that there is some reason to promote one's own happiness or good or at least a reason not to forgo significant quantities of one's happiness or good for the purpose of aiding or promoting the good of others. But whether we should accept it might (in the case of Moore and Sidgwick) depend on the strength of the argument in favor of utilitarianism, to which we now turn.

II

Moore and Sidgwick offer considerations in favor of utilitarianism. Moore thinks they defeat all rivals. Sidgwick concedes that they do not show that utilitarianism is better justified than egoism (ME, pp. 469–509). He does think they show that utilitarianism is superior to common-sense morality, which, for Sidgwick, is, roughly speaking, a pluralist view with principles restricting what we are permitted to do in the pursuit of desirable outcomes.

Moore did not argue in any meaningful way for the consequentialist element of utilitarianism. In PE, he held that it was analytically true:

Our 'duty' ... can only be defined as that action, which will cause more good to exist in the Universe than any possible alternative. And what is 'right' or 'morally permissible' only differs from this, as what will *not* cause *less* good than any possible alternative. When therefore, Ethics, presumes to assert that certain ways of acting are 'duties' it presumes to assert that to act in those ways will always produce the greatest possible sum of good (PE, p. 148; also pp. 25, 147; italics in original).

These definitions undermine the intuitional views of ethics on which there are self-evident claims about what we ought to *do* that constrain or are in tension with pursuit of the impartial good. He thinks this follows because, given his definitions, it is always possible for such a claim to be "confirmed or refuted by an investigation of causes and effects" (PE, p. 149).

Moore complained that one cannot simply “foist” hedonism – the view that pleasure is the only good – on us “on the pretense that this is ‘the meaning of the word’” “good” (PE, p. 7). Against Moore, detractors might similarly complain that he cannot foist consequentialism – the view that only maximally valuable states of affairs are morally relevant – on us simply on the pretense that it is the meaning of the word “right” or “duty.” This complaint is no less justified than Moore’s own against analytical hedonism.

In a review of *Principia*, Bertrand Russell argued that the open question argument Moore used to impugn analytical hedonism can be used to impugn analytical consequentialism. Against analytical hedonism, Moore argued that one might note that a state of affairs is pleasurable but still intelligibly ask whether it is in fact good (PE, pp. 15–16). This suggests, on Moore’s view, that good is not defined in terms of pleasure, for this question could not intelligibly be asked if good was defined in terms of pleasure. Similarly, Russell argued, one might see that an action produces on balance more surplus value than any other action one might have taken and still intelligibly ask whether it is right or one’s duty.³⁶ This suggests, by Moore’s own lights, that right or duty cannot be defined in terms of what maximizes impartial value, for this question could not intelligibly be asked if duty was defined in terms of what maximizes surplus value.

Moore later conceded this argument to Russell.³⁷ In *Ethics*, he did not take consequentialism to be analytically true (E, pp. 29, 89–90). However, his argument for consequentialism did not improve. He says only that it is self-evident that it is wrong to do less than the impartial best (E, pp. 87, 93–94, 121). But just as we might think that this is not sufficient to turn away the claim that we have at least a reason to advance our own happiness we might be of the view that this is not sufficient to turn aside the claim that we have at least a reason to be just or keep our promises or return good for good and so on.

On the face of it, Sidgwick’s argument appears more promising. His argument for utilitarianism rests (at least in part) on an appeal to a set of philosophical intuitions: non-derivatively justified or self-evident propositions “relating to what ‘ought to be’” (ME, p. 102n1). He thinks that to command our obedience utilitarianism must rest on “a fundamental moral intuition” (ME, p. xxi). He describes the set of intuitions that he thinks support utilitarianism as:

certain absolute practical principles, the truth of which, when they are explicitly stated, is manifest; but they are of too abstract a nature, and too universal in their scope, to enable us to ascertain by immediate application of them what we ought to do in any particular case; particular duties have still to be determined by some other method (ME, p. 379).

He arrives at two such principles³⁸ from which he derives a conclusion referred to as the maxim of benevolence:

P1. “The good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view (if I may say so) of the Universe, than the good of any other; unless, that is, there are special grounds for believing that more good is likely to be realized in the one case than in the other” (ME, p. 382).

P2. “And it is evident to me that as a rational being I am bound to aim at good generally, – so far as it is attainable by my efforts, – not merely a particular part of it” (ME, p. 382).

C1. Therefore “each one is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own, except in so far as he judges it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or attainable by him” (ME, p. 382).

The first of these philosophical intuitions says that two individual goods are of equal value unless they differ in quantity; variations in valuing individual goods tracks variations in quantity. The second philosophical intuition supplies a claim about what we ought to do, namely, that one is bound to aim at the good of the aggregate, not merely at the good of some sub-section or part of the aggregate. It tells us to aim at socially desirable outcomes. This is, of course, an important feature of utilitarianism. The conclusion is that we are obliged to promote aggregate or general good, valuing individual goods equally unless the goods differ in quantity.

Sidgwick is not entirely clear on the exact upshot of this argument. After laying the intuitions out, he says: “I find that I arrive, in my search for really clear and certain ethical intuitions, at the fundamental principle of Utilitarianism” (ME, p. 387) and “Utilitarianism is thus presented as the final form into which Intuitionism tends to pass, when the demand for really self-evident first principles is rigorously pressed” (ME, p. 388). He remarks that if in the *Methods* he had focused on the philosophical intuitions alone “this would have led me at once to Utilitarianism.”³⁹

If Sidgwick understands the intuitions as furnishing utilitarianism, the axioms must be understood as claims about what we ought to do, all things considered. This would then entail the following. First, that the *only* reason for valuing one individual’s good more than another’s is on quantitative grounds. Departure from equal treatment is justified *only* on quantitative grounds. Second, that we ought to aim *only* at aggregate good, and not at some part of the aggregate. Sidgwick suggests this reading when he notes that his conclusion conflicts on the face of it with common-sense attitudes about benevolence (which holds that “we owe special duties of kindness to those who stand in special relations to us” [ME, p. 242]):

I before observed that the duty of Benevolence as recognized by common sense seems to fall somewhat short of this. But I think that it may be fairly urged in explanation of this that *practically* each man, even with a view to universal Good, ought to chiefly concern himself with promoting the good of a limited number of human beings, and that generally in proportion to the closeness of their connexion with him (ME, p. 382; italics in original).

There seems little reason to make this claim unless he means to rule out valuing another’s good on grounds other than quantitative ones and to forbid aiming at something other than aggregate good (at least in theory).

If this is how the argument is best interpreted, it is not better than Moore’s. Sidgwick may not be declaring that utilitarianism itself is self-evident, but he is saying this of its central elements and this is enough for him to be charged with ruling out other non-egoistic views as self-evidently wrong.

There is another reading of this argument, however. On this reading, the argument generates a principle that serves only as the rational basis of utilitarianism, that is, the first principle of utilitarianism.⁴⁰ The argument by itself is not intended to rule out all other, rival principles. It is part of a general argument that includes in addition an

argument against the view that one can locate in common-sense morality any self-evident principles. In this case the argument is subtler than Moore's.

The more modest reading of Sidgwick's argument appealing to philosophical intuitions is suggested by a number of things he says. First, when he states the principle that he thinks he gets from this argument it does not appear to rule out other similar principles. He describes it as the principle that "general happiness is desirable" (ME, p. 387), that one seek "others' good no less than one's own, repressing any undue preference for one individual over another" (ME, p. 392), that "a rational agent is bound to aim at Universal Good" (ME, p. xxi; also p. xxii), and that "sets before each man the happiness of all others as an object of pursuit no less worthy than his own" (ME, p. 496). Some of these are sloppy renditions of Sidgwick's considered position. This is not important. What is important is that a common feature of them is that they are consistent with the existence of other, rival principles. They do not say that there is only one morally relevant consideration.

Second, Sidgwick seems to confirm this in the context of offering a "proof" for the principle of utility. He notes that the appeal to philosophical intuitions "only shows the Utilitarian first principle to be *one* moral axiom: it does not prove that it is *sole* or *supreme*" (ME, p. 421; italics in original). That this is so may in part explain why Sidgwick thinks he needs to offer a proof for the principle of utility even after he has articulated his axioms and connected them with utilitarianism (ME, p. 418ff.). It certainly explains the need for an exhaustive survey and critical evaluation of the main rules and principles of common-sense morality, including principles of beneficence, promise keeping, veracity, purity and justice.

Third, Sidgwick, of course, must in some sense claim less than what is required to furnish utilitarianism as he thinks the philosophical intuitions that he accepts are at least not dissented to by many rivals to utilitarianism, including Kant (ME, p. 386).

The absence of rational (or peer) disagreement is one of the "characteristics" by which self-evident truths (or really apparently self-evident propositions) "are distinguished from mere opinions" (ME, p. 338). The idea is that a proposition's acceptability is impugned if it is disagreed to by someone whom you believe is no more likely than you are to be in error. The other characteristics are that the proposition must be: (i) clear and precise, (ii) self-evident upon careful reflection (that is, the greatest introspective care must be taken to ensure that before one's mind is an actual intuition rather than, say, a strong sentiment and that the plausibility of what one intuits depends on its intrinsic sources rather than on what one wishes for or desires or one's society rewards or enforces), and (iii) consistent with other self-evident propositions that one accepts.

On the weaker reading of Sidgwick's argument, the position that common-sense morality fails to furnish any self-evident truths becomes indispensable. The case for utilitarianism will involve the appeal to philosophical intuitions and the argument against common-sense morality. Broadly, this second argument goes as follows: if left vague – keep your promises, promote the good, requite good for good – the main principles of common-sense morality face no resistance: "we are disposed to yield them unquestioning assent" (ME, p. 342). However, as soon as we try to give them the "definiteness which science requires," that is, make their practical implications precise, "we cannot do this without abandoning the universality of acceptance" (ME, p. 342). Either the principles are clear and precise, but not agreed to, or they are agreed to, but not clear and precise.

Here are some examples of how the argument works. Common-sense morality says we owe a debt of gratitude to those who have done us a good turn. Most agree. Agreement breaks down, however, when it comes to specifying whether the requital of benefit ought to be proportionate to what it cost the benefactor to bestow it or to the value it has to the recipient (ME, p. 349). Common-sense morality says we ought to keep our promises. Most agree. Disagreement breaks down when we think about cases in which the cost of fulfilling the promise is greater than anticipated or fulfillment is harmful to the promiser or to the promisee (but the promisee does not release the promiser) (ME, pp. 352–354). Under the principle of beneficence, common sense says that, for example, parents ought to do more to promote the good of their children than good of the children of strangers. We all agree. Agreement breaks down when we think about how much more weight to give. Sidgwick considers a case in which a family lands on a desert island (ME, p. 346). They find there an orphan. It is doubtful, he says, that the family is less bound to provide for the orphan than for its own children. This leads to unclarity. One might object to Sidgwick here that if you have the means and the power you have as much obligation to provide for the orphan as you do for own children. But, Sidgwick might reply, suppose there is a conflict: you can provide for your children or the orphan. Common sense says that you ought to provide for your children. Sidgwick might admit this but argue that common sense still has no account of how much more weight to give to one's own children. Suppose I can use the resources I have to save my children from some harm or to save the orphan from some greater harm. It is not clear what, here, I ought to do. Agreement breaks down.

Sidgwick suggests that his own principles possess the characteristics of self-evidence: whereas the main principles of common sense “present themselves as propositions requiring rational justification of some kind,” his philosophical intuitions “do present themselves as self-evident; as much (e.g.) as the mathematical axiom ‘if equals be added to equals the wholes are equal’” (ME, p. 383).

The argument appealing to philosophical intuitionism and to the negative argument against common-sense morality is not a complete argument for utilitarianism, since it leaves Sidgwick needing to defend views that are required to secure utilitarianism, including hedonism, maximization, aggregation, and so on.⁴¹ But it might get one closer than Moore does to utilitarianism.

Some have charged, however, that even this aspect of his argument for utilitarianism is problematic. One prominent charge is that the argument is unfair to common-sense morality:⁴² Sidgwick demands that the main principles of common-sense morality be determinate in practice. However, he does not demand this of his own philosophical intuitions: they are too abstract to tell us what to do in particular situations (ME, p. 379).

In reply, Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek and Peter Singer argue that Sidgwick can deflect the charge of unfairness because the four “characteristics” of self-evidence “do not include the requirement that they [the philosophical intuitions] should yield determinate answers to questions about what we ought to do.”⁴³

This is an odd reply.⁴⁴ The bulk of the worries that Sidgwick raises about common-sense morality seem to be about the fact that many of its main principles are practically indeterminate (e.g. ME, pp. 342, 344, 349). Sidgwick's focus does seem to be on the idea that there is disagreement over what to do in cases in which there appear to be exceptions

to the broad principles that common-sense accepts. De Lazari-Radek and Singer focus on the idea that the consensus that common sense seems to depend on is undermined by Sidgwick's argument. But that consent evaporates seemingly because of practical indeterminacy and because (at least in some cases) the different remedies appear equally plausible. This is enough to get the unfairness worry going. He does not seem to ask for agreement on determinacy in the case of his own philosophical intuitions.

De Lazari-Radek and Singer might suggest that this objection to their reply is mistaken because it conflates the clarity and precision requirement and the requirement of practical determinacy. This might be Sidgwick's view: he calls for clarity and precision in the "terms" of the proposition (ME, p. 338). But in this case it is not obvious what Sidgwick thinks the problem is with the main rules of common sense. Moreover, this is dangerous for him, since the terms in his principles are not exactly paragons of clarity and precision.

There is another way in which to interpret de Lazari-Radek and Singer's reply to the unfairness objection. They might be suggesting that even if Sidgwick's philosophical intuitions are vague in practice this is unproblematic, for unlike common-sense morality Sidgwick has "resources that go beyond ... self-evident" principles to provide the determinacy.⁴⁵ These are found in the utilitarian method.

There are two replies to this. First, the argument that de Lazari-Radek and Singer provide suggests that we cannot determine whether to accept Sidgwick's intuitions until we have a worked-out view and defense of utilitarianism. But we will not have this until, on Sidgwick's view, we have accepted the philosophical intuitions. So, the appeal to the utilitarian method at this point is premature.

Second, it is not obvious that common sense has no resources to fall back on to remedy its problems. It might simply just point to the need for judgment when thinking about difficult cases. Sidgwick notes, of course, that the morality of common sense is "perfectly adequate to give practical guidance to common people in common circumstances" (ME, p. 361). The common-sense moralist can say that we can depend on common-sense morality for the most part and then on judgment in the knotty cases.

De Lazari Radek and Singer cannot dissent from this. Sidgwick notes that utilitarian calculations are often uncertain (ME, pp. 131–150, 413, 414, 416, 460). He finds it in particular hard to compare pleasures with each other (ME, p. 143); in cases of comparison it is inevitable that he will have to rely on judgment. De Lazari-Radek and Singer agree with Sidgwick that to complete utilitarianism one needs to establish that pleasure is the only good. They do not argue that this is based on an appeal to self-evidence, but rather to claims about what "is, on balance, the more plausible view."⁴⁶ This, too, involves judgment.

Even if Sidgwick were able to survive the unfairness charge, we still might wonder whether Sidgwick's intuitions are in fact agreed to. The argument that de Lazari-Radek and Singer provide seems to suppose that they are.

Consider the first of Sidgwick's axioms. He says that Kant, for example, agrees to it. Sidgwick says that the good of any one "individual" is of no more importance than the good of any other "individual." It is possible here that if left vague this principle (as one principle among others) is readily agreed to by Kant. But that the moment the notion is given the precision that science requires agreement evaporates.

If Sidgwick means by “individual” “rational creature,” Kant will likely agree. If, however, Sidgwick means “sentient creature,” Kant will not agree. Kant holds that it is only the good of rational creatures that matters directly to what we ought to do. Common sense might agree with Kant. Sidgwick notes that all modern lists of virtues include rational benevolence, which “aims at the happiness of other *human beings* generally” (ME, p. 96; italics added), and that “No Intuitionist ever maintained that *all* our conduct can be ordered rightly without any calculation of its effects on human happiness. On the contrary, this calculation, for ourselves and for others, is expressly inculcated by the maxims of Prudence and Benevolence, as commonly understood.”⁴⁷

Sidgwick has two options. He might hold that to get agreement on his philosophical intuitions he can claim only that they regard human good or happiness. The argument that it is not only the good or happiness of rational creatures that matters, but the happiness of sentient creatures more generally, will then be one of the extra ones that Sidgwick has to provide to get to utilitarianism.

This is risky for Sidgwick. The main argument he uses against the claim that only the happiness of rational creatures is of ethical importance involves appeal to the claim that this limitation is “accidental and arbitrary.”⁴⁸ On Sidgwick’s view “the difference of rationality between two species of sentient beings is no ground for establishing a fundamental ethical distinction between their respective pains.”⁴⁹ But Kant is not obviously arbitrary if the limitation it is based on who is and is not in the possession of free will.

(This might be one case in which free will is of some significance to ethics. Sidgwick argues that resolving the debate between libertarians and determinists is of limited importance to ethics [ME, p. 66]. It is of significance here, it seems, for the issue of which individuals count. Kant thinks that it is the possession of free will that serves as a way to segregate those who lack standing from those who have it.)

The second option is to argue that Kant is an intellectual freak in disagreeing with this intuition in so far as it includes animal pleasure and pain. Kant argues, somewhat dubiously, that the reason we ought not to harm animals is that harming animals makes it more likely that we will harm and hence violate our duties to humans. We have at best indirect duties to animals. Sidgwick might note that “Common Sense is disposed to regard this [the claim that we have no direct obligation to avoid the pain of non-human animals] as a hard-hearted paradox, and to hold with Bentham that the pain of animals is *per se* to be avoided” (ME, p. 241).

It might be the case that Sidgwick can bring common sense to the view that the intuition applies to all sentient creatures. Robert Shaver argues that common sense agrees with Sidgwick’s first axiom.⁵⁰ To illustrate he uses Thomas Scanlon’s world cup example.⁵¹ Jones has suffered an accident in the transmission room of a television station broadcasting the World Cup. He is receiving painful shocks. Millions are enjoying the game. If Jones is aided the transmission will fail for 15 minutes, disappointing the millions. If we wait for one hour until the game is over a lot of people will enjoy the game, but Jones will receive painful shocks the entire time and have to wait to have his mashed hand attended to. We seem to be pulled in both directions. That we share Sidgwick’s intuition explains this in part. The quantity of enjoyment had by the many seems to be a reason not to save Jones. This holds even if our considered intuition is that we ought not to delay in aiding Jones.

But take another example. Singer relies on Sidgwick's axiom in his case against speciesism.⁵² Singer argues that species membership is not a reasonable ground for discounting the importance of an individual's interests; the importance of an individual's interests is determined by quantitative considerations. He argues that the good of each individual (sentient creature) is of no greater importance than any other (sentient creature) unless there are quantitative differences between them. Singer's position has generated a lot of criticism.⁵³ In his argument, he seems to construe Sidgwick's principle as all things considered (that is, he accepts the stronger reading). Perhaps this explains the disagreement. But it is likely that many reject Sidgwick's principle if it is interpreted as including the suffering of non-human animals and even if it is considered one principle among others.

Consider another case where Jones is again injured and receiving painful shocks. This time those enjoying the pleasure while he suffers are very primitive non-human animals. Suppose there is a great many of them and the quantity of pleasure they produce is great, much greater than Jones's pain. Most will not think we have a reason to let the animals continue to experience the pleasure at the cost of Jones's suffering. Indeed, most will think it is obvious that we ought to save Jones. Most will think it is obvious that we ought to help Jones and that it is not the case that a principle providing a reason not to save Jones is outweighed. The quantity of very simple non-human animal pleasure is simply not a factor. This involves rejecting the principle if "individuals" is read as "sentient creatures."

Sidgwick might, of course, agree with the more modest principle that Kant agrees with. This makes his case for utilitarianism much harder and makes the appeal to axioms much less interesting and powerful.

Sidgwick is not out of the woods yet. Even if it is true that he can get agreement on a less expansive version of his first axiom, it is still true, by his own admission, that he has failed to show that all common-sense intuitions fail to possess the characteristics of self-evidence. He notes that "potential universality of acceptance [as self-evident] may ... be fairly claimed for the propositions that the promise which the Common Sense of mankind recognizes as binding must be understood by promiser and promisee in the same sense at the time of promising, and that it is relative to the promisee and capable of being annulled by him, and that it cannot override determinate prior obligations" (ME, p. 353).

Sidgwick cannot complain about the lack of full specificity here. This principle is no less vague than his intuition of universality: "it cannot be right for A to treat B in a manner in which it would be wrong for B to treat A, merely on the ground that they are two different individuals, and without there being any difference between the natures or circumstance of the two which can be stated as a reasonable ground for difference of treatment" (ME, p. 380). This throws the *onus probandi* on a man who treats others in a way that he would object to being treated himself (ME, p. 380). The principle of promise keeping might place the *onus probandi* on those claiming to be able to override a promise on other grounds.

Sidgwick remarks that in his campaign against common-sense morality he refrained from "entering at length into the psychogonical question as to the origin of apparent moral intuitions" (ME, p. 383). Such an inquiry is "superfluous," he says, since "direct reflection shows me they have no claim to be ... taken ... as absolutely and without qualification true" (ME, p. 383). He argues that "no psychogonical theory has ever been put forward professing to discredit the propositions that I regard as really axiomatic, by

showing that the causes which produced them were such as had a tendency to make them false" (ME, p. 383).

It might not be true that this argument is superfluous in light of the difficulties with the "direct" reflection argument and the prolonged attempt to show that "from such regulation of conduct as the Common Sense of mankind really supports, no proposition can be elicited which, when fairly contemplated, even appears to have the characteristic of a scientific axioms" (ME, p. 360).⁵⁴

But he has to be careful that such an inquiry – e.g. into the evolutionary origins of the judgements – does not (i) impugn the rival propositions only because important normative questions have been begged and (ii) impugn the rival propositions but only at the expense of impugning the ones that Sidgwick accepts. This may be his best hope and so worth the risk.

III

Sidgwick and Moore disagree most sharply over what has non-instrumental value (dis-value). As noted, Sidgwick endorses quantitative hedonism. Moore devoted much space to pointing out its flaws. He developed his own, pluralistic axiology in opposition to it.

Sidgwick endorses hedonism in part on pragmatic grounds: "If we are not to systematize human activities by taking Human Happiness as their common end, on what other principles are we to systematize them?" (ME, p. 406). He seeks a common standard by which to determine the comparative value of other putative goods (e.g. knowledge, virtue, freedom, and so on) as against each other and happiness. The idea is to compare all non-hedonic values ultimately in terms of the pleasure and pain they produce. He thinks this form of systematization is the only one worthy of "serious consideration" (ME, p. 406).

This argument did not appeal to Moore. He noted at the conclusion of *Principia* that

We have no title whatever to assume that the truth on any subject-matter will display such symmetry as we desire to see – or (to use the common vague phrase) that it will possess any particular form of 'unity.' To search for 'unity' and 'system,' at the expense of truth, is not ... the proper business of philosophy however universally it has been the practice of philosophers (PE, p. 222).⁵⁵

Fortunately, this is not Sidgwick's only argument for hedonism. As noted, he admits that our ability to compare pleasures is limited (ME, p. 142ff.). It not clear, then, how much better, practically speaking, it is to compare pleasure with pleasure as opposed to pleasure with knowledge or knowledge with virtue. He even seems to note in some cases that balancing values requires appeal to judgment.⁵⁶

Sidgwick wields his systematization argument against pluralistic views. His claim is that while it might be true that there are great many uncertainties plaguing hedonistic calculations, the uncertainties associated with pluralistic views are "indefinitely greater."⁵⁷ But given the difficulties in comparing pleasures that he notes this claim seems difficult to verify.

Sidgwick appeals to two further arguments (ME, p. 400).

The first involves an appeal to intuition. He considers the view that in addition to pleasure certain other things have non-instrumental value, including cognition of truth, virtuous willing, and the contemplation of beauty (ME, p. 399). He argues that when we “sit down in the cool hour, we can only justify to ourselves the importance that we attach to any of these objects by considering its conduciveness, in one way or another, to the happiness of sentient beings” (ME, p. 401).

His second argument appeals to “a comprehensive comparison of the ordinary judgements of mankind” (ME, p. 400). He holds that there is some support in common-sense morality for hedonism. He notes that this argument is not entirely successful, for many people disagree that pleasure is the only non-instrumental value (ME, p. 399).

He has a range of replies to this. He contends that some of the resistance depends on false beliefs about the nature of pleasure and the moral doctrines to which hedonism is connected (ME, pp. 402–403), and some on improper recognition of the subtle connection between the non-hedonic goods and pleasure or happiness (ME, pp. 403, 405–406).

The most prominent of these replies is that the non-hedonic goods that dissenters accept are productive of pleasure and typically “obtain the commendation of Common Sense, roughly speaking, in proportion to the degree of this productiveness” (ME, p. 401). We are most supportive of knowledge when it is clearly beneficial; we tend to worry about the merits of pursuing knowledge when its benefits are murky, but tolerate even the seemingly most fruitless of knowledge pursuits because experience teaches that such knowledge can become “unexpectedly fruitful”; when virtue threatens to harm – as in moral fanaticism – we tend to grow cold on virtue (ME, pp. 401–402). This, to Sidgwick, suggests that the value of these things is based ultimately on their conduciveness to pleasure.

Moore raises good criticisms of these arguments. He points out that at best what Sidgwick’s proportion claim shows is that there is a coincidence between what has value and what produces pleasure. Moreover, Moore argues, even if it is true that knowledge and virtue are limited by pleasure in some cases, it does not follow that pleasure is the only good. It shows only that “a thing is not held to be good, unless it gives a balance of pleasure” (PE, p. 92). Moore might have gone further and argued that even if pleasure limits other goods, it does not follow that the goods it limits are instrumental to pleasure.

Moore also attacks Sidgwick’s “cool hour” argument. Sidgwick claims that when we experience pleasure in knowledge, for example, we have something of positive value. However, when we remove the pleasure from that experience, leaving only the knowledge, we do not have anything of value. Sidgwick concludes from this that since what remains – the knowledge – has no value itself, the value of the whole must be due to the value of the pleasure alone. That is, he assumes that the value of the whole is equivalent to the value the quantity of pleasure it contains.

Moore argues that this ignores the doctrine of organic unities: the value of a whole, e.g. knowledge and pleasure, is not proportionate to or equivalent to the sum of the values of the parts (PE, pp. 27–30, 36, 184; E, p. 124ff.). Even if when taken alone knowledge is valueless, it does not follow that the value of the whole comprising knowledge and pleasure is equivalent to the value of the pleasure it contains. As Moore puts it: “the value of a whole must not be assumed to be the same as the sum of the values of its parts” (PE, p. 28). The value of the whole might be much greater than the sum of the value that the parts have when considered alone.

Moore has other arguments against hedonism, including that there are evil pleasures (PE, p. 214) and, of course, that things other than states of mind – e.g. beautiful worlds that no one will ever be in a position to experience – have value (PE, pp. 83–84, 189). Although quite well known, Moore does not place much weight on this second argument (PE, p. 189); in *Ethics* the argument disappeared, and Moore's view was that “nothing can be an intrinsic good unless it contains *both* some feeling and *also* some other form of consciousness” (E, p. 129; italics in original).

Sidgwick might try to reply to some of these arguments by highlighting the paradox of happiness – that happiness is best sought indirectly through non-hedonic goods rather than directly – and how pursuing non-hedonic goods under the belief that they are ends in themselves is integral to its solution (ME, pp. 405–406). This might weaken the commitment to non-hedonic goods. Sidgwick might also attack the principle of organic unities on grounds that it is rather mysterious that things that have no or little value themselves can when they combine to produce a whole create something of great value. Or he might argue that when you have (say) pleasure in knowledge you have a new, distinctly pleasurable state and this accounts for the greater value over the knowledge and the pleasure taken alone.

It is not clear that these replies will deflect all of Moore's worries. Revealing that certain goods are part of an indirect strategy may not be sufficient to show that their value lies in happiness alone. For Sidgwick to succeed, it is likely that part of his argument will have to include some strategy for impugning rival intuitions (e.g. a debunking argument). This is now the standard strategy for defending hedonism.⁵⁸

Moore is likely to reply to any such debunking argument that it is more likely that his intuitions track objective axiological truth than that the argument impugning his appeal to them is true. Which way we decide to go may depend on the main features of Moore's view, to which we now turn.

Sidgwick took it to be beyond cavil that pleasure is *a* non-instrumental good (ME, p. 406). In *Principia*, Moore says pleasure has some non-instrumental value, even if slight (PE, pp. 188, 212). However, his considered view seems to be that pleasure lacks non-instrumental value. In *Ethics* he says that “it does ... seem as if every intrinsic good must be a complex whole containing a considerable variety of different factors – as if, for instance, nothing so simple as pleasure by itself, however intense, could ever be any good” (E, p. 129).⁵⁹

It is not clear what Moore means by “pleasure by itself.” He suggests that he means by this that there exists pleasure and “*nothing else whatever*.”⁶⁰ It is not obvious that it is possible for there to be pleasure and nothing else. Pleasure is typically taken in something. But suppose it is possible to have just pleasure alone by taking (say) a pleasure pill. It is simple, let us suppose. But does this make it valueless? Adding it to one's experience seems at least *prima facie* to make one's state of affairs at least to some extent better.

It is not clear what Moore's considered view is on pain. It is possible that his view is that while pleasure is not good, pain is still evil. This would be one kind of asymmetry between pleasure and pain. This is different from another asymmetry between pain and pleasure that he outlines in *Principia*. There he claimed that whereas pleasure is at best a small good pain is one of the great evils: “pain ... appears to be a far worse evil than pleasure is a good” (PE, p. 212). Here he clashed with Sidgwick who had earlier claimed that pain can be balanced with an equal amount of pleasure, “so that the two contrasted amounts annihilate each other for purposes of ethical calculation” (ME, p. 413).

Moore may not in the end accept either asymmetry as part of his considered view. As noted, he holds that every intrinsic good is a complex whole with a variety of distinct elements, including both some feeling and some other form of consciousness. It is not obvious that he also thought that every intrinsic evil is a similar kind of complex whole. He says only that the characteristics that must belong to all intrinsic goods “may obviously” belong to things that are bad or indifferent; he seems only to insist that nothing can be bad unless it contains some feelings (PE, p. 130).

Suppose he holds that all intrinsic evils are complex wholes with a variety of distinct factors and both some feeling and some other kinds of consciousness. This would conflict with one claim that he made in *Principia*. There he claimed that the pain was distinct from his other great evils and from his great goods in being a “less complex organic unity ... both in respect of the fact that it does not involve, beside the cognition [of a sensation], an emotion directed towards its object, and also in respect of the fact that the *object* may here be absolutely simple, whereas in most, if not all, other cases, the object itself is highly complex” (PE, pp. 212–213; italics in original). If this whole is less complex than what is required by the view above, Moore will have to give up the claim that pain is bad, since (like pleasure) it is not complex.

It is hard to sustain the claim that pain is not evil. Moore says that if you think pleasure has non-instrumental value you “imply that if an agent had to choose between an action which would produce pleasure and *nothing else whatever*, and an action which would have no results at all, it would be his duty to choose the former rather than the later. And surely this is very doubtful: it is ... very doubtful whether the greatest quantity of pleasure, wholly unaccompanied by any other result whatever, would be at all worth producing.”⁶¹ Suppose (contra above) this is right. It is much harder to think that a similar claim about pain is right. Suppose one said that it would be doubtful whether the greatest surplus of pain, wholly unaccompanied by any other result whatever, would be at all worth *avoiding*. This is not doubtful. If one had to choose between an action that would produce the greatest surplus of pain, and nothing else whatever, and an action that had no results at all, it would not be doubtful that one had reason not to choose the former. It is likely that by adding pain to one’s experience one’s situation is made worse.

This gives Moore some reason to think that while it might be true that all intrinsic goods are complex wholes, including both some feeling and some other form of consciousness this is not true of all intrinsic evils. Some of these might not be complex and might include only some feelings and no other form of consciousness.

Moore articulated another asymmetry associated with pain and pleasure. In *Ethics*, he maintains that whereas all valuable wholes must contain some pleasure, it is not the case that all evil wholes must contain some pain. The only requirement is that nothing can be bad unless it includes some feeling (E, p. 130). This seems right, for perhaps he is thinking that, for example, taking pleasure in one’s own ignorance is bad.

Moore frequently suggests that the truth in hedonism seems to be that no whole is valuable unless it includes some pleasure (PE, pp. 93, 213; E, pp. 86, 126). This forms the basis of his own two great goods, which are the enjoyment of beauty and personal affections (PE, p. 189). The enjoyment of beauty is a valuable organic whole, including a cognition of the beautiful qualities of objects and an emotion appropriate or just or proper to those qualities. The value of this whole can be enhanced when the object exists, and one believes it (that is, the value of the whole is enhanced by the addition of

true belief). None of these constituents possesses much value on their own (PE, pp. 191, 199). The value of the whole, then, is much greater than the value of the sum of the values of the parts comprising them. To illustrate, the enjoyment taken in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony involves a cognition of the melodic and symphonic relations in the piece of music and an emotion appropriate to those relations. The enjoyment of these relations is one of the most valuable states of consciousness that we know, even though the parts by themselves are of little or no value. If the melodic and symphonic relations exist and one believes it, the whole is of even greater value.

Moore's other great value is the pleasure of personal intercourse or personal affections. It involves all of the features of the aesthetic enjoyment (a cognition of beautiful qualities and an appropriate emotion). If true belief is present, the whole's value is enhanced. The only thing distinct from aesthetic appreciation is that the thing appreciated – a person – must not only be beautiful but also truly good (PE, p. 203). The affection felt towards a person comprises admiring their admirable mental qualities, principally their contemplation of beauty and/or other persons, in which case the affection involves appreciating other people's appreciations. But mental qualities are not the only things admired: "it is certain that in all actual cases of valuable affection, the bodily expressions of character, whether by looks, by words, or by actions, do form part of the object towards which the affection is felt, and that the fact of their inclusion appears to heighten the value of the whole state" (PE, p. 203).

Moore's view is open to many challenges. I will survey three. These relate to the strong presence of the contemplation of beauty in the view.

Moore defines beauty as "that of which the admiring contemplation is good in itself. That is to say: To assert that something is beautiful is to assert that the cognition of it is an essential element in one of the intrinsically valuable wholes we have been discussing" (PE, p. 201). This seems to make Moore's claim that the contemplation of beauty is good a near tautology, for saying that the contemplation of beauty is good is saying that it is good to contemplate what it is good to contemplate.⁶²

Some suggest that Sidgwick's view of pleasure makes his claim that pleasure is good a tautology.⁶³ His considered view is that pleasure is best "defined as feeling which the sentient individual at the time of feeling it implicitly or explicitly apprehends to be desirable; – desirable, that is, when considered merely as feeling, and not in respect of any of its objective conditions or consequences, or of any facts that come directly within the cognizance and judgement of others besides the sentient individual" (ME, p. 131; also p. 129). On this view, the claim that pleasure is good is not a tautology. It is the claim that feelings which are apprehended or seem to be good are in fact good. But on some occasions, he says that pleasure is defined simply as desirable feelings: "a feeling that is preferable or desirable, considered merely as a feeling."⁶⁴ On this view the claim that pleasure is desirable is a near tautologous. To say that pleasure is good is to say that good feelings are good.

If Sidgwick sticks to the first definition of pleasure, he can avoid the tautology charge. His claim is that pleasure is equivalent to feelings that are apprehended or seem to be desirable. This definition does not entail that they are desirable. There is room for doubt. The claim that pleasure is good is not, then, insignificant. His idea is that in the absence of defeaters of this apprehension or belief the feelings are in fact good.

Moore might borrow from Sidgwick. Moore can argue that a plausible way to define beauty is in terms of that of which the admiring contemplation *appears* or *is apprehended to be* good in itself. To say that something is beautiful is to say that the cognition of it *appears or is apprehended* to be an essential element in one of the intrinsically valuable wholes. In this case, when Moore says the contemplation of beauty is good his claim is not tautologous.

Of course, this is not to suggest that this definition of beauty is unproblematic. There may well be other worries with it, as there are with Sidgwick's view of pleasure. The point is that by defining beauty using the notion of appearance or apprehension he can avoid the tautology charge.

This is important to Moore. He thinks that the wrong definition of beauty can be disastrous to aesthetic argument. He notes that some have defined beauty in terms of what produces "certain effects upon our feelings" (PE, p. 201). On this view, he says that a thing could be both beautiful and not beautiful at the same time. He remarks that as in ethics the naturalistic fallacy has been commonly committed in aesthetics and has "introduced as many errors into Aesthetics as into Ethics" (PE, p. 201).⁶⁵

Another worry targets one of Moore's great evils. One of the great evils includes "an enjoyment or admiring contemplation of things which are themselves evil or ugly" (PE, p. 208). The evil is an organic whole including both a cognition and an emotion. The whole is evil because the emotion is directed at an inappropriate object. Moore frequently talks of having "proper" or "appropriate" or "just" emotions to certain beautiful qualities (PE, pp. 192, 193, 200). There exist, then, emotions that are proper to various beautiful qualities, and when they are directed to things that are ugly the whole is evil.

What Moore says about cruelty is plausible. It is not clear that what Moore says about lasciviousness is plausible. He speaks of different errors associated with seeing beauty in a thing that in fact possesses no beauty. This takes two forms (PE, pp. 192–193). First, it might involve believing that something has what are in fact beautiful qualities when in fact it lacks those qualities. This is an error of fact. Second, it might involve directing a feeling towards the qualities an object possesses but where those qualities are not in fact beautiful. In this case we would have an emotion towards some qualities that is had appropriately only to qualities that are in fact beautiful. Moore calls this an error of taste.

Moore says that these errors are "of very frequent occurrence" (PE, p. 192). It is not exactly clear what error he has in mind when he discusses lasciviousness. It does seem to be that what he has in mind is that in lasciviousness – a passion – there is an error of taste, for it is a case in which the emotion one has is inappropriate to the qualities contemplated. He says lasciviousness involves both cognitions of "organic sensations and perceptions of states of the body ... So far as these are concerned, lasciviousness would, then, include in its essence an admiring contemplation of what is ugly" (PE, pp. 210–211).

It is not clear in what way pleasurable lusting involves the contemplation of what is ugly. What makes the organic sensations and the states of the body ugly or grotesque? If you are enjoying an orgasm or a lover's orgasm or the bodily manifestations of it, it is rather unclear that sensations or bodily states are themselves ugly or in what way they are. It seems odd to think that one's admiration of another's beauty translating into

sexual desire or passion to hold or kiss that person and to enjoy it involves the admiration of what is ugly. (One does not anyway seem to admire organic sensations or states of the body.) If there is an error of taste here, it is not clear what it is. Enjoying certain of one's sexually passionate sensations or those of another is not clearly an error of taste.

This leads to further worries about Moore's view. His focus is mainly on passive contemplation or admiration in his two great goods. In the context of personal intercourse one's affection takes the form of admiring the mental states of others and the behavioral manifestations of them (or of their character) (PE, p. 203). There is a detached nature to this admiration. Affection is not active; it passive or at least removed. At best, this seems one-sided. This view cannot really explain the love or affection that one has for one's children or infants. Affection in these cases seems to involve active nurturing, taking steps to facilitate their growth and well-being. Affection is not only passive but active too: it involves doing things together, building a home, raising children, facilitating learning and growth.⁶⁶ The same passivity is present in the good of aesthetic enjoyment, where the focus is on detached contemplation rather than on artistic creation or activity.⁶⁷

Moore might try to argue that the activities involved in affection or in artistic creation are very important to the states of mind that he thinks are valuable, but that they are at best instrumental. But given Moore's own fashion for arriving at claims about what is non-instrumentally good (PE, p. 187) this is hard to do. When one reflects on artistic creation or active love in isolation one might conclude that they are worth having for their own sake.

The disagreement over the badness of lasciviousness and the value of contemplation leads to a more serious worry for Moore. The two most valuable states of consciousness are enjoyment of beauty and the pleasures of personal affection. Both involve the idea of proper or just emotions; that is, emotions that are fitting to the object. They seem to depend at least in part on claims in aesthetics. For one to make an error of taste there have to be truths about what counts as "good" taste or what is beautiful. So to make clear what these great values involve it seems that we need to make progress in aesthetic regarding proper or just emotions and beauty.

Moore confronts the worry that one has to figure out truths in aesthetics for his ethics to succeed. He notes that for his view to be complete he would have to "attempt a classification and comparative valuation of all the different forms of beauty, a task that properly belongs to the study called aesthetics" (PE, p. 200). He demurs, saying that he includes in his great goods every form and variety of beautiful object "if only it be truly beautiful" (PE, p. 200). He continues that if "this be understood ... it may be seen that the consensus of opinion with regard to what is positively beautiful and what is positively ugly, and even with regard to great differences in the degree of beauty, is quite sufficient to allow us to hope that we need not greatly err in our judgement of good and evil" (PE, p. 200).

Moore ought not perhaps to have been so sanguine. As the criticisms above suggest, there are some quite serious disagreements in aesthetics. Some argue that the lack of consensus in aesthetics should leave us chary of accepting that there are aesthetic truths. One of Moore's contemporaries, E.F. Carritt, argued that the disagreement and variability of tastes in aesthetics is sufficient to impugn its claim to objectivity.⁶⁸ He

argues in favor of an error theory about aesthetic judgments. He claims that though our aesthetic judgments purport to describe an objective aesthetic reality they fail to do so because there are no objective truths in aesthetics. He appeals to the fact of disagreement to arrive at this conclusion. (He thinks no such argument works in ethics.) The best explanation for aesthetic variability is that the judgments rely on mood or sentiment not badly distorted views of objective reality. If this is true, this might lead us to great error in our ethics. Our ethics would in the end be based on our moods and subjective attitudes.

Moreover, it is quite possible that the consensus in aesthetics might be based on distortions. Moore notes that ethics is full of errors: philosophers engage in bad reasoning, set the wrong questions, and so on (e.g. PE, pp. 143, 173, 188). He points out that lots of ethical systems are based on the naturalistic fallacy and that many people in ethics had wrong views about value and obligations. He notes that the naturalistic fallacy has also introduced errors into aesthetics (PE, p. 201). This should make us chary of accepting any consensus in normative areas as reliable.

In reply, Moore suggests that in “anything which is thought beautiful by any considerable number of persons, there is probably some beautiful quality” (PE 200; italics in original). But given the prevailing attitudes about physical beauty, music, art and of course sexual and other forms of passion this seems hard to believe.

Moore tries to explain away the disagreement in aesthetics. He argues that disagreement is more a result of “exclusive attention, on the part of different persons, to different qualities in the same object, than to the positive error of supposing a quality that is ugly to be really beautiful” (p. 200). Again, this does not seem to fit the case of lasciviousness or many other cases (e.g. tattoos and body modification). When the contemplation of my lover’s beauty takes the form of lusting after them with enjoyment, it is not clear, if this is in fact a case of lasciviousness, that the error is not (for Moore) one of taking something that is ugly to be beautiful. It is anyway hard to figure out the precise error. This seems to be true of many aesthetic disagreements.

Moore might be able to overcome some of these worries. But if his aim is to avoid error in his ethical view, he must show to what extent the kinds of problems that he finds in ethics are not present in aesthetics.

IV

This chapter aimed to compare Sidgwick and Moore on a range of issues in normative ethics. Part one compared their versions of utilitarianism. It detailed some inconsistencies in their views and the ways in which they related their view to prudence or self-interest. Part two discussed the different considerations Moore and Sidgwick offer in favour of utilitarianism. It suggested that Sidgwick’s case is more compelling, but that his general argumentative strategy is beset with problems. Part three compared Sidgwick’s hedonism with Moore’s pluralism. Moore raises compelling criticisms of Sidgwick’s view and in addition Moore makes many compelling contributions to value theory. But Moore’s main positive claims in value theory depend on truths in aesthetics, which may not be defensible.

Notes

- 1 The following abbreviations are used throughout: PE=Moore, G.E. 1903. *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge: University Press; E=Moore, G.E. 2005 [1912]. *Ethics*. Edited by W.H. Shaw. Oxford: University Press; ME=Sidgwick, H. 1981 [1907]. *The Methods of Ethics*, 7 edition. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- 2 Moore, G.E. 1942. "An autobiography." In Schilpp, P. (ed.) *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, p. 16.
- 3 Moore, G.E. 2011. The 1898 dissertation: "The metaphysical basis of ethics." In Baldwin, T. & Preti, C. (eds.) *G.E. Moore: Early Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: University Press, p. 117.
- 4 If the fallacy consists in failing to regard the fact that "good" is simple and indefinable, Sidgwick cannot be credited with exposing it. He argued that "good" is definable, though not naturalistically or super-naturalistically, in terms of "ought" (ME, p. 112). Moore appears at times to agree with Sidgwick's definition (see, e.g. PE, pp. 17, 67, 148). Sidgwick held instead that the notions "right" and "ought" are "too elementary to admit of any formal definition" (ME, p. 32). This might be that to which Moore is referring.
- 5 G.E. Moore, "An Autobiography," p. 16.
- 6 Bentham, J. 1996. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Edited by J.H. Burns & H.L.A. Hart, Oxford: University Press, pp. 38ff.
- 7 For Moore's discussion of this objection, see E, pp. 23–25.
- 8 Mill, J.S. 1969. *Utilitarianism*. In Robson, J.M. (ed.) *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. X. Toronto: University Press, p. 211.
- 9 Mill, p. 210.
- 10 Bentham, pp. 11–12.
- 11 Mill and Bentham sometimes appear to embrace maximization; see, e.g. Bentham, pp. 11n, 282 and Mill, p. 213.
- 12 Wallace, J.D. 1988. "The passive conception of practical reasoning." In *Moral Relevance and Moral Conflict*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 24–49, 47.
- 13 Wallace, p. 46.
- 14 This is discussed in the next section.
- 15 For this reading, see Shaver, R. 2014. "Sidgwick's axioms and consequentialism." *Philosophical Review* 123:173–204, 180, and Singer, P. 1974. "All animals are equal." *Philosophical Exchange* 1: 103–116, 106ff.
- 16 See also Sidgwick, H. 1908. *The Elements of Politics*, 3 edition. London: Macmillan, 378.
- 17 The view was baptized by Hastings Rashdall, who defended a version of it in 1907. *The Theory of Good and Evil*, volume I. Oxford: University Press, pp. 217–218.
- 18 More on which below, in part III.
- 19 Moore, G.E. 2011. *The 1897 dissertation*: "The metaphysical basis of ethics." In Baldwin, T. & Preti, C. (eds.) *G. E. Moore: Early Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: University Press, pp. 87–94.
- 20 Moore, 1897, p. 94.
- 21 Moore, 1897, p. 94.
- 22 Moore, 1897, p. 94.
- 23 Moore, 1897, p. 94.
- 24 Moore, 1897, p. 94.
- 25 Moore, 1897, p. 94.
- 26 Moore appears to agree with this distinction; see E, pp. 100–101.
- 27 See Ross, W.D. 1930. *The Right and the Good*. Oxford: University Press.
- 28 More on which below.

- 29 For this point, see Skelton, A. 2011. "Ideal utilitarianism: Rashdall and Moore." In Hurka, T. (ed.) *Underivative Duty: British Moral Philosophers from Sidgwick to Ewing*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 45–65.
- 30 Some hold that this is because at least some of the main judgments of common-sense morality have probative status or initial authority. For this view, see, e.g. Shaver, R. 1999. *Rational Egoism*. Cambridge: University Press, and Crisp, R. 2002. "Sidgwick and the boundaries of intuitionism." In P. Stratton-Lake (ed.) *Ethical Intuitionism*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 56–75. For a reply, see Skelton, A. 2010. "Henry Sidgwick's moral epistemology." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48: 491–519.
- 31 Baldwin, T. & Preti, C. 2011. "Editors' introduction." In Baldwin, T. & Preti, C. (eds.) *G. E. Moore: Early Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: University Press, p. xliii.
- 32 Baldwin and Preti, "Editors' Introduction," p. xliii.
- 33 Baldwin and Preti, "Editors' Introduction," p. xliii
- 34 See also Sidgwick, H. 1877. "Hedonism and ultimate good." *Mind (o.s.)* 2: 27–38. For penetrating discussions of Sidgwick's dualism, see Shaver, *Rational Egoism* and David Phillips, *Sidgwickian Ethics* (Oxford: University Press, 2011), chapter 5.
- 35 Sidgwick, H. 1889. "Some fundamental ethical controversies." *Mind* 14: 473–487, 483.
- 36 Russell, B. 1904. "The meaning of good." *The Independent Review* 2: 328–333.
- 37 Moore, G.E. 1942. "A reply to my critics." In Schilpp, P. (ed.) *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, p. 558.
- 38 There are other philosophical intuitions that I leave aside here. The ones listed are the most important to the argument for utilitarianism. For discussion, see Skelton, A. 2008, "Sidgwick's Philosophical Intuitions." *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics* 10 (2):185–209.
- 39 Sidgwick, H. 1876. "Professor Calderwood on intuitionism in morals." *Mind (o.s.)* 1: 563–566, 564.
- 40 This reading is suggested in Skelton, "Sidgwick's Philosophical Intuitions," and developed in Shaver, "Sidgwick's Axioms."
- 41 Shaver, "Sidgwick's Axioms."
- 42 For this charge, see Skelton, "Sidgwick's Philosophical Intuitions," Phillips, *Sidgwickian Ethics*, and Shaver, "Sidgwick's Axioms."
- 43 de Lazari-Radek, K. & Singer, P. 2014. *The Point of View of the Universe*, Oxford: University Press, p. 148.
- 44 What I say here about the reply is pure speculation; it is extraordinarily hard to parse.
- 45 de Lazari-Radek & Singer, p. 147.
- 46 de Lazari-Radek & Singer, p. 146 n46.
- 47 Sidgwick, "Professor Calderwood," p. 564; italics in original.
- 48 Sidgwick, H. 1879. "The Establishment of Ethical First Principles." *Mind*. 4: 106–111, 106.
- 49 Sidgwick "Establishment," pp. 106–107.
- 50 Shaver, "Sidgwick's Axioms."
- 51 Scanlon, T.M. 1998. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 235.
- 52 Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal," p. 106.
- 53 See, for example, Steinbock, B. 1978. "Speciesism and The Idea of Equality" *Philosophy* 53: 247–256, Cohen, C. 1986. "The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 314: 865–869, & Kagan, S. 2016. "What's Wrong with Speciesism?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 33: 1–21.
- 54 Some urge this; see, for example, Singer, P. 2005. "Ethics and intuitions." *Journal of Ethics* 9: 331–352, Greene, J. 2013. *Moral Tribes*. New York: Penguin, and de Lazari-Radek, K. & Singer, P. 2014. *The Point of View of the Universe*.

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- 55 See also Moore, 1897, pp. 90–91; E, p. 129.
- 56 Henry Sidgwick, 1906. *A Memoir*, London: Macmillan, p. 569.
- 57 Sidgwick, H. 1902. *Lectures on the Ethics of T. H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau*. London: Macmillan, p. 148. The comment is aimed at Green's view.
- 58 See, for instance, Crisp, R. 2006. *Reasons and the Good*. Oxford: University Press, and Hewitt, S. 2010 "What do our Intuitions about the Experience Machine Really Tell us about Hedonism?," *Philosophical Studies* 151: 331–349.
- 59 For the same view, see Moore, G.E. 1903. "Mr. McTaggart's ethics." *International Journal of Ethics* 13: 341–370, 358, and Moore, G.E. 1907–1908. "Review of Hastings Rashdall, *The theory of good and evil*." two volumes, *Hibbert Journal* 6: 446–451, 450.
- 60 Moore, Review of Rashdall, p. 450; italics in original.
- 61 Moore, Review of Rashdall, p. 450.
- 62 Hurka, T. 2015. "Moore's Moral Philosophy," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 edition). Edited by E. Zalta <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/moore-moral>
- 63 For discussion, see Shaver, R. 2016. "Sidgwick on pleasure." *Ethics* 126: 901–928.
- 64 Sidgwick, *Lectures on the Ethics of Green, Spencer, and Martineau*, p. 130. See also ME, p. 402.
- 65 It is noteworthy he does not argue that beauty is indefinable as he does in the case of good.
- 66 Hurka, T. 2003. "Moore in the middle." *Ethics* 113: 599–628.
- 67 Baldwin, T. 1993 [1922]. "Editor's introduction." In Baldwin, T. *G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica* revised edition, Cambridge: University Press, xxxiv.
- 68 Carritt, E.F. 1938. "Moral positivism and moral aestheticism." *Philosophy* 13: 131–147.