man who performed them belonged. Hence, it appeals to a tendency in some modern moral philosophers to be rather absurdly uncritical of the moral attitudes of communities other than their own. They may be less willing to accept this variant theory, however, when they realize that if it is true, they must be equally uncritical of the morals of their own community. It must be pointed out that according to this theory, if one says, "Introducing racial segregation into University X was wrong," one means that introducing segregation into the university was disapproved of by the community in which the action was performed. It is perfectly obvious, however, that one might perfectly well think that it was wrong and at the same time know that it was not disapproved of by the community in which it was performed. Again, this theory has the difficulty that even when a community disapproves of some practice only because the community is grossly mistaken concerning its nature (as in the case of the women and the eggs), we are still bound to say that the practice is wrong, providing the community does in fact disapprove of it.

Moral judgments state what most men feel. The objections that have already been raised against earlier types of subjectivism can be applied without much difficulty to the view that what we mean when we say an action is right is that most men approve of it. This theory does imply that any two men (whoever they are), one of whom condemns an action and the other of whom judges it to be right, really will be saying incompatible things, for it cannot be that most men approve of an action and at the same time disapprove of it. However, since men may change from approving of something to disapproving of it, the theory does entail that a man may judge an action to be right and later judge the same action to be wrong without having to retract his first judgment. The theory means that an action is wrong if most men feel disapproval of it, however ignorant or mistaken they may be about the nature of the action. It also means that it is impossible for a man to make up his mind concerning the rectitude of any action unless he has decided whether mankind in general would approve of it; it is obvious, however, that we can make up our minds on such questions without having the least idea what the attitude of most men would be. In view of what has already been said about the theory that what we mean when we say that an action is right is that the speaker thinks it is right, nothing need be said about the analogous views that an action is right if the speaker's community thinks that it is right, or that an action is right if most men think that it is right.

It is fairly obvious from what has been said that all subjectivist theories need to be amended, at least to exclude the possibility that the attitude of the people we are alleged to be describing when we make moral judgments is not based on ignorance or mistake. Hence, a consideration of subjectivism may lead to the view that an action is right not if it is approved of by any actual person or group of people, but only if it would be approved of by a person of a very special kind—for instance, one who, at the very least, is never ignorant of or mistaken about any relevant matter of fact concerning the action toward which his attitude of approval is directed. Hence, a consideration of subjectiv-

ism must inevitably lead to a consideration of ideal observer theories; these, however, are best treated as a variety of ethical objectivism.

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ETHICS. The Encyclopedia features two detailed survey articles, entitled ETHICS, HISTORY OF and ETHICS, PROBLEMS OF. It also contains separate articles on the following topics and theories of ethics: ASCETICISM; CAN; CHOOSING, DECIDING, AND DOING; CONSCIENCE; DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS; DETERMINISM; DUTY; EGOISM AND ALTRUISM; EMOTIVE THEORY OF ETHICS; ENDS AND MEANS; EPISTEMOLOGY AND ETHICS, PARALLEL BETWEEN; EQUALITY, MORAL AND SOCIAL; ETHICAL NATURALISM; ETHICAL OBJECTIVISM; ETHICAL RELATIVISM; ETHICAL SUBJECTIVISM; GOLDEN RULE; GOOD, THE; GUILT; HAPPINESS; HEDONISM; HISTORY AND VALUE JUDGMENTS; LIFE, MEANING AND VALUE OF; LOYALTY; MORAL SENSE; MOTIVES AND MOTIVATION; NATURAL LAW; NIHILISM; PESSIMISM AND OPTIMISM; PUNISHMENT; RELIGION AND MORALITY; RESPONSIBILITY, MORAL AND LEGAL; RULES; SUICIDE; TELEOLOGICAL ETHICS; ULTIMATE MORAL PRINCIPLES: THEIR JUSTIFICATION; UTILITARIANISM; VALUE AND VALUATION; VOLITION; and VOLUNTARISM.

ETHICS, DEONTOLOGICAL. See DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS.

ETHICS, EMOTIVE THEORY OF. See EMOTIVE THEORY OF ETHICS.

ETHICS, HISTORY OF. The term "ethics" is used in three different but related ways, signifying (1) a general pattern or "way of life," (2) a set of rules of conduct or "moral code," and (3) inquiry *about* ways of life and rules

of conduct. In the first sense we speak of Buddhist or Christian ethics; in the second, we speak of professional ethics and of unethical behavior. In the third sense, ethics is a branch of philosophy that is frequently given the special name of metaethics. The present discussion will be limited to the history of philosophical or "meta" ethics, for two reasons. First, because it is impossible to cover, with any degree of thoroughness, the history of ethics in either of the first two senses. Practices and the codification of practices are the threads out of which all of human culture is woven, so that the history of ethics in either of these senses would be far too vast a subject for a brief essay. Second, although ethical philosophy is often understood in a broad way as including all significant thought about human conduct, it can well be confined within manageable limits by separating purely philosophical thought from the practical advice, moral preaching, and social engineering which it illuminates and from which it receives sustenance. This distinction, while somewhat artificial, makes sense of the common opinion that philosophy in general, and ethical philosophy in particular, was invented by the Greeks.

The central questions of philosophical ethics are: What do we or should we mean by "good" and "bad"? what are the right standards for judging things to be good or bad? how do judgments of good and bad (value judgments) differ from and depend upon judgments of value-neutral fact? But when these questions are answered, it is important to find out the differences between specific types of value judgments that are characterized by such adjectives as "useful," "right," "moral," and "just." We may therefore divide our subject matter into the search for the meaning and standards of good in general, and of well-being, right conduct, moral character, and justice in particular. Needless to say, these are not watertight compartments. Many philosophers reject sharp distinctions between them. But provisional separation of these topics, subject to reunification in accordance with particular philosophical views, will prove helpful in disentangling the various issues on which philosophers have taken opposing stands, so that the history of ethics can be seen as irregular progress toward complete clarification of each type of ethical judgment.

GREEK ETHICS

Ethical philosophy began in the fifth century B.C., with the appearance of Socrates, a secular prophet whose self-appointed mission was to awaken his fellow men to the need for rational criticism of their beliefs and practices.

Greek society of the fifth century was in a state of rapid change from agrarian monarchy to commercial and industrial democracy. The religious and social traditions that had been handed down from one generation to the next through the natural processes of social imitation and household training were brought into question by the accession to power of a commercial class, whose members were untrained in and scornful of the ancestral way of life. New rules of conduct were required by a market economy in which money counted more than noble birth and in which men had to be considered equals as buyers and sellers. Men who wished to be elected to public office, but

had not been trained at home as rulers of serfs and household servants, needed a more explicit and general code of conduct than was embodied in the sense of honor and *esprit de corps* of the landed aristocracy. Occurring with the rapid political and social transformation of Greece, and interacting with it as both cause and effect, was the development of basic industrial arts and a scientific technology. These forces both expressed and intensified the developing interest in rational evaluation of beliefs. As Henry Sidgwick put it:

> This emergence of an art of conduct with professional teachers cannot thoroughly be understood, unless it is viewed as a crowning result of a general tendency at this stage of Greek civilization to substitute technical skill for traditional procedure. . . . If bodily vigour was no longer to be left to nature and spontaneous exercise, but was to be attained by the systematic observance of rules laid down by professional trainers, it was natural to think that the same might be the case with excellences of the soul. (*Outlines of the History of Ethics*, p. 21)

Early Greek thinkers drew frequent comparisons between medicine and ethics, describing ethics as the "art of living" and the "care of the soul." Socrates' motto, "A sound mind in a sound body," suggests the medical image of ethics as mental hygiene. Many thinkers took a special interest in medicine, and, recognizing the interdependence of mind and body, they practiced a rudimentary psychiatry. Alcmaeon of Croton, Empedocles, and Democritus were renowned for their psychotherapeutic skills. This biological conception of mind and soul led to a more critical and scientific approach to problems of ethical judgment. Philosophers began to search for reasons for established modes of conduct and, where no reasons were found, to suggest that action could be directed toward individual goals in defiance of tradition. The professional teachers known as Sophists, whose social role was to prepare the uncultivated *nouveaux riches* for positions of power in the rising democracies, employed the new-found weapon of logic with devastating effect against the code of honor of the declining aristocracy. Protagoras, Gorgias, and Thrasymachus taught methods of self-advancement and of attaining virtue. They stressed the difference between subjective values and objective facts, arguing that good and evil are matters of personal decision or social agreement (*nomos*) rather than facts of nature (*phusis*).

Socrates. Socrates stood midway between the unexamined, traditional values of the aristocracy and the skeptical practicality of the commercial class. Like the Sophists, he demanded reasons for rules of conduct, rejecting the self-justifying claim of tradition, and for this reason he was denounced as a Sophist by conservative writers like Aristophanes. But unlike the Sophists, he believed that by the use of reason man could arrive at a set of ethical principles that would reconcile self-interest with the common good and would apply to all men at all times.

The central questions of ethical philosophy were raised for the first time by Socrates and the Sophists, but only Socrates realized the difficulty, bordering on impossibility, of finding adequate answers. In this respect, Socrates may

be regarded as the first philosopher, in the strictest sense of the term. While the Sophists, after exposing the impracticality of traditional rules of conduct, then offered glib formulas in their place—such as "Justice is the rule of the stronger" (Thrasymachus) and "Man is the measure of all things" (Protagoras)—Socrates applied the same logical criticism with equally devastating results to both aristocratic and market-place morality. He did not find the universal and self-evident code he searched for, but it was his memorable achievement to have revealed to mankind that without such a code its actions will lack justification and that moral perfection is therefore an ideal to which we can only approximate. Perfect clarity about what constitutes moral perfection is no more of this world than is moral perfection itself.

Our knowledge of Socrates is primarily derived from the dialogues of Plato, so it is not possible to draw a sharp line between the ideas of the two men. But since Plato's early dialogues are considerably different in style and content from those which he wrote later in life, one may take the early as fairly representative of Socrates and the late as more expressive of Plato's own thought. The chief differences discernible are the following: the more Socratic dialogues are devoted to the criticism of conventional beliefs and to the demonstration of the need for further inquiry, while the later dialogues argue for positive conclusions; the early dialogues search for definitions of ethical concepts, while the later dialogues are concerned with justifying a contemplative way of life in which pleasures of the senses are spurned in favor of pleasures of the mind; finally, the Socratic style is conversational and argumentative, while that of the later years is more didactic and abstract.

The Socrates of the early dialogues raises questions about the meaning of ethical terms, such as "What is justice?" (*Republic*), "What is piety?" (*Euthyphro*), "What is courage?" (*Laches, Charmides*), "What is virtue?" (*Protagoras*). The answers offered by others to these questions are then subjected to a relentless cross-examination (Socratic dialectic), exposing their vagueness and inconsistency.

Although Socrates did not separate judgments of value from judgments of fact, the negative results of his line of questioning suggest a distinction that was made explicit only in modern times by Hume and Moore. In each of his discussions of ethical concepts like courage or justice, Socrates refutes all efforts to define them in terms of ethically neutral facts. For example, when, in the *Protagoras, Laches*, and *Charmides*, courage is defined as resolute facing of danger, Socrates observes that a man who faces dangers that he would be wise to avoid is a fool rather than a hero. The generalization toward which Socrates points the way, although he does not arrive at it himself, is that ethical concepts can never be adequately defined in terms of observable facts alone. Many philosophers, beginning with the Sophists, have believed that this principle leads to ethical skepticism. Plato attempted to escape such skepticism by means of his theory of Forms, and the modern school of intuitionism proposes a similar way out. Indeed, all the ethical theories developed since Socrates may be considered as alternative explanations of the relation between facts and values, naturalistic theories stressing their interdependence and nonnaturalistic theories stressing their differences. Socrates, in demanding rational grounds for ethical judgments, brought attention to the problem of tracing the logical relationships between values and facts and thereby created ethical philosophy.

Plato. Plato's thought may be regarded as an endeavor to answer the questions posed by Socrates. From the *Republic* on through the later dialogues and epistles, Plato constructed a systematic view of nature, God, and man from which he derived his ethical principles. The foundation of this metaphysical view was the theory of Forms, whose most succinct formulation may be found in the discussion of the Divided Line, toward the end of Book VI of the *Republic*. Plato divides the objects of knowledge into two main categories and each of these into two subcategories symbolized by unequal sections of the line. The main division is between the realm of changing, sensible objects and that of unchanging, abstract forms. Knowledge of sensible objects acquired by sense perception is inaccurate and uncertain, for the object of sense, like the river of Heraclitus, is in continual flux. In contrast, knowledge of timeless forms is precise and rigorously provable. The realm of sensible objects is subdivided into shadows and images, in the lower section, and natural objects in the upper section. The realm of forms is subdivided into mathematical forms and ethical forms. At the apex of this ascending line is the Form of the Good, in relation to which all other objects of knowledge must be defined if they are to be adequately understood. Thus, ethics is the highest and most rigorous kind of knowledge, surpassing even mathematics, but it is also the most difficult to attain. Mathematics leads us away from reliance on visual images and sense perception, and ethical philosophy demands an even greater effort of abstraction. The objects of ethical knowledge are even less visualizable than geometrical forms and numbers—they are concepts and principles ultimately unified under the all-encompassing concept of the Good.

Although Plato suggests in this and other passages that ethical truths can be rigorously deduced from self-evident axioms, and thus introduces the mathematical model of knowledge that has guided many philosophers ever since, he does not employ a deductive procedure in his discussions of specific ethical problems, perhaps because he did not feel that he had yet attained an adequate vision of the Good that would supply him with the proper axioms from which to deduce rules of conduct. His actual procedure follows what he calls an ascending dialectic, a process of generalization through the give and take of conversation and the consideration of typical cases, a process designed to culminate in an intellectual vision of the structure of reality, from which, by a "descending dialectic" or deduction from general principles, particular judgments of value can be deduced. Plato's main goal in his ethical philosophy is to lead the way toward a vision of the Good.

The Socratic–Platonic ethical theory identifies goodness with reality and reality with intelligible form and thus concludes that the search for value must lead away from sense perception and bodily pleasure. This suggests an ascetic and intellectualistic way of life which is spelled out in full detail in the *Republic*, in the description of the

training of the guardians. Some difference in the degree of intensity of the preference for mind over body may perhaps be discerned in the increasing severity of tone from the early dialogues to the later. In the *Protagoras* and *Symposium*, Socrates argues for rational control over the body for the sake of greater pleasure in the long run, but he does not oppose pleasure as such. In the *Symposium* the unity of body and mind is a luminous thread throughout the discussion. Love is regarded as a search for the pleasure that consists in possession of what is good, and it is shown to exist on many levels, the lowest being that of sexual desire and the highest that of aspiration toward a vision of eternity. While still under the influence of Socrates, Plato distinguishes noble pleasures from base pleasures, rather than condemning pleasure in itself. The image he draws of Socrates is of a man who eats and drinks heartily and enjoys himself on all levels of experience, but in rationally controlled proportions. Socrates enjoys the wine at the symposium as much as anyone else, but unlike the others he remains sober to the end. While the poet Agathon becomes drunk with his own rhetoric, Socrates employs richly sensual language and metaphor in a way sufficiently controlled to make a philosophical point and so remains master of his rhetoric as well as of his body.

In the extraordinarily beautiful dialogue *Phaedo*, which describes the day of Socrates' execution, the theme of superiority of soul to body is dealt with directly, as might be expected of a philosopher who is about to die. Here Socrates commits himself unequivocally to a rejection of the body and its pleasures, maintaining that a wise man looks forward to his own death, when the soul is freed from its corporeal prison. Whether this is an exact expression of Socrates' attitude toward life may, however, be doubted in view of other dialogues, such as the *Protagoras*. In any case, it is natural for a man confronting death to try to set the best possible light on it. But it was this more somber, otherworldly strain in Socrates that Plato in his later works elaborated into a mystical vision of a timeless higher world. Plato has Socrates say, in the *Philebus*, ". . . no degree of pleasure, whether great or small, was thought to be necessary to him who chose the life of thought and wisdom" (translated by B. Jowett, New York, 1933, Para. 33).

In the *Timaeus*, where, significantly, the protagonist is no longer Socrates but the Pythagorean Timaeus, pleasure is described as "the greatest incitement to evil," and Timaeus places the "inferior soul" below the neck, separating it from the intellect. Plato's severe castigations of bodily pleasures, his sharp separation of soul from body and of the eternal from the temporal, and his mystical cosmology entail a more extreme asceticism than that preached or practiced by Socrates.

Plato's mistrust of bodily pleasure and perceptual judgment led him to take an unfavorable view of public opinion and, consequently, of democratic institutions. In the *Republic*, and still more emphatically in the *Laws*, he proposed that society be ruled by an intellectual elite who would be trained to govern in accordance with their vision of eternal forms. He proposed, in the *Laws*, a ruthless system of punishments and the propagation of ideologically useful myths that would preserve social harmony and class distinction. Yet despite his support of severe punishment for social transgressions, Plato followed Socrates in holding, in the *Protagoras*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*, that evil is due only to ignorance or madness and that "no man is voluntarily bad," a paradox that Aristotle later tried valiantly to resolve.

Aristotle. One might expect that Aristotle, who studied at Plato's Academy for many years, would take the same view of nature and human conduct as his mentor. But the differences between Plato and Aristotle are more fundamental than the resemblances. Although Aristotle naturally used a similar terminology and shared with Plato certain principles and attitudes expressive of the rationality of Hellenic culture, his method of inquiry and his conception of the role of ethical principles in human affairs were different enough from Plato's to establish a rival philosophical tradition. Plato was the fountainhead of religious and idealistic ethics, while Aristotle engendered the naturalistic tradition. Throughout the subsequent history of Western civilization, ethical views that looked to a supranatural source, such as God or pure reason, for standards of evaluation stemmed from the metaphysics of Plato, while naturalistic philosophers who found standards of value in the basic needs, tendencies, and capacities of man were guided by Aristotle.

Aristotle was born in Stagira, Macedonia, the son of Nicomachus, court physician to Amyntas II. He received early training in biology and physiology and in methods of careful observation and classification, a fact that may account for his later differences with Plato on the role of sense perception in the acquisition of knowledge. While Plato was guided by mathematics as a model of scientific knowledge, Aristotle modeled his system on biology, stressing the importance of observation of recurrent patterns in nature. Thus Plato's goal for philosophical ethics was to make human nature conform to an ideal blueprint, while Aristotle tailored his ethical principles to the demands of human nature.

Aristotle's ethical writings, consisting of the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*, all edited by his disciples from his lecture notes, constitute the first systematic investigation of the foundations of ethics. Since the *Eudemian Ethics* is superseded by the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* is an extension of his ethical principles to social regulation, this discussion will be confined to the ideas contained in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

In the latter work, Aristotle's main purpose was to define the subject matter and methodology of philosophical ethics. In doing so, he both drew upon and revised the beliefs and values of the Greek society of his time. Aristotle begins his study by searching for the common feature of all things said to be good and, in contrast with Plato, who held that there is a Form of Good in which all good things "participate," Aristotle concludes that there are many different senses of "good," each of which must be defined separately for the limited area in which it applies. Each such "good" is pursued by a specific practical art or science, such as economics, military strategy, medicine, or shipbuilding. But the ends of these particular disciplines can be arranged in order of importance, so that the su-

preme good can be identified with the goal of the most general practical science to which the others are subordinate. On an individual level, this all-inclusive science is ethics; on a social level, it is politics. The end of ethics is personal happiness and that of politics is the general welfare, and since the good of the whole ranks above that of the part, personal ethics is subordinate to politics. However, this principle does not entail, for Aristotle, that the individual must sacrifice his interests to those of the community, except under unusual conditions such as war, because he assumed that the needs of both normally coincide.

Aristotle identifies the supreme good with "happiness," which he defines as the exercise of natural human faculties in accordance with virtue. His next task is to define virtue as a skill appropriate to a specific faculty, and he distinguishes two classes of virtues—intellectual and moral. There are five intellectual faculties, from which arise art, science, intuition, reasoning, and practical wisdom. He offers a long list of moral virtues, defining each as the mean between the extremes of either emotion or tendencies to action. For instance, courage is the mean between the excess and the deficiency of the emotion of fear, temperance is the mean between the tendencies to eat and drink too much or too little, justice is the mean with respect to the distribution of goods or of punishments. The bulk of the *Nicomachean Ethics* contains detailed analyses of the criteria of specific moral virtues. The final result of Aristotle's investigations is the definition of happiness or the good life as activity in accordance with virtue, and thus as the harmonious fulfillment of man's natural tendencies.

Summary: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Returning to the central problems of ethical theory, one may hazard an estimation of the contributions of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to their clarification. Socrates was the first to recognize the importance of analyzing the meaning of good, right, just, and virtuous, and of articulating the standards for ascribing these properties. Plato charted a spiritualistic direction for finding the answers in a realm of timeless ideals, while Aristotle located the answers in the scientific study of biology, psychology, and politics. Good, for Plato, means resemblance to the pure Form, or universal model of goodness, which serves as the standard for all value judgments. Actions are right, laws are just, and people are virtuous to the degree to which they conform to the ideal model. For Aristotle, good means the achievement of the goals at which human beings naturally aim, the balanced and rational satisfaction of desires to which he gives the name "happiness." Right action, just laws, and virtuous character are the means of achieving individual and social well-being. All three philosophers agree in identifying individual good with social good and in defining moral concepts such as justice and virtue in terms of the achievement of good.

Moral responsibility. The concept of moral responsibility that acquired crucial importance in later Christian thought was only obliquely considered by Plato and more fully, although inconclusively, dealt with by Aristotle. Plato, who identified virtue with philosophical understanding, concluded that "no one does evil voluntarily," so that wrong action is always due to intellectual error. Aris-

totle recognized that intellectual error must be distinguished from moral vice, since the former, unlike the latter, is involuntary. In order to distinguish punishable evil from innocent mistakes, he explained vice as due to wrong desire as well as poor judgment. The will, for Aristotle, is rationally guided desire, formed by moral education and training. But since even voluntary action is determined by natural tendencies and early training, Aristotle searched for an additional factor to account for the freedom of choice necessary for moral responsibility. He thought he found that factor in deliberation, the consideration of reasons for and against a course of action. The further question, as to whether, when an agent deliberates, he has any choice of and consequently any responsibility for the outcome of his deliberation, was not considered by Aristotle and remains an unsettled issue between determinists and libertarians. In general, the concepts of free will and moral responsibility did not become matters of great concern until the rise of Christianity, when people became preoccupied with otherworldly rewards and punishments for moral conduct.

HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN ETHICS

During the two millennia from the death of Aristotle in the fourth century B.C. to the rise of modern philosophy in the seventeenth century A.D., the interests of ethical thinkers shifted from theoretical to practical ethics, so that little advance was made in the clarification of the meanings of ethical concepts, while, on the other hand, new conceptions of the goals of human life and new codes of conduct were fashioned. The philosophical schools of Skepticism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Neoplatonism that set the ethical tone of Hellenistic and Roman thought offered a type of intellectual guidance that was more like religious teaching than like scientific inquiry and paved the way for the conquests of Christianity. The popular conception of philosophy as an attitude of indifference to misfortune applies best to this period, in which philosophy and religion were nearly indistinguishable.

The subtlety of Socrates' thought is attested to by the variety of schools that developed out of his teaching. Plato and, through Plato, Aristotle probably represent the Socratic influence most completely. But the Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics also owed their guiding principles to Socrates. Aristippus of Cyrene, at first a disciple of Socrates, founded the school of Cyrenaicism, which followed the simple hedonistic principle that pleasure is the only good. Antisthenes, another Socratic disciple, founded the Cynic school on the apparently opposite principle that the good life is one of indifference to both pleasure and pain. The Cynics, of whom Diogenes was the most renowned, rejected the comforts of civilization and lived alone in the forests, like the dogs after whom they named themselves. Cyrenaicism developed into Epicureanism, and Cynicism into Stoicism. Soon after the death of Aristotle, Pyrrho of Elis initiated the philosophy of Skepticism, influenced by both the Sophist and the Socratic criticisms of conventional beliefs. According to Skepticism, no judgments, either of fact or of value, can be adequately proved, so that the proper philosophical attitude to take toward the actions of

others is one of tolerant detachment, and toward one's own actions, extreme caution. In the second century B.C., the leaders of Plato's Academy, Arcesilaus and Carneades, adopted Skepticism, and Carneades developed a theory of probability which he applied to ethical judgments. During this period, the Peripatetic school at Aristotle's Lyceum continued the Aristotelian tradition until it merged finally with Stoicism.

Epicureanism. Epicurus (c. 341–270 B.C.) founded one of the two dominant philosophical schools of the era between the death of Aristotle and the rise of Christianity. The other dominant school was, of course, Stoicism. These two traditions are often thought of as diametrical opposites, yet it may plausibly be argued that the differences between them were more verbal than substantial. Both views of life were fundamentally pessimistic, directed more toward escape from pain than toward the positive improvement of the human condition. Both encouraged individual withdrawal from the public arena of struggle for economic and political reform, in favor of personal self-mastery and independence of social conditions. The later Roman Stoics modified this extreme individualism and placed more stress on civic duties, but even they preached resignation to the imperfections of social organization rather than efforts at improvement.

Epicurus based his ethics on the atomistic materialism of Democritus, to which he added the important modification of indeterminism by postulating a tendency of the atoms that make up the human body—and particularly its "soul atoms"—to swerve unpredictably from their normal paths, resulting in unpredictable human actions. In this way, Epicurus thought he could account for freedom of the will. He assumed that freedom of choice of action is incompatible with the deterministic principle that all events are necessary results of antecedent causes. But this identification of freedom with pure chance seems to entail that a capricious person is more free than a rational and principled person, and such a conclusion would contradict Epicurus' own vision of moral life. For Epicurus' main difference with his Cyrenaic predecessors lay in his conviction that, by the use of reason, one could plan one's life and sacrifice momentary pleasures for long-run benefit. Like the Cyrenaics, Epicurus held that pleasure is the single standard of good. But he distinguished "natural pleasures," which are moderate and healthful, from "unnatural" satiation of greed and lust. His name for moderate and natural pleasure was *ataraxia,* gentle motions in the body which he regarded as the physiological explanation of pleasure. He proposed, as the ideal way of life, a relaxed, leisurely existence, consisting in moderate indulgence of the appetites, cultivation of the intellect, and conversation with friends, which is how Epicurus himself lived and taught in his famous garden. Two centuries later, Epicureanism was established in Rome by Lucretius (c. 99–55 B.C.), whose influential poem, *On the Nature of Things,* helped to spread Epicureanism among the Roman aristocracy.

Stoicism. Stoicism was by far the most impressive intellectual achievement of Hellenistic and Roman culture prior to Christianity, providing an ethical framework within which metaphysical speculation, natural science, psychology, and social thought could flourish to such a high degree that Stoicism has not unjustly been identified in the public mind with philosophy itself, that is, with the distinctively "philosophical" attitude toward life. Like every great tradition, Stoicism evolved through many stages and thus comprehends a great variety of specific beliefs. Historians generally distinguish three main stages of its development:

(1) The early Stoa—which derived its name from the portico, or porch, on which the early Stoics lectured—whose important figures were Zeno of Cyprus, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus. Chrysippus made the most substantial contributions to Stoic logic and theory of knowledge. The early Stoics remained close to Cynicism in recommending withdrawal from community life so as to render oneself independent of material comforts, social fashions, and the opinions of one's fellow men. Their ethical goal was the achievement of apathy, the state of indifference to pleasure and pain. They considered reason to be the distinctive nature of man and proposed that one should live "according to nature" and thus according to rational principles of conduct.

With the Stoics, the concept of duty acquired a central place in ethics, as conformity to moral rules which they identified with laws of human nature. The later Roman Stoics developed this doctrine into the theory of natural law on which Roman jurisprudence was largely based. Most of the Stoics were materialists, yet imbued with natural piety, and many identified God with the Logos of Heraclitus, as a universal "fire" or energy of nature embodied in its lawlike processes. Many were fatalists, maintaining that man can control his destiny only by resigning himself to it, a principle that contrasted vividly with their emphasis on rationality and self-control. They sought to reconcile this extreme determinism with freedom and moral responsibility by means of the Aristotelian distinction between external and internal causation, thus suggesting that the free man is one who, in understanding the necessity of what befalls him, accepts it and thus freely chooses it, a solution echoed in modern thought by Hegel's definition of freedom as the recognition of necessity.

(2) The middle Stoics, notably Panaetius and Posidonius, brought Stoicism to Rome, shaping the doctrine to the political-mindedness of the Romans by modifying its extreme individualism and stressing the importance of social duties.

(3) The late Stoics, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and, to some extent, Cicero—who accepted only certain parts of Stoic doctrine—developed the ideal of a "cosmopolis," or universal brotherhood of man, in which all men would be recognized as having equal rights and responsibilities, an ideal which Christianity absorbed into its conception of the "City of God" and which, in the modern age, Kant made the cornerstone of his system of ethics.

Neoplatonism. Epicureanism offered a way of life that was open only to the leisure class. Stoicism appealed to highly reflective men of all classes, as evidenced by the fact that the two great figures of late Stoicism were the educated slave Epictetus and the emperor Marcus Aurelius. However, both philosophical views could interest only those of a sufficiently high level of education and

thoughtful temperament to place intellectual values above all others. As the Roman Empire declined, and reason seemed powerless to solve the intense economic and social problems of the empire, an atmosphere of pessimism and disaffection with reason began to prevail, a situation which Gilbert Murray has described as "a failure of nerve." Interest increased in finding supernatural routes to salvation of the kind offered by various religious cults, and even in the intellectual schools the study of logic and natural science declined in favor of a search for psychological means of escape from suffering. The philosophy of Neoplatonism fashioned by Plotinus (c. 204–270) offered an intellectual road to salvation, while early Christianity paved an emotional and ritualistic highway toward the same destination. Later, these two roads converged.

Plotinus lectured in Rome and, after his death, his notes were edited by his disciple Porphyry, forming the work entitled *Enneads*—so called because of its division into chapters of nine sections each. Plotinus developed one strain of Plato's thought, the ascetic mysticism of the passages on the Form of the Good in the *Republic* and the *Symposium* and the pantheistic metaphysics of the *Timaeus*. According to Plotinus, the world is a series of emanations or overflowings of the One, the ineffable and ultimate reality of which every determinate thing is a part. The One is so transcendent as to be indescribable, "the One, transcending intellect, transcends knowing." But if the One cannot be described, it can at least be negatively characterized in terms of what it is not, namely, that it is not limited by any finite properties. This negative characterization of the One was the source of Christian "negative theology," the description of God in terms of the denial of all modes of limitation.

The One emanates intelligible Forms or Platonic Ideas, out of which the World Soul produces individual souls which in turn emanate lower beings in a process that approaches, but does not quite reach, pure matter. Matter, as total formlessness, is so far from true being that it does not exist. Identifying evil with matter or formlessness, Plotinus concluded that evil does not exist in an absolute sense, but only as incompleteness or lack of good. This account of evil as having no positive existence was later adopted by Augustine and most subsequent theologians.

Since Plotinus, following Plato, equated goodness with reality and evil with unreality or distance from the One, it followed that virtue consists in purging the soul of reliance on sensual pleasures and imagery, so that it can ascend the ladder of being and return to its source in the One. The culmination of this process of purification through self-denial is the mystical experience of reunion with the One, which Plotinus describes—having experienced it himself at least four times—as "the flight of the Alone to the Alone." Thus virtue, for Plotinus as later for Augustine, is not its own reward but is a means to a metaphysical state of blessedness. In the words of the historian W. T. Jones, "Like other men of his time, Plotinus found this world a sea of troubles and a vale of tears; like them he sought to leave it; and like them he found perfect peace only in otherworldliness." How much of this view was absorbed into Christian, Islamic, and Judaic theology can hardly be overestimated, although the influence of Platonism on

Judaism was mainly through Philo Judaeus (fl. 20 B.C.– A.D. 40), an Alexandrian Jew and contemporary of Jesus, who combined elements of Stoicism with a Platonistic interpretation of Judaic theology and ethics.

(The above section on Hellenistic and Roman ethics was prepared in collaboration with Professor Richard O. Haynes of the University of Hawaii.)

MEDIEVAL ETHICS

The rise of Christian philosophy, out of a fusion of Greco-Roman thought with Judaism and elements of other Middle Eastern religions, produced a new era in the history of ethics, although one that was prepared for by Stoicism and Neoplatonism. The Stoic concern with justice and self-mastery, and the Neoplatonic search for reunion with the source of all being, were combined in early Christian philosophy with the Judaic belief in a personal God, whose commandments are the primal source of moral authority and whose favor is the ultimate goal of human life. Two sources of ethical standards, human reason and divine will, were juxtaposed in one system of ethics, and the tension between them was reflected in conflicting sectarian interpretations of theological principles.

From the second to the fourth century, Christianity spread through the Roman Empire, offering the poor and the oppressed a hope for otherworldly happiness in compensation for their earthly suffering, and thus a way of life with which the more pessimistic and intellectualist schools of philosophy could not compete. By the fourth century, Christianity dominated Western civilization and had absorbed the main ideas and values of the secular schools of thought, as well as rival religions such as Manichaeism, Mithraism, and Judaism. Having converted the masses, it was time to win over the intelligentsia, and doing this required the hammering out of an explicit and plausible system of metaphysical and ethical principles. This task was performed by the Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Ambrose, and, most completely and authoritatively, by Augustine.

Augustine. St. Augustine (354–430), born near Carthage, the son of a pagan father and a Christian mother, was first a Manichaean and later became converted to Christianity. He rose in the church to become bishop of Hippo and helped to settle the doctrinal strife among the many Christain sects by constructing a system of theology, ethics, and theory of knowledge that soon became the authoritative framework of Christian thought, modified but not supplanted by subsequent church philosophers. Augustine's major works, *Confessions, The City of God, Enchiridion,* and *On Freedom of the Will,* wove together threads of Stoic ethics, Neoplatonic metaphysics, and the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of revelation and redemption into a many-colored fabric of theology. With Augustine, theology became the bridge between philosophy and revealed religion, the one end anchored in reason and the other in faith, and ethics became a blend of the pursuit of earthly well-being with preparation of the soul for eternal salvation.

Like the Neoplatonists, Augustine rejected almost entirely the claims of bodily pleasures and community life,

maintaining, as St. Paul had done, that happiness is impossible in this world, which serves only as a testing ground for reward and punishment in the afterlife. Augustine inherited the Neoplatonic conception of virtue as the purgation of the soul of all dependence on material comforts in preparation for reunion with God. Against the Stoic and Aristotelian reliance on reason as the source of virtue, Augustine maintained that such apparently admirable traits as prudence, justice, wisdom, and fortitude—the four cardinal virtues identified by Plato and stressed by Stoics and Christians—are of no moral worth when not inspired by Christian faith. With the pessimistic view of life characteristic of an era of wars, political collapse, and economic decline—a view already apparent in the Stoic, Epicurean, and Neoplatonic modes of withdrawal from social responsibilities—intensified by his personal sense of guilt and worthlessness, Augustine saw life on earth as a punishment for Adam's original sin. "For what flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this life?" he laments in *The City of God.*

Nature. The tension between natural and supernatural values in Augustine's ethical thought shows itself most clearly in his ambivalent attitude toward nature. Nature, as God's creation, must be unqualifiedly good. Natural evils are only apparently evil, and in the long run they contribute to the fulfillment of divine purpose. Natural evil is simply imperfection that makes variety possible and thus, when viewed on a cosmic scale, does not exist at all. On the other hand, since man must be held morally responsible for his sins, human sin cannot be so easily explained away as incompleteness that promotes the cosmic good. Moreover, it is man's bodily desires that tempt him to sin. Without the aid of divine grace, the promptings of human nature, whether impulsive or rational, lead only to vice and damnation. Augustine resolves this paradoxical view of human nature by holding that man, unlike other natural species, was endowed by his Creator with free will and thus with the capacity to choose between good and evil. Through the original sin of Adam he has chosen evil, and it is for this reason, rather than because of any flaw in his original construction, that he is irresistibly inclined to further sin.

Free will and divine foreknowledge. If Augustine's dual conception of nature is explained by his concept of free will, the latter contains new difficulties. The problem of free will is critical in Christian ethics, which emphasizes responsibility and punishment. The Greek ideal of practical reason ensuring physical and mental well-being was supplanted by the ideal of purification of the soul through suffering, renunciation, and humble obedience to divine will.

Where the practice of virtue produces well-being as its natural consequence, as in the Greek view, virtue carries with it its own reward in accordance with the causal processes of nature, so that causal necessity and moral desert are not merely compatible; they normally coincide. But in the Christian view, causal necessity and moral responsibility seem incompatible, for the choice between good and evil is made by the soul, independently of natural processes, and its reward or punishment is independent of the natural effects of human actions. Man is punished or rewarded to the degree to which he voluntarily obeys or disobeys the commands of God. In the Greek view, man suffers from the natural consequences of his mistakes, but in the Christian view, no matter what the natural consequences of his actions, he is held to account for the state of his soul. It is his motives and not his actions that count in assessment of his moral responsibility, and the primary motive is his desire for, or his turning away from, God.

Responsibility is thus transferred from the consequences of a person's actions to the state of his soul. Yet if the soul is created by God, and not subject to its temporary owner's control, then in what sense can man be said to have freedom of choice between good and evil? Augustine describes the soul that chooses evil as "defective," but if so, is not the Creator of the defective soul responsible for its deficiency? In absolution of God, Augustine argues that a defect is not a positive entity, thus not a created thing and not attributable to a creator—a terminological escape that is vulnerable to the objection that, on such grounds, a man who stabs another produces in his victim a deficiency rather than a positive state and therefore is not responsible for his "nonexistent" product.

Augustine's concept of free will is further complicated by his support of the theological principle of divine omniscience, which entails foreknowledge by God of human decisions. The term "predestination," used by later theologians and notably by the Protestant reformers, suggests a determinism that Augustine rejects in his criticism of fatalism. For Augustine, God knows what man will choose to do and makes it possible for man to act on his free choices but does not compel him to any course of action. To the obvious question of how God can know in advance what has not been destined or causally necessitated, Augustine replies by means of his subtle analysis of time. God has knowledge, not of what we are compelled to do but of what we freely choose to do, because his knowledge is not the kind of advance knowledge that is based on causal processes but is due to the fact that, in the mind of God, we have already made our decisions. All of past and future time is spread out in the specious present of the divine mind, so that what, from our limited standpoint, would be prediction of the future is, for God, simply direct awareness of contemporaneous events.

Distinctions among ethical concepts. While Augustine's ethical writings are mainly concerned with the substantive problem of how to achieve redemption, rather than with the clarification of ethical concepts, much of his writing is philosophical in our strict sense, in that it suggests solutions to conceptual or metaethical problems of meaning and method. Augustine opposed the classical tendency to define the moral concepts of rightness and virtue in terms of individual and social well-being and interpreted moral right and virtue as obedience to divine authority. The concept of good is split into a moral and a practical sense. Good as fulfillment of natural tendencies is subordinated to eternal beatitude, the fulfillment of the aspirations of the virtuous soul. Freedom and responsibility are interpreted as internal states of the soul and as excluding, rather than (as for Aristotle) presupposing, causal necessity.

Fourth to thirteenth centuries. From Augustine in the fourth century to Abelard in the eleventh century, Chris-

tian, Islamic, and Judaic philosophy was dominated by Neoplatonic mysticism and preoccupied with faith and salvation. The outstanding figure of this period was John Scotus Erigena (c. 810–c. 877), whose conception of good was the Platonic one of approximation to timeless being and whose view of life as issuing from and returning to God bordered on heretical pantheism.

By the eleventh century, interest in rational philosophical speculation had revived, and even those Schoolmen like Bernard of Clairvaux (1091–1153), who continued to defend religious mysticism and denounced reliance upon reason as inimical to faith, nevertheless employed philosophical arguments to refute contrary opinions. Augustine had asserted that one must "believe in order to understand," and St. Anselm (1033–1109) took this to mean that faith is not incompatible with reason but, rather, prepares the soul for rational understanding. The main issues among philosophers of this time were the relation between faith and reason, and the nature of universals.

However, Peter Abelard (1079–1142), an extraordinarily original and independent thinker whose vibrant personality reveals itself in his philosophical writings, rediscovered some of the unsolved problems of ethical philosophy. Abelard brought into clear view the distinctive features of Christian ethics implicit in Augustine's work, in particular, the split between moral and prudential concepts that sharply separates Christian ethics from Greek ethics. Abelard held that morality is an inner quality, a property of motive or intention rather than of the consequences of one's actions, a principle that was later stressed by the Reformation and attained its fullest expression in the ethical system of Immanuel Kant. A somewhat heretical corollary follows from Abelard's principle, namely that, as Étienne Gilson puts it, "Those who do not know the Gospel obviously commit no fault in not believing in Jesus Christ," and it seems clear from all this that Christian faith need not be the foundation for moral rules. Abelard concluded that one can attain to virtue through reason as well as through faith.

Thomas Aquinas. The towering figure of medieval philosophy is, of course, Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274), whose philosophical aim was to reconcile Aristotelian science and philosophy with Augustinian theology. The way to this achievement had already been prepared by the revival in western Europe of interest in Aristotle, whose thought had been preserved and elaborated by Muslim and Jewish scholars such as Avicenna, Averroës, and Maimonides and had been brought to the attention of Christendom by the commentaries of Albert the Great. It remained for Aquinas to prove the compatibility of Aristotelian naturalism with Christian dogma and to construct a unified view of nature, man, and God. This he undertook with remarkable success in his *Summa Theologica* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

To a large degree, Aquinas' union of Aristotelianism with Christianity consisted in arguing for the truth of both and in refuting arguments of his predecessors and contemporaries that purported to show their incompatibility. Aristotle's ethics was relativistic, rational, and prudential; Augustinian ethics was absolutist, grounded on faith, and independent of consequences. Now one of these views is totally misguided, or else there must be room for two different systems of ethical concepts and principles. Aquinas adopted the latter alternative and divided the meaning of ethical concepts into two domains, "natural" and "theological." Natural virtues, adequately accounted for by Aristotle, can be attained by proper training and the exercise of practical reason, while theological virtues—faith, hope, and love—require faith and divine grace. Similarly, he distinguished two highest goods, or paramount goals of life, worldly happiness and eternal beatitude (which has precedence); the former is achieved through natural virtue and the latter is achieved through the church and its sacraments. Aquinas thus expressed a considerably more optimistic attitude than did Augustine toward the possibility of improving man's lot on earth through knowledge of nature and intelligent action. This helped to prepare the climate for the rebirth of natural science, whose first stirrings were felt in the thirteenth century.

Natural law. At the center of Thomistic ethics was the concept of natural law. The medieval doctrine of natural law, stemming from Aristotle's teleological conception of nature and from the Stoic identification of human reason with the Logos, was a fusion of naturalistic Greek ethics with monotheistic theology. On this view, the promptings of informed reason and moral conscience represent an inherent tendency in the nature of man, and conformity to this nature fulfills both the cosmic plan of the Creator and the direct commands of God revealed in the Scriptures. Natural law is the divine law as discovered by reason, and therefore the precepts of the church and the Bible, and scientific knowledge of the universal needs and tendencies of man, provide complementary rather than competing standards of ethical judgment. Where conflicts between science and religious authority arise, they must be due to inadequate understanding of science, since church authority and dogma are infallible.

The Thomistic unification of scientific and religious ethics in the doctrine of natural law—further elaborated in subtle detail by Francisco Suárez and other legalists—was an effective way of making room, within the religious enterprise of achieving salvation, for the practical business of everyday living in pursuit of personal and social well-being. The ideological supremacy of theology was maintained, but the doctrine of natural law purported to guarantee reliable knowledge of nature, psychology, and political economy. The weakness in this system was that it placed religious barriers in the way of scientific advance, tending to sanctify and render immune from revision whichever scientific principles seemed most congenial to theology, such as instinct theory in psychology, vitalistic biology, and geocentric astronomy.

Free will. Aquinas' account of freedom and moral responsibility was, in general form, similar to that of Augustine, maintaining the compatibility of free will with predestination or divine foreknowledge. Aquinas also maintained the compatibility of free will with causal determinism, thus dealing with the problem on the level of prudential ethics as well on as the theological level of grace and salvation. Aquinas' solution makes effective use of Aristotle's analysis of choice and voluntary action in terms of internal causality and deliberation, and it

identifies free will with rational self-determination rather than with the absence of causal influences. On the other hand, Aquinas' concept of freedom is, as a result, more relativistic than Augustine's, and, while it explains the conditions under which an agent may be held responsible for his *actions*—namely, the conditions of desire, knowledge, and deliberation—it does not meet the further issue of whether these faculties that determine action are within the control of the agent, that is, whether a person can freely choose the habits and desires that determine his actions. Later writers, particularly Protestant theologians, tended to interpret Augustine as stressing predestination and Aquinas as stressing free will, but it may be argued to the contrary, that Augustine's conception of free will as an inexplicable and supernatural thrust of the soul allows the agent more independence of his formed character than does Aquinas', but by that very token, Aquinas' account is more congenial to a scientific view of man.

Subsequent scholastic philosophy, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, added little to the clarification of metaethical problems, but it probed further into the relation between intellect and will as sources of human and divine action. John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308), William of Ockham (c. 1285–1349), and Nicholas of Autrecourt (fl. c. 1335) developed the voluntaristic doctrine that the will is free in a more absolute sense than that accounted for by Aquinas, in that it is independent both of external causality and of determination by the intellect—that is, by the agent's knowledge of what is right and good. Their view in one way strengthened the case for religious faith as against scientific reason, at least in matters of ethical judgment, but, in another way, it helped stimulate an attitude of individualism and independence of authority that prepared the ground for the secular and humanistic ethics of the modern age.

EARLY MODERN ETHICS

Philosophy seems to flourish best in periods of rapid social transformation, when the conceptual framework of a culture crumbles, requiring a re-examination of basic concepts, principles, and standards of value. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which saw the demise of medieval feudalism and ushered in the modern age of industrial democracy, were, like the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., a period of intense philosophical ferment. In both cases, the preceding century witnessed the demolition of traditional beliefs, while the succeeding century was one of systematic reconstruction. The development of commerce and industry, the discovery of new regions of the world, the Reformation, the Copernican and Galilean revolutions in science, and the rise of strong secular governments demanded new principles of individual conduct and of social organization.

In the sixteenth century, Francis Bacon demolished the logic and methodology of medieval Scholasticism. Erasmus, Luther, and Calvin, while attempting to strengthen the bond between religion and ethics, undermined the elaborate structure of canon law based on the moral authority of the medieval church, and Machiavelli dynamited the bridge between religious ethics and political science. The task of reconstruction in philosophy was performed in the seventeenth century by Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz, Spinoza, and Locke.

Hobbes. Modern ethical theory began with Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). The advent of Galilean natural science had challenged the traditional notions, supported by authority, of purpose, plan, and value in the physical world; it cast into doubt the doctrine of natural law and nullified the anthropomorphic assumptions of theology. New standards of ethical judgment had to be found, not in the cosmic plan of nature or in scriptural revelations of the divine will but in man himself, either in his biological structure, or in his agreements with his fellow men, or in the social and political institutions that he creates. Thus were born, simultaneously and to the same parent, the ethical philosophies of naturalism, cultural relativism, and subjectivism, respectively.

Born in a time of international and domestic strife, Hobbes regarded the preservation of life as the paramount goal of human action and constructed his system of ethics and political science in his major work, *Leviathan*, with the principle of self-preservation as its cornerstone. His enthusiasm for Galileo's physics and his conviction that all fields of knowledge could be modeled on this universal science (following the method of Euclid's geometry) may have suggested to him that the drive to self-preservation is the biological analogue of the Galilean principle of inertia. Hobbes conceived of man as a complex system of particles in motion and attempted to deduce ethical laws from the principle of self-preservation. He offers, however, two formulations of this principle, the first of which is his foundation of ethics, while the second is, in effect, the repudiation of ethics.

The tendency to self-preservation, according to Hobbes, expresses itself in the quest for social harmony through peace-keeping institutions and practices or, alternatively, in the aggressive drive toward power over one's fellow men. Thus he formulates his "first and fundamental" principle in two parts, the "law of nature" to the effect that "Every man ought to endeavor to peace as far as he has hope of obtaining it," and the "right of nature," that "when he cannot obtain it, he may seek and use all the helps and advantages of war." Which of these two forms of the principle of self-preservation should be applied depends, for Hobbes, on whether the agent finds, himself in a well-organized society or in a "state of nature" in which he cannot expect cooperative behavior on the part of his fellow men. Thus, the concept of ethical law applies to social agreements and commitments, while that of rights applies to the exercise of natural powers. In the state of nature one has a right to do whatever one has the power to do.

From his fundamental law of nature, Hobbes derives a number of specific rules that prescribe the means of establishing and maintaining a peaceful society, the primary means being the willingness to make or, if already made, to maintain the social contract in which individual rights or powers are surrendered to a sovereign in return for the guarantee of personal security. The state is thus the artificial creation of reasonable men, a "Leviathan" that maintains peace by means of power relinquished to it by

its citizens. Once such a commonwealth has been established by contract or conquest, other general rules of conduct follow in accordance with Hobbes's theory of psychology. To restrain the natural human tendencies to envy, mistrust, self-aggrandizement, and aggression, the virtues of accommodation, gratitude, clemency, obedience to authority, and respect for the equal rights of others are recommended by "laws of nature" as effective means of ensuring social harmony.

Reason and ethical laws. Hobbes's use of the term "laws of nature" in referring to ethical principles is to be distinguished sharply from the medieval concept of natural law that he rejected. There is, for Hobbes, no moral order in the cosmos, nor any natural prompting toward justice and sympathy for others in human nature. Man, like the rest of nature, is a system of particles perpetually moving and colliding in accordance with physical laws whereby direction and intensity of motion are determined solely by preponderance of force. Yet reason plays a role in human action that distinguishes man from the rest of the world machine. Ethical rules are "precepts, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life or taketh away the means of preserving the same."

In his mechanistic physiology, Hobbes explained reason as a mechanical process in the brain consisting in the combining and separating particles that serve as representations of objects and qualities; thus, cognitive processes are a special type of physical process, governed by the same laws. But on this mechanistic view of man, it is difficult for Hobbes to account for the prescriptive character he attributes to ethical laws as distinguished from physical laws. Throughout his discussion, Hobbes vacillates between a conception of ethics as a branch of physical science that describes the behavior of human mechanisms and the quite different conception of ethics as rational advice on how to get along with one's fellow men by consciously restraining one's aggressive impulses. Both sides of the *nomos–phusis* controversy between the Sophists and Plato are represented in Hobbes's thought, and he cites both social authority and prudential reason as sources of ethical obligation. Moral virtue consists in conformity to custom and law, in opposition to the natural aggressiveness that equips a man for survival in the state of nature, yet the "precepts found out by reason" provide a natural basis for the establishment of customs and laws.

Desire and will. Hobbes's account of desire and will is designed to bridge the gap between rational directives and physical laws. He defines good as "any object of desire" and desire as the motion toward an object that results from physiological processes ("endeavors") within the body. To act rationally does not entail freedom to act contrary to one's physiological impulses, since rationality or deliberation is simply the mediating processes of the central nervous system. The will is not a supernatural power controlling desires but simply the last stage of deliberation that eventuates in overt action, and thus is itself a neurological process governed by laws of physics. Freedom of the will from causal influences is, for Hobbes, a senseless combination of concepts; freedom is the "absence of external impediments" to the will. It is the person who is free or unfree, and not his will, since his freedom consists in the determination of his overt actions by his will rather than by external forces. Yet this mechanistic account of the will seems in paradoxical contrast with his subjectivist account of civil law as deriving its obligatory force from the arbitrary will of the sovereign, an account which comes dangerously close to the Aristotelian and Augustinian notions of the will as a "first cause."

Naturalism and nonnaturalism. The importance of Hobbes to modern ethical theory is inestimable. In freeing ethics from bondage to revealed theology and its anthropomorphic view of nature, Hobbes brought philosophy back to the problems with which it had begun to wrestle in the time of Socrates and the Sophists, and of which it had lost sight for a millennium. At the same time, he raised the understanding of these problems to a higher level, profiting both from the Christian insight that moral principles have an obligatory force and from the refinements of scientific method introduced by Bacon, Galileo, and Descartes.

If ethics was to become a body of reliable knowledge, it must be grounded on objective laws of psychology and biology, rather than on tradition, sentiment, and church authority. On the other hand, if nature and its scientific description are ethically neutral, then ethics is to be contrasted with science and purged of references to nature, just as natural science must be purged of references to ethical values. In that case, ethical principles must be understood as subjective expressions of emotion and desire, and not as objectively verifiable laws. This dilemma has plagued philosophy ever since, and, if it was not resolved by Hobbes, at least his thought was not completely impaled on either horn but only a bit on both.

Early intuitionists. Reaction to Hobbes's attack on the objectivity of ethical judgment was immediate. The doctrine of natural law and its vision of nature as a moral system were defended in a new form by a group of scholars at Cambridge who became known as the Cambridge Platonists, principally Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688) and Henry More (1614–1687). They maintained that moral principles are self-evident truths, as certain and immutable as the laws of mathematics. Richard Cumberland (1631–1718) attempted to deduce all the principles of ethics from a single "Law of Nature" that later became the cornerstone of utilitarian ethics, namely, the law that all actions should promote the common good. Nicholas Malebranche (1638–1715) developed the Cartesian theory of ethics as a deductive system but gave it an Augustinian slant, attributing to God the sole power to translate knowledge of ethical truth into action. Malebranche realized that the analogy between ethics and mathematics fails to explain the connection between ethics and action, and so he made a virtue of this defect by means of his "Occasionalist" account of causality as divine intervention. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) developed an intuitionist theory of "natural religion" similar to that of Cudworth and More, holding that the quality of right or "fitness" is an intrinsic property of actions that the mind can perceive as directly as it perceives geometrical relations.

Spinoza. Born in the Netherlands of Jewish refugees from the Spanish Inquisition, Benedict Spinoza

(1632–1677) combined Descartes's faith in the capacity of reason to govern action with Hobbes's mechanistic theory of psychology to express a scientific vision of nature as a unified system of laws. In his *Ethics Demonstrated in the Geometric Manner* Spinoza, like Hobbes but with more formal precision, derived the principles of physics, psychology, and ethics from metaphysical axioms.

The first principle of psychology for Spinoza, as for Hobbes, is the drive to self-preservation and self-aggrandizement, corresponding to the physical principle of inertia. But Spinoza's unique achievement was to derive, as the logical corollary of this egoistic psychology, a rational, humane, and cultivated way of life. A strict determinist in his metaphysics and a thorough naturalist in his ethics, Spinoza held that every event is deducible from antecedent causes and concluded that ethical right is identical with causal necessity. The rules of conduct are therefore laws of human nature, obeyed by all but obeyed blindly by the selfish person enslaved by his passions while understood and accepted by the free man who, in achieving a vision of the necessary order of all things, experiences the "intellectual love of God" that provides both happiness and moral virtue.

While Spinoza tried more consistently than Hobbes to reduce ethics to psychology and thus to make it a branch of natural science, it has often been contended that his program was self-defeating. For if men cannot help acting in accordance with their desires, and if nothing is objectively good or bad but only appears so to those who do not understand the necessity of all events, then what sense can there be to either prudential or moral rules of conduct? Having banished values from nature, Spinoza, like Hobbes, had to relocate them in human consciousness. But then consciousness must be either a supranatural force that interrupts the causal order of nature—as it was for Descartes—or a part of nature and thus ethically neutral, in which case ethics becomes senseless; or, finally, consciousness is an illusory reflection of physical processes in the body, in which case ethics, too, is illusory. Spinoza and Hobbes vacillated between the last two alternatives although, as we have seen, Hobbes's prescriptivist account of moral right as stemming from the will of an authority may be suspected of having slipped an element of supranatural agency back into the picture.

In their social and political theories, both Spinoza and Hobbes argued for the appraisal of institutions and policies in terms of the satisfaction of human needs rather than of conformity to religious tradition. But Hobbes's conception of force as the basis of law led him to support political authoritarianism, while Spinoza's identification of value and right with rational self-interest enabled him to argue, like Locke, for representative government and maximum civil liberty.

Locke. John Locke (1632–1704) is generally regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism, although his applications of utilitarian ethics to social and political theory were more influential than his analysis of standards of individual conduct. He combined the mathematical model of ethical judgment suggested by Descartes and the Cambridge Platonists with a hedonistic theory of psychology according to which pleasure is the goal of all human action

and consequently is the fundamental standard of evaluation. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke criticizes the doctrine of innate ideas of Descartes and Leibniz, in defense of the principle that all knowledge is founded on experience; he then, somewhat paradoxically, offers an account of ethics as a deductive science in which specific rules of conduct are derived "from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences as incontestable as those in mathematics." The appearance of paradox dissolves, however, on noting that, for Locke, the formation of the ideas of goodness and justice is due to the sensations of pleasure and pain, and thus ethical *concepts* are derived from experience although their logical relations are then discoverable by reflective analysis.

Locke follows Hobbes in defining good as the object of desire, but then, assuming that the only property of things which provokes desire is their tendency to produce pleasure or reduce pain, he also defines good as "what has an aptness to produce pleasure in us." Again, like Hobbes, Locke defines moral virtue as conformity to custom and law, but he differs from Hobbes in maintaining that custom and law can in turn be evaluated by the more fundamental standards of utility and natural rights. It is in terms of these more basic standards that Locke justifies representative government and civil liberty.

Locke's main contribution to the clarification of the meaning of ethical concepts was in his distinction between "speculative" and "practical" principles. Speculative knowledge is independent of action, while practical principles (including ethical principles) can be said to be believed and known to be true only insofar as they are acted upon. This distinction accounts for the obligatory force of ethical principles and eliminates the need for a supernatural agency, "free will," to translate belief into action, although it makes it difficult to explain why, if practical principles are "self-evident propositions," we do not all behave in a morally impeccable way. Like Hobbes, Locke ridicules the notion of free will as a semantical absurdity similar to the questions "whether sleep be swift or virtue square." Will is the power of the mind to decide on action, and freedom the power to carry out one's decisions, that is, to get what one wants.

Moral-sense theories. The seventeenth-century philosophers found the connection between self-interest and morality in the threat of punishment—divine, natural, or civil—that coerces the individual to be moral for the sake of self-interest. But it was soon noticed that this connection breaks down wherever the expected benefit to the individual of immoral conduct outweighs the likelihood of punishment and that, if morality is grounded in psychology, then human nature cannot be as aggressively self-centered as the apostles of self-preservation and pursuit of pleasure maintained.

The third earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) and Francis Hutcheson (1694–1747) proposed that moral obligation has its source in benevolent affections, such as love and pity, that are as natural and universal as the more aggressive tendencies ("self-affections"), such as envy, greed, and the impulse to self-preservation. Moreover, there is a "moral sense" in man that finds unique satisfaction in actions directed toward the common good. This moral

sensibility turns us from the pursuit of pleasure toward the performance of duties toward others and explains our admiration of self-sacrifice independently of external reward or punishment.

Bernard Mandeville (c. 1670–1733), in *The Fable of the Bees*, defended egoistic psychology against this attack and ridiculed the concept of moral conscience as a hypocritical device for maintaining social privileges, a view later echoed by Holbach, Marx, and Nietzsche. Bishop Joseph Butler (1692–1752), whose sermons in defense of Christian morality against the cynicism of Hobbes and Mandeville reveal extraordinary analytical power, argued that benevolence and conscience are as deeply rooted in human nature as is self-love. In adding conscience or intuition of duty to benevolence as the psychological source of moral obligation, Butler lessened the stress of earlier moral-sense theorists on emotion and gave more recognition to the role of rational judgment.

Moral-sense theory, refined further by David Hartley (1705–1757) and Adam Smith (1723–1790), who applied utilitarian ethics to economic theory, achieved its most persuasive formulation in the writings of David Hume.

Hume. David Hume (1711–1776), like Hartley and Smith, combined an emotional account of morality with a utilitarian theory of good. Hume's discussions of ethics in the third part of his *A Treatise of Human Nature* and, more fully, in his *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* are attempts to answer the metaethical questions of the meaning of good, right, justice, and virtue; by what standards they are attributed to persons and actions; how it is psychologically possible for men to admire and cultivate morality at the expense of self-interest; and by what rules ethical disputes can be decided in favor of one judgment against another. Despite the clarity and good sense that Hume brings to bear on these topics, his discussion shifts inadvertently from one type of question to another, particularly from questions of meaning to questions of motivation, a shift characteristic of moral-sense theories.

Hume begins his studies of ethical judgment with a search for the meanings of ethical terms. Finding no observable facts or logical relations that answer to our concepts of goodness, justice, and moral virtue, Hume concludes that the function of ethical terms is not to denote qualities or relations but to convey a "sentiment of approbation," so that their meaning is to be found in the feelings of the judge rather than in the object judged. We call things good for the same reason that we call them beautiful: because we find them agreeable. An object is good if it is immediately pleasant, or if it is a useful means for attaining something else that is pleasant. Virtues are qualities that render a person agreeable or useful to himself or to others, whether they are "natural virtues" such as talent, wit, and benevolence or "artificial virtues" like honesty and justice. While judgments as to what is useful in producing pleasure, insofar as they rest on knowledge of causal facts, are within the competence of reason, nevertheless they depend, for their distinctively ethical import, on feeling or taste, since rational knowledge alone is "not sufficient" to produce any moral blame or approbation. "Utility is only a tendency to a certain end; and were the end totally indifferent to us, we should feel the same

indifference toward the means. It is requisite a certain *sentiment* should here display itself . . ." (*Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix I).

Thus, according to Hume, there are two possible grounds or standards of evaluation, utility and feeling, the one objective and subject to rational confirmation, the other subjective and personal. The objective standard, unfortunately, applies only to instrumental values and not to ultimate ends. However, the subjectivity of feelings is not cause for despair about achieving agreement on ethical judgments, since the sentiment that motivates them, the disinterested pleasure and approval that we feel in contemplating actions directed toward the welfare of others, is, for Hume as for Butler, a universal tendency in human nature.

Moral reasons and psychological motives. In common with Hobbes and Locke, who justified moral conduct by the fear of punishment, and the earlier moral-sense theorists, who explained moral obligation in terms of the benevolent affections, Hume identifies the psychological motives that influence and often prejudice moral judgments with the logical grounds or reasons for moral judgments. From the premise that, were it not for our natural benevolence, we would not care enough about moral issues to make moral judgments, Hume draws the *non sequitur* that the only evidence that supports such judgments lies in the feeling of approval or disapproval that motivates them.

Hume tends to equate moral virtue with the artificial quality of justice, artificial because it is required only for the protection of property rights in a society in which goods are neither too scarce nor sufficiently abundant. The importance for social harmony of strict conformity to laws renders it dangerous and undersirable to make exceptions in the name of expediency. Consequently, the utility of strict justice outweighs the utility of any possible exceptions. But Hume realized that this rather abstract utilitarian consideration can hardly explain our sense of moral obligation and our admiration for those who demonstrate high moral character. He therefore supplements this account with the notion of "disinterested interest" that resembles the rational moral sense appealed to by Butler, Price, and Reid (see below).

However, Hume is not positing any occult faculty, for he explains disinterested moral approbation as a combination of the natural quality of sympathy for others (pain at witnessing another's pain) and the habit of following rules. Since natural sympathy alone would lead us into injustices and considerations of utility alone would seem to justify exceptions to general rules, we come to agree on general principles of conduct and transfer to these principles the sentiment of approbation that we originally felt toward the happiness or release from pain usually produced by following such principles. Thus arises the sense of moral duty and the capacity for disinterested approval. Here again, Hume offers a psychological description of the motivating processes that cause us to approve of moral virtue as an answer to the question of what criteria we use to judge persons and actions to be worthy of moral approval. Once this identity of psychological motive and logical ground is presupposed, it becomes impossible to distinguish between correct and incorrect moral judgments. The ques-

tion as to whether action that meets with general approbation actually merits such approbation cannot even be raised, since merit has already been identified with the mere fact of approbation.

Freedom. On the issue of free will and its relation to moral responsibility, Hume argued persuasively that responsibility presupposes the causal efficacy of threat of punishment. He developed further the arguments of Hobbes and Locke that freedom is not a quality of the will but a relation between desire, action, and environment, such that a man is free when his actions are caused by his own desires and unimpeded by external restraints, a view that William James later baptized "soft determinism."

Common-sense intuitionism. Hume's subjective account of moral judgment was countered by the common-sense intuitionism of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) and Richard Price (1723–1791), who explained the moral sense, or conscience, that enables man to distinguish right from wrong as a combination of benevolent emotion and rational intuition. Both argued, like Butler, that moral principles are not in need of utilitarian justification but are as natural to man as self-love and desire for pleasure. Reid argued that moral qualities are as directly perceived as physical properties are and thus exist in the object judged rather than in the feelings of the subject who judges. Ethics is as much a matter of objective fact as science is, except that its principles are self-evident and can be discovered by "common sense" alone, uncorrupted by bad philosophy. Reid also defended the belief in freedom of the will as the ground of moral responsibility, arguing that we are introspectively aware of our ability to choose between good and evil independently of our desires.

The French Enlightenment. Ethical thought in eighteenth-century France paralleled developments in Great Britain, although the French philosophers failed to establish as strong traditions as their British contemporaries. French thought subsequent to the eighteenth century added little to moral philosophy as compared with that of Germany and Great Britain. Due to their intense involvement in political issues, the French writers placed rhetorical effectiveness above clarity and consistency as a standard of philosophical value.

Voltaire (François Marie Arouet, 1694–1778) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) led the revolt against Cartesian rationalism as well as against political and religious superstition, so transforming philosophy into ideology that *idéologue* became a popular French synonym for *philosophe*. Voltaire employed acid satire in attacking religious and philosophical obscurantism in *Candide*, *Zadig*, and his *Philosophical Dictionary*, while Rousseau inaugurated the romantic style of soul-stirring emotional intensity, in place of detached analysis and rigorous argument. Denis Diderot (1713–1784) raised philosophical writing to the highest level of literary grace and subtlety since Plato, criticizing conventional morality and religious beliefs in his remarkable essay-novels *Le Neveu de Rameau*, *Jacques le fataliste*, and *Rêve de d'Alembert*. Yet while appreciating their extraordinary intellectual qualities and the permanence of their place in Western culture, it must be noted that they provided few new concepts and principles on which later ethical philosophers could build.

Rousseau. Rousseau's celebrated exaltation of untutored human nature in his two *Discourses* attributed genial and cooperative tendencies to man's innate disposition and aggressively self-serving tendencies to the harmful influence of civilization. This coincided with the British moral-sense theorists' attacks on Hobbesian egoism. However, unlike Hume (his friend and benefactor prior to their notorious public quarrel), Rousseau considered custom and law to be arbitrary restraints on natural impulses rather than rational methods of channeling self-interest toward the common good. Whatever justification can be given for control of the individual by social institutions lay, for Rousseau, in their claim to represent the "general will," that is, the desires of the majority, independently of whether what is so desired is good. While Rousseau argued forcefully, in *The Social Contract*, for popular sovereignty and the right of revolution, he justified the use by the state of extremely repressive measures, such as the death penalty for atheism. His rather mystical notion of the state as the embodiment of the general will helped to inspire the overthrow in France of absolute monarchy in favor of representative government, yet half a century later it was employed by Fichte, and a century after that by Lenin, in the justification of authoritarianism.

Although Rousseau's religious mysticism and his preference for feeling over rational prudence were contrary to the general tone of the Enlightenment, his most lasting contribution to ethical philosophy was his insistence that good and evil tendencies are due to social causes, a principle that he shared with Montesquieu, Voltaire, and the Encylopedists. The soundness of this principle is subject to question, but there can be no doubt that it served as a useful guide in the reform of social institutions.

Montesquieu. Charles Louis de Secondat, baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu (1689–1755), in *The Spirit of the Laws* founded the relativistic conception of moral and political principles as grounded in the traditions of particular societies. The "spirit of the laws" is the system of social practices in relation to which new laws are to be evaluated. Western European governments require a division of functions and compensating checks and balances to fulfill the partly republican, partly monarchical values of European society. In treating values as historical and sociological facts, rather than as divine principles or natural laws, Montesquieu developed further the scientific approach to ethics and politics begun by Machiavelli and Hobbes.

The Encyclopedists. Denis Diderot, Claude Helvétius (1715–1771), and Baron Paul Dietrich d'Holbach (1723–1789) derived, from a materialistic theory of nature, an ethical view based on the self-centered pursuit of pleasure as the sole rational motive for action. A well-ordered society, on their view, is one in which the pursuit of personal well-being is unhindered by social authority. Insofar as there are conflicts between morality and self-interest, these are due to defects of social organization and perverse education, rather than to the moral defects of individuals. These Encyclopedists, and kindred spirits in other countries, such as the Italian legal philosopher Beccaria, employed utilitarian moral theory in political campaigns for representative government and humane laws and punishments.

Kant and the German Enlightenment. The Enlightenment attack on tradition and authority in favor of individual reason took a nonutilitarian form in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). The utilitarians identified reason with practical intelligence in the pursuit of happiness. Kant, however, inherited the Cartesian and Leibnizian conception of reason as the intellectual recognition of abstract truths. In fashioning an ethical theory that became the main rival of utilitarianism, Kant combined the Augustinian emphasis, revived by Butler, Price, and Reid, on the internal sense of moral obligation with the rationalistic ideal of knowledge as a deductive system. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he attempted to show that the laws of science are imposed by the mind on the objects of its perceptions and can thus be known with certainty through reflection on the a priori structure of knowledge. In his *Critique of Practical Reason* he applied the same analysis to ethics, founding morality on the a priori laws with which "practical reason" regulates action. While Kant defended religious faith against the utilitarian freethinkers, he shared their view that ethics is independent of theology, and he followed the deistic tradition of interpreting God as a scientific and ethical ideal, rather than as a supernatural source of revelation and authority.

In his most influential work on ethics, *The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant made the most thorough attempt by any philosopher to clarify and explain the difference between ethical principles and laws of nature. The difference lies both in our subjective sense of obligation to obey moral laws, as contrasted with laws of nature, toward which we feel no such obligation, and in the practical—that is, prescriptive—meaning of moral laws, in contrast with the "theoretical"—that is, descriptive—meaning of laws of nature. In virtue of this difference, moral rules are expressed in the imperative mood and laws of nature in the declarative mood. To account for this disparity, Kant distinguished two realms of knowledge dealing with two metaphysically distinct subject matters. Natural science, including scientific psychology, formulates laws of nature that the mind imposes on the objects of perception in accordance with the principle of causal determinism. Ethics articulates the "laws of freedom" that a rational being imposes on his own actions and expects other rational beings to recognize and obey. The justification for these rules lies in the logical fact that to be rational means to act in accordance with general rules and that moral rules are those which can be followed consistently by all rational beings. Thus, insofar as man is moral, he is rational and, in this sense, free; insofar as he is immoral, he is an irrational slave to his natural inclinations. The reward of virtue is not happiness but dignity and freedom.

Moral virtue: the supreme good. Kant's system of ethics is built on three pillars: the examination of the facts of moral experience, the analysis of the logic of ethical judgment, and the formulation of the metaphysical principles presupposed by ethical judgments, as distinct from scientific generalizations. In the first part of the *Foundations* Kant argues, like Reid, that common-sense reflection, uncorrupted by the dialectics of philosophers, informs us with unwavering certainty that duty is distinct from pleasure and utility, that moral virtue or "good will" is the supreme good to which all other values are subordinate, and that moral worth is not measured either by the consequences of a person's actions or by his natural benevolence but by the agent's intention to obey moral laws.

Categorical imperatives. In the second section of the *Foundations*, Kant attempts to explain the distinctive character of moral laws by clarifying the logical differences between three types of rules or imperatives: technical "rules of skill," prudential "counsels" as to how to achieve happiness, and moral duties. The first two, he argues, are "hypothetical imperatives" whose directives are contingent on the desires of the agent. Naturalistic ethics mistakes counsels of prudence for moral laws because the desire for happiness is so universal that directives toward this end have the superficial appearance of unconditional laws. But the generalization that all men seek happiness is a law of nature, not a rule commanding action, and the very possibility of a moral code entails that this psychological generalization is subject to exception. For moral duty requires that the agent sacrifice his personal happiness and even the welfare of his community rather than violate a "categorical imperative."

A moral or genuinely categorical imperative is a rule that commands a type of action independently of any desired end, including happiness. Kant accepts the utilitarian account of hypothetical imperatives but argues that the peculiar obligatoriness of moral principles can be explained only by their unrestricted universality and thus by their independence of any facts of human nature or circumstance. It is not in virtue of what satisfies human needs, but in virtue of the demand of reason that action be in accordance with universal law, that we feel obligated to obey moral principles.

Universalizability criterion. To the question of whether any rule of action can qualify as a moral principle, Kant's answer was in the negative. He maintained that there is one general or "fundamental" categorical imperative from which all specific moral duties can be derived: "Act only on that maxim which you can will to be a universal law." All maxims or specific rules of conduct can be judged morally right or wrong according to this general criterion. If universal obedience to a proposed rule would contradict the very purpose of the rule, as is the case for rules that under certain circumstances permit lying, stealing, or taking life (somewhat inconsistently, Kant approved of capital punishment), then the rule cannot be part of a true moral code. In contrast, a rule such as "Do not make false promises" can in principle be followed without exception and thus qualifies as a moral duty.

This criterion of universalizability, that is, the logical or psychological possibility of requiring universal obedience to a rule of action (logical for "strict" duties and psychological for "meritorious" duties), was undoubtedly Kant's most original and important contribution to ethical theory. It expresses more precisely and unambiguously the "golden rule" to be found in all the great religions, and it has been incorporated, in one form or another, in most modern systems of ethical theory. Countless writers since Kant have attempted to reformulate the criterion of universalizability in a way sufficiently qualified to avoid reasonable objections, but without complete success.

The obvious objection to Kant's formulation is that no

one would want *any* specific rule of action to be followed without exception. No one would want the truth to be told on occasions when unmitigated harm would result—for example, when a murderer demands to know where his intended victim is hiding. Kant's own reply to this objection is that, while one may not be psychologically inclined to tell the truth on such occasions, there is no logical contradiction in willing—that is, commanding—that it be told, come what may.

A second objection is that Kant assumes, for any rule of action, that either it or its negation must be a moral law, and yet there are few rules, if any, which we would care to have followed universally in either positive or negative form. Kant argues that, since it would be self-defeating to will that every person may make false promises when it suits his purposes, we ought to will that false promises never be made. Yet on the same reasoning one could justify all sorts of absurd laws, such as that everyone at all times wear heavy clothing, since we would not and could not will the universal prohibition of heavy clothing.

A third weakness of Kant's theory is that it provides no grounds for deciding what is right in a situation where apparent moral duties collide and one must be sacrificed in favor of another. With respect to this problem, utilitarianism seems clearly superior to Kantian ethics.

Autonomy of the will. The third part of Kant's ethical theory consists in the metaphysical account of the rational will as a source of action outside the sphere of causal determinism and thus not an object of scientific investigation. The autonomy of the will—that is, the capacity to obey laws of its own conception in defiance of natural causes—is, Kant argues, a necessary presupposition of any moral code. For if all actions were necessary effects of natural causes, then moral evaluation would be pointless. "Ought" implies "can," that is, the obligation to do what is right entails the ability to do it and the ability not to do it. Since science rests on the regulative principle of universal determinism, there can be no scientific proof of freedom of the will. But this only shows the radical difference between science and ethics and the folly of attempting to derive ethics from psychology. Man as an object of scientific inquiry is an organic phenomenon obeying laws of biology and psychology. But man as an object of ethical evaluation is a noumenal being, free to obey or disobey the dictates of practical reason. From this dual conception of man as both inside and outside nature, Kant derives an ideal way of life impressive in its purity and its faith in human perfectibility. Man as a rational agent is a member of a "kingdom of ends" in which he is both subject and sovereign, legislating for himself and for others. The highest goal of human life is to realize this ideal "kingdom" in individual and social practice.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY ETHICS

Nineteenth-century ethical thought became a battleground for two rival traditions. Utilitarianism, stemming from Locke, Hume, and the French Encyclopedists, dominated British and French philosophy, while idealistic ethics was supreme in Germany and Italy. Both traditions took root in the United States, with idealism appealing to the religious vision of Emerson and Royce, while utilitarianism answered to the developing faith in technology that found philosophical expression toward the end of the century in the pragmatic ethics of James and Dewey.

Utilitarianism. Christian ethics based on divine authority and natural law was given a utilitarian interpretation by William Paley (1743–1805) in his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*. The source of moral obligation, he agreed with Hobbes, lies in the "violent motive resulting from the command of another," while the ground of goodness is pleasure or utility. But moral duty and self-interest coincide because God, as the paramount authority, commands us through the Scriptures and the promptings of conscience to seek the general good as well as our own happiness. Moral obligation is supported both by natural pleasure in the welfare of others and by the fear of divine punishment which provides the selfish but rational person with a good reason to sacrifice his pleasure for the common good. Paley's psychological account of morality, like that of earlier moral-sense theories, failed to explain why anyone who lacks natural benevolence ought to have it. His alternative justification of morality in terms of the fear of divine punishment equally fails to explain why such punishment would be just and why a nonbenevolent nonbeliever in Christian theology can nevertheless be expected to behave morally.

Bentham. The mainstream of utilitarian thought was anticlerical. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and James Mill (1773–1836) formed a political movement that helped bring about legislative reforms by criticizing social institutions in terms of their utility in producing "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." In his influential *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham formulated a theory of ethics and jurisprudence remarkable for its clarity and consistency. The great appeal of Bentham's theory lay in its apparent simplicity and ease of application, although these virtues may have been more apparent than real. Bentham attempted to make ethics and politics scientifically verifiable disciplines by formulating quantitative standards of evaluation. He began with the psychological generalization that all actions are motivated by the desire for pleasure and the fear of pain: "Nature hath placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne" (*Principles*, London, 1823, p. 1). From this equation between ethical obligation and psychological necessity, Bentham derived the general principle of utility which "approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question" (*ibid.*), happiness being understood as the predominance of pleasure over pain.

The most original but also the most dubious part of Bentham's theory is his "hedonic calculus" for measuring pleasures and pains, in computing the over-all value of alternative policies. If such a procedure were feasible, ethical judgments would be as scientific as meteorological

forecasts, even though both are subject to considerable error, due to the complexity of the factors involved. But Bentham's ideal of a science of ethics runs afoul of two internal difficulties, the resistance of pleasure to measurement and the impossibility of predicting the long-range consequences of actions. Aside from these internal defects, there remains the general objection that pleasure, unlike pain, is not a bodily sensation but a favorable response to an object grounded on the perception of value in the object, as Thomas Reid had argued. To conclude that an object is good from the fact that it pleases us involves the circular reasoning that it is good because it is judged to be good, a principle too vacuous to provide a guide to ethical judgment. If, on the other hand, pleasure is understood in a more narrow, technical sense as desirable bodily sensations, then Bentham's identification of happiness and welfare with pleasure is unacceptable because it reduces human experience to the level of animal existence. The plausibility of Bentham's theory may be due to the ease with which he shifts inadvertently from one of these senses of "pleasure" to the other.

Despite its theoretical defects, Benthamite utilitarianism, which was more socially oriented than that of Locke and Hume, had a salutary effect on social legislation. His analysis of pleasures into factors of intensity, duration, propinquity, certainty, fecundity, and "extent" (number of persons affected) offered reasonable criteria by which alternative social programs and laws can be evaluated and was a marked improvement over the sanctification of existing laws and customs by which Hobbes, Locke, and Hume had made the transition from self-interest to morality. But there is a missing link in Bentham's chain of reasoning that may not be reparable within the confines of his hedonistic psychology, namely, the link that should connect the desire for one's own pleasure with the willingness to consider "extent" or pleasure of others in deciding on a course of action. Is desire for the pleasure of others also a "sovereign master under which nature hath placed us?" If so, then desire for one's own pleasure cannot be sovereign as well. If not, then on what ground are we required to consider the factor of extent?

Mill. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) recognized the defects in Bentham's formulation of utilitarianism, and in his essay "Utilitarianism" he offered a more sophisticated version that sought to incorporate the moral insights of rival ethical systems. Realizing that Bentham's emphasis on quantitative aspects of pleasure reduces pleasure to bodily sensation and tends to justify an uncultivated mode of life, Mill proposed a new factor by which pleasures could be compared, the factor of quality. Some pleasurable experiences, notably intellectual, aesthetic, and moral achievements, are qualitatively superior to the satisfaction of bodily needs: "Better to be Socrates unsatisfied than to be a fool satisfied." But like Epicurus' preference for "natural" over "unnatural" pleasures, Mill's criterion of quality introduces a standard of value other than pleasure, by which pleasure itself can be evaluated, and thus contradicts the principle of utility, that pleasure is the single standard of good.

Mill also tried to make room in utilitarian theory for the appreciation of the saintly virtues, renunciation and self-sacrifice, by arguing along Humean lines that such virtues are originally valued for their social utility but that we later become attached to them for their own sake, and that this psychological shift from appreciation of virtue as a social instrument to admiration of virtue for itself is a good tendency because it, too, is socially useful. For the appreciation of moral qualities independently of their immediate consequences ensures the social reliability of the agent and, in the long run, produces more good than harm. This utilitarian defense of moral principles rested on an optimistic belief in the generally beneficial tendencies of man. In applying it to political theory, Mill argued for democratic institutions, minimum state interference in social life, and free economic competition. Assuming a general convergence of individual and social benefit, Mill, like Hume and Bentham, left unanswered the question why, in cases of conflict, one *ought* to place public over private interest and confined himself to explaining why we admire the person who does so. Yet if the social utility of moral self-sacrifice is the only rational ground for favorable judgment of it, then it would seem to follow that each of us has reason to approve of self-sacrifice in others but not in himself. If the step from individual happiness to the greatest good for the greatest number is justified only by the long-range coincidence of the two, then whenever we are assured that they will not coincide, we have no reason to prefer public welfare to our own other than the irrational habit of doing so, a habit which, in such case, it would be wise to break. In Kantian terms, utilitarianism, even in Mill's sophisticated version, fails to provide a logical bridge between inclination and obligation, between "is" and "ought."

Later intuitionists, beginning with Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900), attempted to supply this bridge by combining the Kantian theory of rational duty with the utilitarian theory of value, maintaining that we are intuitively aware of the duty to obey moral principles at the expense of self-interest but that moral principles, in turn, are justified by their utility in promoting the common good.

Idealist ethics. Kant's distinction between man as noumenon, legislating and obeying "laws of freedom," and man as phenomenon, governed by laws of nature, was incorporated into new ethical systems by later German idealists, who assimilated the phenomenal side of the distinction to a part of the noumenal side, making natural science subordinate to ethics. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) extended the noumenal will into a universal force that creates the material world out of its own force and expresses itself partially in the free rational will of the individual conscience but more fully in social institutions and laws. The individual thus achieves self-realization in identifying himself with the universal will and voluntarily accepting his *Beruf* (vocation) as part of the social order.

Fichte. In his early work *Wissenschaftslehre (Theory of Science*, 1794) Fichte enlarged Kant's ethical concept of man into a metaphysical picture of the universe. Rejecting Kant's notion of things-in-themselves, Fichte reduced reality to the projections of an absolute mind, and he reduced mind itself to will. The criterion of reality became a practical one: that is real which it is right or good to believe and to act upon (the beginning of pragmatism).

Fichte went even further than Kant in stressing moral duty as the goal of life. Kant had sharply separated duty from self-interest in criticizing positions of the kind later referred to as utilitarianism, but Fichte moved full circle by reidentifying moral duty with a higher form of self-interest, the self-realization of an absolute will of which each person is a temporary embodiment. The logical problem created by Fichte's voluntaristic idealism is caused by the fact that it begins with Kant's primacy of moral good over prudential good but concludes with a form of supernatural utilitarianism in which prudential good of a higher self reappears as the ground of morality.

Fichte explained the function of the state as the regulation of conflicts among individuals in protection of their natural rights, and on this basis he supported democratic government. But he advanced the view, later elaborated by Hegel, that governmental restraints on individual action are not limitations of personal freedom but expressions of the higher freedom of the absolute will.

In *The Vocation of Man* (1800) Fichte, who had been accused of atheism, developed a less rationalistic and more religious view of human life. He identified the absolute will with the personal God of Christianity and moral duty with the vocation imposed on man by God. In his later *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808) he applied his notion of divinely ordained vocation to the German nation, which he claimed was destined to raise civilization to a higher level. The evolution of Fichte's thought from austere moralism to religious mysticism and then to chauvinistic nationalism provides an instructive example of the lengths to which thought can go in denying the basic distinctions from which it begins, such as that between self-interest and moral duty or between individual rights and social restraints.

Hegel. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) developed Fichte's social basis of ethics further and in more historical terms. For Hegel value, morality, and law are among the highest forms of self-realization of absolute spirit. The Enlightenment doctrine of abstract rights is only the first stage in the development of ethical consciousness. A higher stage is reached in the Kantian sense of moral duty, which recognizes the conflict between individual rights and social responsibilities, subordinating the former to the latter. But the highest stage of self-realization of "objective mind" involves the incorporation of rights and duties in a rational system of social and political institutions which the individual citizen recognizes as the embodiment of the national will. The perfect freedom that consists in rational self-determination is achieved when individual conscience coincides with custom and law, so that will and reason, subjective motivation and objective necessity, become identical. But this is possible, according to Hegel, only in the modern age of the national state, Christian conscience, and constitutional law. In earlier stages of human history, whatever was necessary for historical progress was, for that age, necessary and therefore right, as, for example, the institution of slavery was necessary and right in ancient Greece. "World history," he declared, "is world justice."

Post-Hegelian theories. The impact of Darwin's theory of natural evolution produced naturalistic echoes of Hegelian historical relativism in the utilitarian "survival of the fittest" doctrine of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), the Marxist philosophy of class conflict, and the cultural elitism of Nietzsche.

Marx. Karl Marx (1818–1883) transformed Hegel's theory of the dialectical self-realization of mind into a doctrine of dialectical development of history through class conflict. In the Marxist theory, moral principles represent the sanctification of the interests of the ruling class at each stage in the development of progressively superior modes of economic organization. Marx criticized both utilitarian and Kantian ethics as variant expressions of bourgeois market-place procedures. Subordinating rules of individual conduct to the historical imperatives of "revolutionary praxis," the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels called for revolutionary action to achieve a classless society in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all," a society that would require neither the internal repressions of conscience nor the external repessions of laws and punishments. Both morality and the state would "wither away."

Schopenhauer. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), like Fichte, located the source of both egoistic pursuit of pleasure and moral obligation in the universal will. The morality of equal rights for all represents a higher development of consciousness than that of self-interest, but a still higher stage is reached in the philosophical understanding that the will, in any form, produces illusion and suffering and that the extinction of desire is the only salvation. Schopenhauer gave the Stoic and Buddhist ethic of ascetic renunciation an idealistic metaphysical basis.

Kierkegaard. Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) rejected the rationalistic and socially oriented ethic of Hegel in favor of religious individualism. While, like Hegel, he regarded the conflict between self-interest (the "aesthetic attitude") and duty (the "ethical attitude") as reconciled and transcended in a higher stage of consciousness, he denied that this stage could be achieved by reason and described it as a "leap of faith" preceded by tragic anguish. As the contemporary existentialists who have rediscovered Kierkegaard have put it, "The world is absurd" because there are no objective grounds for human decisions. What is right, according to Kierkegaard, is what the individual asserts with the total commitment born of faith, but it is right only for him. Emotional authenticity rather than conformity to rules is the proper guide to action.

Nietzsche. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) proposed a less mystical but equally individualistic transcendence of moral codes. Like Hobbes and Mandeville, he regarded altruism as contrary to natural impulse and denounced moral restraint as a device created by religion to contravene the natural order of dominance of the strong over the weak. The true source of value lies in the creative self-assertion of the artist and the man of genius who produce new and positive forms of good, while moral prohibitions produce only resentment, envy, and dull conformity.

American developments. In the United States, the transcendentalists, led by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) and the pragmatic idealist Josiah Royce (1855–1916), fashioned still other variations on the idealist theme of self-realization as the goal of human life. The transcendentalists identified the self with the creative force of nature, the "oversoul." Royce, following Hegel, defined the fully realized self as a unity of personal and community inter-

ests. All of these post-Hegelian philosophies rejected the Kantian morality of strict adherence to general rules of conduct and proposed ways of transcending the conflict between duty and self-interest through a higher mode of consciousness in which the conflict allegedly disappears.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, William James and John Dewey developed the philosophy of pragmatism, in which all of human knowledge is regarded as essentially ethical. They rejected both the Kantian separation of ethics from natural science and the traditional conception of scientific knowledge as disinterested contemplation of value-neutral truths. The split between value and fact was bridged by reinterpreting both so that they became indistinguishable. James (1842–1910) combined utilitarianism with a creative individualism similar to that of Nietzsche and the prescriptivism of Hobbes, by identifying the source of value with the human act of making a claim, thus bestowing value on the object claimed. Ethical judgment is a rational process of determining by empirical investigation which policies are likely to satisfy the maximum number of such claims. James defended the indeterminist concept of free will, criticizing what he called the soft determinism of Hume and Mill as a purely verbal escape from the embarrassing consequences of scientific determinism.

British idealism and intuitionism. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the vitality of idealism began to attract even the sober British intellect, and the ethics of self-realization became a powerful rival to utilitarianism through the influence of Green, Bosanquet, and Bradley.

Green. Thomas Hill Green (1836–1882) introduced Oxford students to the lofty vision of idealist metaphysics. In his *Prolegomena to Ethics* (published posthumously) Green derived liberal ethical and political principles from his conception of the individual self as part of a universal and divine self. He criticized both utilitarianism and moral-sense theories for downgrading the role of reason in moral judgment and for reducing human motives to natural causes. A motive, he argued, is a goal previsioned by a rational consciousness, not an event or process in the body. Value is therefore logically prior to desire rather than a product of desire. One can desire or find pleasure only in what one has judged to be good. The source of evil must therefore be found in defects of the understanding, in the failure of the human mind to realize its identity with the universal mind. The highest good is thus as much an object of self-interest as any other, but it is the kind of self-interest that also constitutes morality.

Green was active in social and political controversies, supporting the North in the American Civil War and supporting liberal legislation in England. Green rejected laissez-faire individualism, insisting on the more positive role of government in promoting social welfare.

Green's ethical theory was sharply criticized by Henry Sidgwick in *The Ethics of Green, Spencer and Martineau* (1902). Sidgwick argued that Green's identification of morality with higher self-interest obliterates the all-important distinction between prudence and duty and thus fails to provide a basis for moral responsibility, a defect that, as we have seen, goes all the way back to Plato.

Bosanquet. Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923), like Green, grounded ethics and politics on idealist metaphysics. Bo-

sanquet stressed somewhat more than Green the uniqueness of individual values while at the same time taking a Hegelian view of the state as the embodiment of objective mind. Like Green, Bosanquet actively supported liberal political causes.

Bradley. Francis H. Bradley (1846–1924), generally considered the most distinguished ethical theorist among the British idealists, criticized both utilitarianism and Kantian formalism and favored a Hegelian conception of the community as an organic unity whose needs, expressed in social institutions, transcend those of individual citizens, a conception which he applied in the defense of conservative social policies. Bradley was probably more consistent than Green and Bosanquet. If law and custom are the expression of a higher self, then only internal inconsistencies can justify reforms, and individual rights are subordinate to group or national interests. In his *Ethical Studies* (1876) Bradley supported retributive punishment on the ground (which he held to be self-evident to common sense) that punishment is unfair unless it is deserved and that moral desert is independent of social utility. He attempted to reconcile freedom with causal determinism in the notion of an all-encompassing Reality that determines itself in accordance with rational laws. Recognizing that idealism faces the problem of accounting for evil and that its traditional solution—claiming that evil does not exist— is contrary to the judgment of common sense on which Bradley himself always relied, he employed a subtle distinction between existence and reality in holding that evil, though it exists, is unreal. From the standpoint of the totality of knowledge, evil may be seen to contribute to cosmic harmony. This "solution" was later castigated by Bertrand Russell as a morally untenable justification of evil.

Sidgwick. Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) combined the social utilitarianism of Mill with the intuitionism of Butler and Kant. In *The Methods of Ethics* (1875), a work described by C. D. Broad as "the best treatise on Moral Philosophy that has ever been written," Sidgwick raised ethical analysis to a new level of precision and logical rigor. Setting aside practical moralizing as not the business of objective philosophical analysis, Sidgwick interpreted the task of moral philosophy to be the clarification of the logic of moral judgment, a conception of philosophy that was continued by the contemporary British school of linguistic analysis.

Sidgwick held that there are just three approaches to ethics worth philosophical consideration: egoistic hedonism, utilitarianism, and intuitionism. He pointed out that neither the self-centered ethics of Hobbes and the French Encyclopedists nor the socially oriented ethics of Bentham and Mill can justify the step from psychology to ethics, that is, from the description of human motivation to judgments of moral obligation. Even those who declare that one ought to pursue one's own interests must justify their use of "ought," and this cannot be done on the grounds of psychological facts alone. Sidgwick therefore insisted on distinguishing psychological hedonism from ethical hedonism and grounding the latter on intuition. His argument is reminiscent of Hume's claim that values cannot be deduced from facts, and it anticipates G. E. Moore's later analysis of the "naturalistic fallacy."

All three "methods of ethics" rest, according to Sidgwick, on principles held to be self-evident, and thus intuitionism is, to some extent, inescapable. The egoist must assume the self-evident rightness of pursuing one's own pleasure, and the social utilitarian must assume the rightness of maximizing the common good. Intuitionists differ from utilitarians and egoists only in holding many principles and duties to be self-evident as well, and thus they expose themselves to inevitable counterinstances. The more numerous and specific the rules claimed to be self-evident, the more subject to exception and vulnerable to disproof. Sidgwick concludes that social utilitarianism offers the correct standard of moral judgment but that this standard is in turn grounded on direct awareness of moral obligation. Thus at least one, and probably at most one, moral intuition is essential for moral judgment.

Sidgwick could not finally decide between the conflicting claims of self-interest and social utility. He leaned toward the latter as definitive of moral duty, but he recognized that one's self-interest rightly carries a special weight, other things being equal. Perhaps he would have been able to reconcile these two "intuitions" more easily had he considered utilitarianism in a somewhat weaker form, as the principle that one ought always to refrain from causing unnecessary suffering, rather than the stronger claim that one ought always to aim at maximizing happiness. For while one's own welfare seems naturally to outweigh that of others, it is very close to being self-evident to any morally sensitive person that he ought not to pursue his interests at the cost of substantial suffering to others.

It would appear from our brief glance over the history of ethics through the nineteenth century that philosophers failed to find any conclusive ethical truths and merely argued, more persuasively and with a more impressive display of learning than most, for whatever way of life and standards of conduct they happened to prefer. In some respects this impression would be justified, and it serves to remind us of the differences between scientific knowledge and ethical wisdom. The perennial character of the problems, the lack of general agreement on proposed solutions, and the return of later doctrines to principles advanced by earlier ones all contrast strikingly with the irreversible progress of scientific discovery. It has been suggested by some contemporary philosophers that the endless disputability of ethical issues is rooted in the very nature of ethical language, so that it is not a defect of philosophy to have failed to achieve general agreement on ethics. As W. B. Gallie has put it (*Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, New York, 1964), ethical concepts are "essentially contestable." It is essential to their meaning that they evoke continual disputes as to the correct standards for their application. But if we cannot find historical progress in the form of final settlement of issues, we can at least discern some degree of gradual, if irregular, advance toward greater clarity in the formulation of the issues.

On the central issue of the logical relation between facts and values, ethical theories have provided increasingly clear and sophisticated statements of two fundamental positions, naturalism and nonnaturalism (sometimes called teleology and deontology). Naturalistic theories relate values to facts by defining "good" and related concepts in terms of observable criteria, such as fulfillment of natural tendencies (Aristotle), satisfaction of desire (Hobbes and Spinoza), production of pleasure for the greatest number (utilitarianism), conduciveness to historical progress (Spencer and Marx), or efficiency of means to ends (Dewey). Nonnaturalistic theories stress the fact that the meaning of ethical terms goes beyond the observable facts on which ethical judgments are grounded, and they locate the additional component of meaning outside nature. Plato located it in a realm of abstract Forms, Christianity in the will of God, the intuitionists in the direct recognition of the quality of rightness, the moral-sense theorists in the feeling of approbation. Each of these accounts of value and moral right has revealed an additional dimension of the complex logic of ethical judgment. Naturalistic theories have brought to light various ways in which ethical judgment is grounded on the fulfillment of biological and social needs, while nonnaturalistic theories have revealed prescriptive aspects of moral concepts that are independent of prudential considerations. The main effort of twentieth-century ethical philosophy has been to weave together in a consistent pattern all the threads, both naturalistic and nonnaturalistic, that constitute our philosophical heritage.

CONTEMPORARY NONNATURALISM

In much of the English-speaking world G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, 1903) is taken to be the starting point of contemporary ethical theory. But it is important to recognize that this primacy is to a considerable degree local and distinctive of the tradition of analytical ethics. On the Continent and in Latin America the work of Max Scheler and Franz Brentano has been a preeminent influence. For much of American thought until fairly recently, the work of John Dewey or Ralph Barton Perry provided the starting point. But, for all that, it is reasonable to begin with G. E. Moore.

Moore. It is the critical side of Moore's work in ethics that has had the most lasting effect. His delineation of the subject matter of ethics and his very careful effort to show that any form of ethical naturalism involves a fundamental conceptual mistake—the work of the first three chapters of *Principia Ethica*—has been the part of Moore's work that has deeply affected contemporary ethical thought. However, Moore's own positive nonnaturalistic cognitivism, with its reliance on nonnatural characteristics, has found few adherents. Most philosophers—C. L. Stevenson and R. M. Hare are typical—who have been convinced that in essence Moore's case against naturalism is sound have not followed Moore's lead but have adopted some form of noncognitivism.

It was Moore's belief that if moral philosophers simply interest themselves in good conduct, they are not really starting at the beginning, for we cannot know what good conduct is until we know what goodness is. Moore's concern was with a "general enquiry into what is good." Our first question must be "What is good and what is bad?" Such knowledge of good and evil, Moore claims, is the "goal of ethical investigation"; but, he stresses, "it cannot be safely attempted at the beginning of our studies, but only at the end." First we must consider how "good" is to be defined.

Moore clearly is not interested in giving a stipulative definition of "good," and from his disclaimers in *Principia Ethica* about being interested in a merely verbal point, it would seem that he is not interested in a lexical definition either. What he is after, in seeking a definition of "good," is just this: what property or set of properties is common to and distinctive of anything that could conceivably be properly called intrinsically good, for instance, "answering to interests." Moore thinks "good" stands for a property, and he seeks to determine what it is. Moore's answer, which he is aware will cause discontent, is that "good" is not definable. All we can finally say correctly is that good is good and not anything else. "Good," like "red," is, in the appropriate sense, indefinable. Good is a simple, unanalyzable, nonnatural characteristic. We are either directly aware of it or we are not, but there is no way of defining it or analyzing it so as to make it intelligible to someone who is not directly aware of it.

Such a radical claim on Moore's part would have little force if he could not thoroughly refute naturalistic and metaphysical theories which do purport to give the kind of characterization of intrinsic goodness that he takes to be impossible.

Moore's case against naturalism. Let us consider Moore's case against ethical naturalism. An ethical naturalist holds that moral judgments are true or false empirical statements ascribing an empirical property or set of properties to an action, object, or person. "Good" is defined in terms of this property or set of properties. But, Moore argues, we will *not* come to know what good is simply by "discovering what are those other properties belonging to all things which are good." Those who commit what Moore calls the naturalistic fallacy think that when they have "named those other properties they were actually defining good; that these properties, in fact, were simply not 'other,' but absolutely and entirely the same with goodness." But to identify good with any other property is to commit the naturalistic fallacy. The naturalists confuse the question of the meaning of the concept of good with the quite different question of what kinds of things are good.

In a famous argument, which has been dubbed the open-question argument, Moore points out that for whatever naturalistic value we substitute for the variable *x* in a proposed definition of "good," we can always significantly ask if it is good. If a man says "Happiness is good," or "Self-realization is good," or "The object of any interest is good," we can always significantly ask "Is happiness good?," "Is self-realization good?," "Is the object of any interest good?" Even though we agree, let us say, that happiness is good, it is an evident fact of language that these questions are not without significance. But they would be without significance if "good" did *mean* "happiness," or "self-realization," or "the object of any interest," just as it is pointless to ask if a father is a male parent or a puppy is a young dog. For whatever naturalistic definitions we offer—whatever naturalistic values replace the variable *x*—it always makes sense to ask if that thing is good. Since this is so, these naturalistic definitions can be seen to be inadequate.

This can be seen in another way as well. If a statement like "The satisfaction of desire is good" were a definition

of the sort Moore was searching for, it would be analytic and it would be self-contradictory to assert "This satisfies desire but it is not good." For whatever naturalistic definition one proposes, however, one can assert without self-contradiction "This is *x* but it is not good," but if *x* meant the same as "good" this would be impossible, for "*X* is good" would then be analytic. But since this is possible it is clear that the proposed statement is synthetic.

Moore's influence. The above arguments of Moore's, together with his famous argument in Chapter 3 of *Principia Ethica* against Mill's alleged naturalism, have provided the background for much of the controversy in contemporary ethical theory. While few have accepted all the details of Moore's case against ethical naturalism, it has been felt by many that Moore's essential case is well taken. R. M. Hare in his *The Language of Morals* (Oxford, 1952), P. H. Nowell-Smith in his *Ethics* (Harmondsworth, 1954), and A. C. Ewing in his *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy* (London, 1959) try to restate these Moorean insights in such a way as to present a decisive case against ethical naturalism.

It should be noted, however, that the reception of Moore's case against naturalism, even on the part of such eminent nonnaturalists as A. N. Prior and E. W. Hall, has not been that favorable. It is generally thought now that (1) the naturalistic fallacy is not, strictly speaking, a fallacy but is at best a mistake and (2) that it is not really distinctive of naturalism but should be called the definist fallacy, that is, the belief that moral terms are capable of definition in nonmoral terms.

Criticisms of Moore. It is easy to see that someone, though at a certain price, could be a consistent ethical naturalist and that Moore's naturalistic fallacy would not really point to anything necessarily fallacious in such a naturalist's reasoning. An ethical naturalist who is also a hedonist could argue: By "intrinsic good" I am just going to mean "pleasure." This is a stipulative definition on my part and I am making no claim that it squares with ordinary usage, but it will give a clear and consistent definition of "good" that fits well with my preanalytic insight that pleasure and pleasure alone is intrinsically good. It is indeed true that on my theory "Pleasure is good" is a tautology and "Is pleasure intrinsically good?" is a self-answering question. Still, there is a normatively vital question that I can and do ask with perfect conceptual propriety. The vital open question is this: Should an individual seek pleasure and only pleasure as the thing that, morally speaking, he ought always to do? If a man takes this position, Moore's arguments, given above, do not show anything fallacious in his thinking, that is, he has committed no formal or informal fallacy, though it can be shown by some additions to Moore's arguments that he has said something that is mistaken.

There is a further criticism of Moore that can be made with considerable plausibility. Though it is indeed true that "good" taken in isolation cannot be defined, the term "good" is in reality always used in specific contexts, with context-dependent meanings and with such riders as "good at" and "good for." But in such a context "good" can be defined. "A good car," "good teacher," "good at ballet," or even "good man" can be naturalistically defined, even though "good" *sans phrase* cannot. Finally,

and perhaps most importantly, it has been pointed out that the open-question and noncontradiction arguments are not conclusive. At best they show why all the naturalistic definitions hitherto proposed do not work. They do not show that naturalistic definitions are impossible.

Deontological nonnaturalists. There are other nonnaturalists who, while holding cognitive metaethical theories, reject Moore's ideal utilitarianism. Moore thought that Bentham and Mill were mistaken in trying to define "good" naturalistically, but that they were not mistaken in regarding good as the fundamental moral concept and were not mistaken in arguing that it is always our duty to seek to bring the greatest total good possible into being. H. A. Prichard, W. D. Ross, E. F. Carritt, and C. D. Broad all agree with Moore that intrinsic good is a unique, nonnatural quality that is indefinable and can only be known directly. But they reject Moore's claim that "right" means "productive of the greatest possible good." "Right," they argue, is also *sui generis;* it is not reducible to "good" or to any teleological concept. To say "This is a right act" means, according to Ross, "This act ought to be done." Furthermore, even what *makes* an act right is not to be completely determined by teleological concepts. An act, even though it may be productive, everything considered, of the best consequences, may still not be the right thing to do. Even Broad, who makes the most concessions to the utilitarians of any of the deontologists (as they are called), argues that in determining what is suitable to the actual situation, we must consider both the total fittingness of the events that are relevant to the act in question and the utilities in question, and then without any precise measure of what is suitable to the situation, we must decide what we are to do. The utilitarians, including Moore, the deontologists agree, oversimplify the situation here.

In 1909 H. A. Prichard, in his celebrated article "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?," set forth in perceptive but uncompromising form the deontological position. But it is W. D. Ross, taking Prichard's position as a starting point, who has been the most influential of these deontological nonnaturalists. Ross's *The Right and the Good* (Oxford, 1930) and his *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford, 1939) present the classical statement of these views.

Prichard. In "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" Prichard argued that it was an endemic mistake of moral philosophy to try to give reasons for our obligations. Moral obligation cannot be reduced to acts which ought to be done because by doing them, more good is likely to result than by doing any alternative act. We do not, Prichard contended, come to appreciate an obligation by argument, but in a particular situation we are either directly aware of what it is we ought to do or we are not. Moral philosophy cannot justify these obligations; it can only (1) help us to come to understand the nature of this immediate type of awareness and (2) help us to see through the confused attempts to exhibit the "truly rational foundations" of these obligations by showing how they are grounded in human interests.

Ross. Ross accepted the Prichardian belief that we have an intuitive insight into our obligations, but he went on from certain hints in Prichard to develop a concept of prima-facie duty. A prima-facie duty is a conditional duty of a very distinctive kind. What is meant by saying that it is "conditional" is that it is something which always would be an actual duty were it not for the fact that in certain circumstances there are more stringent moral considerations that outweigh it. But prima-facie duties are always actual duties unless such conditions obtain. Ross takes it as "self-evident that a promise, simply as such, is something that prima facie ought to be kept, and it does not, on reflection, seem self-evident that production of the maximum good is the only thing that makes an act obligatory." Like Cook Wilson and Prichard before him, Ross takes as his data "the moral convictions of thoughtful and well-educated people." They serve as his point of departure and his check on all theorizing concerning morals.

Reasoning from this base, Ross can show that we do not always reason as utilitarian moralists would have us reason. We often have duties of special obligation that conflict with the utilitarian principle that we should always maximize good. If we carefully attend to the data of ethics—our actual moral experiences—we will note that we have prima-facie duties to fidelity, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and self-improvement. Some of these prima-facie duties are more binding than others. *Ceteris paribus*, the duty of nonmaleficence outweighs our obligation to keep a promise. But Ross stresses—as does Broad—that it is not always the case that we have a rule, a general principle, for deciding what to do when there is a conflict in prima-facie duties. Sometimes we simply have to appreciate or come to "see" what is suitable to the situation.

Criticisms of deontology. Many, though by no means all, philosophers would agree that the deontologists have shown that moral reasoning is not as simple as the classical utilitarians took it to be. But it has been thought by many that consequences play a far larger role in determining what makes an act right than the deontologists have been willing to admit. Their rather antiquated epistemology of intuitions, synthetic a priori judgments, and so forth, and their misleading use of mathematical analogies have stood in the way of an acceptance of deontology. It is, however, quite feasible to argue that such appeals are not essential to a deontological view.

It has also been repeatedly argued that a deontological position, with its list of prima-facie duties and its appeal to the convictions of the thoughtful and the well-educated, is thoroughly ethnocentric. To these objections it is reasonable to reply that most of Ross's prima-facie duties are very similar to the kind of generalities that the anthropologists Ralph Linton and Robert Redfield (among others) have claimed to be cross-culturally sanctioned "universal values." Moreover, the appeal to thoughtful and well-educated people surely need not and should not limit itself to people in one cultural circle.

Rather more important criticisms of deontology have been that it gives us no criteria for deciding what laws, practices, rules, or institutions are worthy of our acceptance. Here the kind of quasi-utilitarian reasoning concerning practices characteristic of the good-reasons approach seems to have decided advantage.

Ewing. It should be mentioned that A. C. Ewing in two closely reasoned books, *The Definition of Good* (New

York, 1947) and *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy* (London, 1959), works out a theory that in many respects tries to find a middle ground between Moore and Ross. Ewing takes "ought" as his fundamental term, and in the second work he makes far more concessions to the naturalists and noncognitivists than in the first, without abandoning what he takes to be the core of his nonnaturalism.

Phenomenological views. Moore, Ross, Broad, and Ewing are not the only nonnaturalists and intuitionists who have exerted a considerable influence on contemporary ethical thought. During a roughly comparable period, Franz Brentano, Nicolai Hartmann, and Max Scheler had a comparable influence on the Continent.

It is necessary to mention that in contemporary philosophical thought there is a fundamental cleavage that divides the English-speaking and Scandinavian countries, on the one hand, from the Continent, Latin America, and the Near East and Far East, on the other. In these latter areas of the world the influence, either direct or indirect, of the philosophers so far discussed has been slight, while the influence in intellectual circles of the philosophers to be discussed in this section and in the section on existentialism has been considerable. Even though Moore, Ross, and Ewing opposed empiricism, their techniques remained analytical, while the work of the philosophers about to be discussed is philosophy in the grand manner; that is, it is comparatively speculative and metaphysical.

Brentano. Franz Brentano's *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (Leipzig, 1889) and his later *Grundlegung und Aufbau der Ethik* (F. Mayer-Hillebrand, ed., Bern, 1952) mark the beginning of contemporary Continental ethical theory. In 1903 G. E. Moore remarked that Brentano's work more closely resembled his own than that of any writer with whom he was acquainted. Like Moore, Brentano rejected naturalistic definitions of ethical terms, regarded fundamental moral concepts as *sui generis*, and thought judgments of intrinsic value incapable of being proved.

To gain an adequate understanding of Brentano's ethical theory, it is essential to understand the rudiments of what he called descriptive psychology (the latter, in Husserl's hands, was to become phenomenology). Brentano classified mental phenomena into three fundamental classes: ideas and sensory presentations (images and the like), judgments, and emotions. That is to say, there are three fundamental ways in which one may be intentionally related to something. One may simply think of it, one may take an intellectual stance toward it by either accepting it or rejecting it, or one may take an emotional or attitudinal posture toward it. To do the last is a matter of loving or hating it. (Brentano, of course, uses "love" and "hate" here in a very stretched manner.) Brentano regarded emotions as intentional; he maintained that "certain feelings refer unmistakably to objects and language itself signifies this through expressions which make use of it." Moreover, emotions, like judgments but unlike ideas, can properly be called either correct or incorrect. In this way Brentano differed radically from the emotivists.

How do we decide whether a given emotion is correct or incorrect? Here Brentano, who like Ross was a careful student of Aristotle, was very Aristotelian. We can come to understand what a correct emotion or, for that matter, a correct judgment is only by contrasting actual cases of emotions and judgments taken to be correct by experienced and thoughtful people with cases that are not so regarded.

To say that something is good—where we are talking about "intrinsic good"—is to say that it is impossible to love it incorrectly. To say that something is intrinsically evil is to say that it is impossible correctly to love whatever is in question. "Good" and "evil" are what Brentano called synsemantic terms: they do not refer to concrete particular things, either physical or mental. But such ethical concepts were, on Brentano's view, objective because of the impossibility of loving correctly whatever is hated correctly and of hating correctly whatever is loved correctly. The truth of these fundamental moral judgments is directly evident to the mature moral agent. Any question about the empirical evidence for them is as impossible as it is unnecessary.

Scheler. Max Scheler attempted to apply Husserl's phenomenological method to moral concepts. His major works in ethics, *Formalism in Ethics and the Ethics of Intrinsic Value* (Halle, 1916) and *The Nature of Sympathy* (Bonn, 1923), are among his earlier writings (*The Nature of Sympathy* is simply a second and enlarged edition of the early *Zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühle*, Halle, 1913); but his later work in philosophical anthropology, *The Forms of Knowledge and Society* (Leipzig, 1926), also has important implications for his ethical theory.

Scheler's ethics is best understood by setting it in relation to that of Kant. Scheler accepted Kant's critique of naturalistic and utilitarian ethical theories. But while he took the categorical imperative as pointing to an essential feature of morality, he thought that such Kantian formalism was incomplete. Like Husserl, Scheler believed that Kant was mistaken in limiting the a priori to the purely formal. The phenomenological method shows that we have a *Wesensschau* (an intuition of essences) in virtue of which we know certain fundamental a priori but nevertheless nonformal moral truths, such as "Spiritual values have a higher place in the scale of values than vital values, and the Holy a higher place than the spiritual."

Given this very extended sense of "a priori," it is correct to say, according to Scheler, that there are objective nonformal moral judgments which are universal, necessary, and synthetic. These moral judgments are said to have an intrinsic content that is given in our intuition of essences.

Scheler argued that there is a hierarchy of objective values, all open to our intuitive inspection. There is, he would argue, nothing subjective about this ordering. In the hierarchy of values phenomenologically given to man, we have at the top religious values, then cultural values (aesthetic, speculative, scientific, and political), and finally, at the bottom, material values (useful things, things that satisfy needs, desires, etc.). All of these values are thought to have an ethical dimension. Questions concerning moral obligation arise when there is a conflict of values. Moral obligation is that which binds us, in such a situation, to take as the order of our incentives the values as they are ordered in the value hierarchy. Scheler was, however, sufficiently Kantian to believe that the ultimate ground of

moral obligation lay not in the consequences of moral acts but in the intentions of moral agents. To someone who has studied Mill, Sidgwick, or Ross, this seems like a plain confusion between the moral "grades" we would give a person and an objective consideration of what acts are morally right.

There is another aspect of Scheler's moral theory that should be mentioned, namely, his claim that love and sympathy are the sole means by which we gain an intuitive insight into moral reality. Like Brentano, he thought that these feelings had intentional objects, and like Pascal, he thought that there was a "logic of the heart"—that through the feelings we gain a type of cognition into essential value structures that can be had in no other way.

Hartmann. Nicolai Hartmann's massive work *Ethics* was published in Berlin in 1926. It shows the influence of Scheler and Husserl and is without doubt the most extensive phenomenological discussion of value in the literature. Ethics, for Hartmann, is part of a general theory of value, though, as might be expected, ethical values are the highest values. "Value" for Hartmann, as for Scheler, is a general predicate, and under it there are more specific predicates for determinate values, for instance, "beauty" is to "value" as "red" is to "colored." Values are said to be essences, and we have a direct though emotionally tinged intuition of essences. Being essences, values, like numbers, are thought by Hartmann to have an ideal self-existence (*Ansichsein*). But unlike numbers, values have a "material essence."

Like Scheler, Hartmann believes that if we will but attend patiently to our feelings, we will be able to discern, though vaguely, some hierarchical ordering of those things which are valuable. Putting aside as far as possible our theoretical preconceptions concerning values, we should reflect carefully on our actual experience until we achieve a clear and evident insight into value phenomena. This, of course, is a desideratum that will never be completely achieved, for "morally no age entirely comprehends itself." The real ethical life is "a life deeper than consciousness." But there is a capacity on the part of the human animal to appreciate the valuable, and by ever more carefully attending to this, we can attain both a clearer view and a more purified form of the moral life.

Though values are material essences, they are not, as in Plato, identical with being. Hartmann, no more than Moore or Sartre, will identify what is good or what has worth with what exists. That would destroy the autonomy of ethics and obscure the nature of value. But although values are independent of existence, they are related to existence by a "tendency to reality" which Hartmann calls the ideal Ought-to-Be. We have many different values, but it always remains the case that values ought to be. The criteria for what is good or for what is valuable vary from context to context, but the ought-to-be remains the same: "The ideal Ought-to-Be is the formal condition of value, the value is the material condition of the Ought-to-Be." In contrast with the ideal Ought-to-Be there is the more practical, more directly morally relevant "Ought-to-Do." Here "ought" implies "can," and here practical moral questions arise about making something the case that is not the case.

Recent developments in Germany. Finally, a brief note is in order about more recent developments in ethics among German philosophers. Heidegger, whose influence is completely overshadowing in Germany, took a dim view not only of the relevance of logic to philosophy but also of philosophical ethics. This has impeded systematic work in ethics in Germany, but nonetheless it is going on. There has been a reaction against the work of Scheler and Hartmann. O. F. Bollnow has argued for a *Situationsethik* and Richard Schattländer has contended that the Scheler–Hartmann approach is too speculative and theoretical and does not adequately handle the moral agent's question: what ought I to do? But the Scheler–Hartmann school is hardly dead, for Hans Reiner, in his *Das Prinzip von Gut und Böse* (Freiburg, 1949), gives us a detailed and vigorous restatement of such a position. Against Heidegger, he defends the philosophical importance of a general theory of value. But in an effort to blunt Heidegger's criticism that such investigations are morally and humanly irrelevant, Reiner concerns himself primarily with moral values. In his concern with moral value, he examines in some detail the problem of ethical relativism, and in this examination he stresses the importance of anthropological investigations to our understanding of morality.

NATURALISM IN AMERICA

While ethical naturalism seemed to have received its quietus in England from Moore and Ross and certainly could not be considered a major force on the Continent, in America in various forms it was, until shortly after World War II, the dominant form of ethical theory.

Perry. R. B. Perry developed a general theory of value with specific applications to questions of normative ethics, law, politics, economics, and education in his *General Theory of Value* (Cambridge, Mass., 1926) and *Realms of Value* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954). "Value" is used by Perry in a very broad sense as a generic term to group together such terms as "desirable," "good," "worthwhile," "right," "beautiful," "holy," "obligatory," and the like. Perry defines "value" as follows: "a thing—anything—has value, or is valuable, in the original and generic sense when it is the object of an interest—any interest." In an attempt to make his contention overtly verifiable, Perry in turn defined "interest" quasi-behavioristically as "a train of events determined by expectation of its outcome." "Interest" for Perry was an umbrella term for such terms as "like," "desire," "preference," and "need" and their opposites. For something to have positive value, it must be an object of a favorable interest; for something to have negative value, it must be an object of aversion, disapproval, or dislike: in short, it must be an object of negative interest.

It should be understood that this definition of "value" is not taken by Perry to be either a lexical or a purely stipulative definition. It is, rather, a reforming definition. That is to say, it is a deliberate proposal concerning the use of a term in the language, but the proposal is not simply a stipulation, for it has some antecedent basis in the usage in question. It is proposed that this use be adopted as the

standard use in order to clear up what are taken to be confusions allegedly resulting from unclear and vacillating usage. By such maneuvers Perry hoped to escape from Moore's arguments concerning the naturalistic fallacy.

Such a theory, initially at least, is extremely attractive, for it holds out a promise for a genuine "normative science" and thus for some objective, if not absolute, knowledge of good and evil. It holds out the promise that we will eventually use the emerging sciences of man to gain some cross-cultural and interpersonally confirmed, and thus objective, knowledge of right and wrong.

The crucial problem for the naturalist is to show how all statements containing ethical terms can be translated into statements that do not contain such terms and are directly or indirectly confirmable or disconfirmable by empirical observation. What must be achieved to develop such a naturalism is to show the tenability of some set of naturalistic definitions of key moral terms.

Working from his initial definition of "value," Perry developed his system from the following definitions:

(1) "X has value" equals "X is the object of any interest."

(2) "X is bad" equals "X has negative value."

(3) "X is good" equals "X has positive value."

(4) "X is intrinsically good" equals "X is the object of a favorable interest for its own sake."

(5) "X is extrinsically good" equals "X is the object of a favorable interest because X, directly or indirectly, is the most efficient means to something which is intrinsically good."

(6) "X is morally good" equals "X is the object of interests harmoniously organized by reflective agreement."

(7) "X is the highest good" equals "X is the object of an all-inclusive and harmonious system of interests."

(8) "X is morally right" equals "X is conducive to the moral good."

(9) "X is morally obligatory" equals "X is a social demand that, of any alternative demand, is most clearly called for by the ideal of harmonious happiness."

A theory based on these definitions should, Perry would argue, provide us with a systematic account of our normative concepts and exhibit the rationale of our moral judgments. However, it would be queried by many, including many who are not intuitionists, just how it can be that all moral statements are really a subspecies of empirical statement and how they all could, even in principle, be empirically confirmed or disconfirmed. To take moral statements as empirical statements asserting that so-and-so is the case seems to miss their distinctive, dynamic, and guiding function in the stream of life.

Dewey. For John Dewey, moral philosophy had a definite normative ethical function. Dewey wanted to criticize normative standards and hoped to indicate more reasonable moral goals. "Philosophy's central problem," he wrote, "is the relation that exists between the beliefs about the nature of things due to natural science and beliefs about values—using that word to designate whatever

is taken to have rightful authority in the direction of conduct."

His basic proposal was that we should use what he called experimental intelligence in morals. This means that in moral inquiry we should use the same methodological principles we use in scientific inquiry. We should develop a scientific critique of our institutions and of the patterns of conduct designated "moral." In order to do this we must show the untenability of what Dewey took to be an unjustified but ancient philosophical preconception that injects a divorce or dichotomy between scientific knowledge, on the one hand, and moral, philosophical, or religious knowledge, on the other. There is but one kind of knowledge, with one reliable method of fixing belief, the experimental method, though this knowledge and method of fixing belief must be applied to different subject matters.

To most people, the use of the experimental method in ethics heralds a drop of any normative ethical standards. In trying to establish that this is a misconception, Dewey tried to establish a severe contextualism. A central mistake of traditional moral philosophies, both naturalist and nonnaturalist, was that of looking for one bedrock *summum bonum* or one ultimate moral criterion rather than realizing that there is an irreducible plurality of moral standards and that moral problems are fully intelligible and rationally resolvable only in a definite context. Moral standards are a part of a cultural context in which means and ends are qualitatively continuous and functionally interactive.

This reference to a continuum of means and ends leads to another main element in Dewey's moral philosophy. He argues against the specialist's conception of ethics. To hold this conception, which is traditional with philosophers as different as Plato and Russell, is to stress the distinction between intrinsic good and instrumental good and to contend that intrinsic good is the sole object of philosophical interest. This, according to Dewey, is a mistaken dichotomy rooted in the ancient Greek dichotomy between theory and practice. It is not only intellectually bankrupt but it can, Dewey argues, have vicious social consequences. It even makes for irrationalism in ethics, for given this conception, we are easily led to the assumption that while science can deal with mundane instrumental goods, the highest goods—the basic ends, namely, intrinsic goods—must be grasped by intuition, be vouchsafed by revelation, or be merely a matter of the whims of mortal will. Dewey argued that in concrete moral contexts, answers concerning means actually transform ends. In reasoning morally it is not a matter of discovering the most efficient means to attain a fixed end. If in considering the means it becomes apparent that our ends are utopian, we will, if we are behaving rationally, often give them up or modify them in view of this discovery. Here intelligence has a major role to play in morality. Ends cannot rationally be divorced from means. In fact, they are always functionally interactive. Furthermore, what is an end in one problematic situation is a means in another, and so on. There are never any actual normative goals or ends that are simply intrinsic goods. Ideals are always transformable in the light of what we discover about our world, and they are always imbedded in a network of other ideals.

Such considerations, it will surely be objected, hardly show that there are no intrinsic goods—but it could be contended that they effectively argue against Aristotelian final ends, or against the belief that in moral appraisal we can justifiably consider intrinsic goods independently of their consequences—and this, after all, is the major point Dewey wanted to establish.

Here we hardly have the metaethical concerns that are so distinctive of the work of Moore and Perry. But Dewey—though he didn't call it that—also had a metaethical theory.

Dewey argued that moral judgments are judgments of practice. That is to say, they are made in problematic situations of choice in which a moral agent is trying to decide what to do. This gives them their distinctive normative or *de jure* force. But at the same time they remain *de facto* empirical statements. It is this puzzling amalgam that we must understand if we are to get clear what Dewey was claiming.

Dewey asserted that value judgments are not mere prizings and disprizings. They are predictions about the capacity or incapacity of actions, objects, or events to satisfy desires, needs, and interests. As such they are confirmable and disconfirmable. They predict that certain ends in view will satisfy certain vital impulses under certain conditions. Not everything that is desired is desirable, but those things which are desired "after examination of the relations upon which the object depends" are desirable. In short, to say of something that it is valuable, desirable, or good is to say that it is something which would be desired or approved after reflection upon its relevant causes and consequences.

Criticism of Dewey. Dewey's theory has been subject to some trenchant criticisms by Morton White and Charles Stevenson and has been stanchly defended by Sidney Hook, Gail Kennedy, and Gertrude Ezorsky. The basic considerations here are as follows: even if X is desired after an examination of the causes and consequences of desiring X, it still does not follow that X is desirable or that X ought to be desired. However, to carry out Dewey's program of identifying moral statements as a subspecies of empirical statement, some such identity of meaning must be established.

But the admission that Dewey is wrong in claiming that moral statements are empirical statements or hypotheses is not destructive to his over-all program about the place of reason in ethics. If we ask how we justify our ethical evaluations, it seems that much of Dewey's method of criticism, including much of his use of science, could still be reasonably instituted. Dewey's great failure in talking about morality was in not realizing how very different "values" and "facts" are; his great success was in seeing the extensive relevance of scientific knowledge and scientific method to the making of intelligent moral appraisals.

CONTEMPORARY NONCOGNITIVISM

Both naturalism and nonnaturalism are cognitive theories. That is to say, they regard moral utterances in the declarative form as statement-making utterances that assert the existence of certain moral facts and are thus either true or false. But first in Sweden, and later in England and America, a quite different kind of metaethical theory developed that has been called a noncognitive theory. According to this theory, moral statements do not assert moral facts; they are neither confirmable nor disconfirmable, and there is nothing to be known by "moral intuition." It is even characteristic of this view to argue that it is either mistaken or at least misleading to characterize moral utterances as true or false.

Emotive theory. The noncognitive view, which has subsequently been called the emotive theory, received its first formulation in 1911, when the Swedish philosopher Axel Hägerström drew the outlines of such a theory in his inaugural lecture, "On The Truth of Moral Propositions." In 1917 Hägerström developed his ideas with particular attention to the concept of duty in his *Till Frågan om den Gällande Rättens Begrepp* (Uppsala, 1917). Similar statements of the emotive theory have been developed in Scandinavia by Ingmar Hedenius and Alf Ross. Independently of its Scandinavian formulation, the emotive theory was first stated in the English-speaking world by I. A. Richards and by Bertrand Russell, but it was developed in the Anglo-Saxon world by A. J. Ayer and by Charles Stevenson. There have also been interesting if somewhat atypical statements of it by Richard Robinson, Rudolf Carnap, and Hans Reichenbach.

The emotivists were convinced that moral statements are not a subspecies of factual statement, and they were further convinced that it was impossible to derive a moral statement from a set of purely factual statements. As Hägerström put it, "There is no common genus for the purely factual and the 'ought.' By using the predicate 'ought to happen' we refer an action to an altogether different category from the factual. That an action 'ought to be done' is regarded as something which holds true altogether without reference to whether it actually is done or not." The whole notion that there is a determinate character of an action that would make a moral statement true or false is, Hägerström argues, an illusion. There is nothing there for an "unmoved spectator of the actual" to observe that would either confirm or disconfirm his moral statements. Moral statements characteristically take a declarative form, but they actually function not to assert that so-and-so is true but to express an attitude toward an action or a state of affairs.

The emotive theory developed as a *via media* between intuitionism, on the one hand, and ethical naturalism, on the other. Both of these ethical theories displayed crucial difficulties. "Nonnatural qualities" and "nonnatural relations" were obscure, fantastic conceptions, to say the least, and the notion of intuition remained at best nonexplanatory. Furthermore, it was plain that moral judgments are closely linked to one's emotions, attitudes, and conations. But, as Moore in effect showed, neither "A cup of tea before bed is good" nor such general utterances as "Pleasure is good" and "Self-realization is good" are empirical or analytic.

The function of ethical statements. The emotivists maintained that while the grammatical function of a sentence like "A swim before bed is good" is indicative, its actual logical function is much closer to that of an optative or imperative utterance, such as "Would that we could go

swimming before bed" or "Swim before bed." Because of this, emotivists have claimed that it is misleading to say that ethical sentences can be used to make statements: they do not function to assert facts.

Similarly, it is a mistake to treat all words as simply functioning to describe or designate some characteristic or thing. Some words so function; but there are other words, like "nasty," "saintly," "graceful," and "wise," that function primarily or in part to express the attitudes of the utterer or to evoke reactions on the part of the hearer. The emotivists claim that "good," "ought," "right," and the like are also emotive words. This gives them their normative function.

Ethical argument. Hägerström and Ayer contend that the fact that there are no moral facts carries with it the corollary that there can be no genuine moral knowledge. There are no moral facts to be learned; there is no moral information to be gained or forgotten. It makes clear sense to say "I used to know the difference between a pickerel and a pike, but by now I've forgotten it," but what is meant by "I used to know the difference between right and wrong, but by now I've forgotten it"? The word "forgotten" could hardly do its usual job here. The utterance is so deviant that without explanation and a very special context, we do not understand it. Considerations of this sort bring us to the realization that moral utterances are not used to state facts or assert truths; their essential role is a noncognitive one. They typically express emotions, attitudes, and conations and evoke actions, attitudes, and emotional reactions.

Because of this fact about the logical status of moral utterances, it always remains at least logically possible that two or more people might agree about all the relevant facts and disagree in attitude—that is, disagree about what was desirable or worth doing.

We do, however, as Ayer and Stevenson stress, give reasons for moral judgments. If I say "MacDonald did the right thing in killing Janet," it is perfectly in order to ask me to show why this is so. If I say "I don't have any reasons. There aren't any reasons, but all the same I just know that MacDonald did the right thing," I am abusing language. I am saying something unintelligible, for we can't "just know" like that. The person who claims that an action is right *must* always be prepared to give reasons for his moral claim.

Ayer and Stevenson grant all that. This is indeed how we do proceed when we are being reasonable about a moral disagreement. But Ayer says: ". . . the question is: in what way do these reasons support the moral judgments? They do not support them in a logical sense. Ethical argument is not formal demonstration. And they do not support them in a scientific sense either. If they did, the goodness or badness of the situation, the rightness or wrongness of the action, would have to be something apart from the situation, something independently verifiable, for which the facts adduced as the reasons for the moral judgment were the evidence." But this is just what we cannot do. There is *no* procedure for examining the *value* of the facts, as distinct from examining the facts themselves.

If we cannot demonstratively prove or inductively establish fundamental moral claims, then what can it mean to say that a factual statement *F* is a good reason for a moral judgment *E*? The emotivist's answer is very simple: if *F* causes the person(s) to whom *E* is addressed to adopt *E*, to share the attitude expressed by *E*, then *F* is a good reason for *E*. It is Ayer's and Stevenson's claim that whatever in fact determines our attitudes is *ipso facto* a good reason for a moral judgment.

Criticisms of emotive theory. It has been argued by many moral philosophers (W. D. Falk, Richard Brandt, Errol Bedford, Paul Edwards, and Kai Nielsen, among others) that so to characterize what is meant by "a good reason" in ethics is persuasively to redefine "a good reason" in ethics. As Bedford has well argued against the emotive theory, "we do use logical criteria in moral discussion, however inexplicit, unanalyzed, and relatively vague these criteria of relevance may be." Remarks like "It doesn't follow that you ought to" or "That's beside the point" are just as common and just as much to the point in moral argument as elsewhere. There is no reason to think that these remarks about relevance differ in any essential way from their use in nonevaluative contexts. We don't just seek agreement when there is a moral dispute, but we try to justify one claim over another and we rightly reject persuasion as irrelevant to this task of justification.

Stevenson has replied that to answer in this way is in effect to confuse normative ethical inquiries with metaethical ones. "Good" and "relevant" are normative terms and have their distinctive emotive force. To say that such and such are good reasons is to make a moral statement. Making such a statement involves leaving the normative ethical neutrality of metaethical inquiry. One answer to this is that to say what is *meant* by "good reasons" in ethics is to *mention* "good reasons" and not to *use* them.

Existentialism. Noncognitivism is not limited to emotivism. The existentialists do not call themselves noncognitivists, nor do they write metaethical treatises. But reasonably definite metaethical assumptions are implicit in their writings. Their contention that "men create their values," their stress on decision, commitment, and the impossibility of achieving ethical knowledge, strongly suggests a noncognitivist metaethic. We shall limit the examination here to two major figures, Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Camus. Unlike Sartre, Albert Camus wrote no technical philosophy, but in his *Myth of Sisyphus* (Paris, 1942), *The Rebel* (Paris, 1951), and his plays and novels he did articulate an ethical view that has been called the ethics of the absurd. To read Camus is to be immediately thrown into normative ethics via what has been called philosophical anthropology. We are immediately confronted with a picture of man and man's lot. Man is divorced from the world yet is paradoxically thrust into it. The world as we find it—given our hopes, our expectations, our ideals—is intractable. It is incommensurate with our moral and intellectual demands. Life is fragmented. We seek to discover some rational unity amidst this diversity and chaos. We discover instead that we can only impose an arbitrary unity upon it. *L'homme absurde,* as distinct from *l'homme quotidien,* sees clearly the relativity and flux of human commitment and the ultimate purposelessness of life. Yet man has a blind but overpowering attachment to life as something more powerful than any of the world's ills or any

human intellectualization. But the world is ultimately unintelligible and irrational, and man's lot in the world is absurd.

Given this situation, all moral commitments are arbitrary. There is no escaping this: reason will only show us the arbitrariness of human valuations, and a Kierkegaardian leap of faith in the face of the absurd is evasive. It is evasive because it is to consent to absurdity rather than to face up to it, recognizing it for what it is. Man's dignity comes in his refusing to compromise. His very humanity is displayed in his holding on to his intelligence and in recognizing, contra Kierkegaard, that there is no God and, contra Jaspers, that there is no metaphysical unity that can overcome the absurdity of human existence.

Yet paradoxically, and some would claim inconsistently, in his novel *The Plague* (Paris, 1947), and in his essays, collected and published in English under the title *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (New York, 1961) Camus writes with passion and conviction in defense of human freedom and intelligence. Camus's rationale for this is that we become *engagé* because we see that life has no ultimate meaning and that, finally free from a search for cosmic significance, we can take the diverse experiences of life for what they are in all their richness and variety. Yet beyond that and perhaps because of that, Camus, as a humanist, is espousing the cause of man. By this is meant, as is very evident in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*, that Camus repeatedly defends human freedom, equality, and the alleviation of human misery and deprivation. We must become involved, but in this involvement Camus urges a reliance on human intelligence in facing the problems of men.

What might be taken to be a conflict between the more theoretical side of Camus's thought and his more directly normative ethical side comes out in his fourth "Letter to a German Friend." Camus agrees with his "German friend" that the world has no ultimate meaning, but he does not and will not conclude from this, as his "German friend" did, "that everything was equivalent and that good and evil could be defined according to one's wishes." Camus then goes on to remark that he can find no valid argument to answer such a nihilism. His only "answer" is "a fierce love of justice, which after all, seemed to me as unreasonable as the most sudden passion." Camus felt he could only resolutely refuse to accept despair and "to fight against eternal injustice, create happiness in order to protest against the universe of unhappiness." Camus concludes with a cry of the heart that while "the world has no ultimate meaning . . . something in it has a meaning, namely man because he is the only creature to insist on having one."

Sartre. Jean-Paul Sartre's views on man's condition are in many important respects like those of Camus, but to a far greater degree than Camus, Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (Paris, 1943) and *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris, 1960) sets his ethical theorizing in the murky atmosphere of metaphysics. The promised systematic work on ethics that was to follow *Being and Nothingness* has not been forthcoming, but in one way or another all of Sartre's works are concerned with ethics. It can be said that there are two Sartres, or at least that the Sartre of *Critique de la raison dialectique* has moved from his earlier existential-

ism over to a kind of Marxist materialism. Here we shall for the most part (except where specifically noted) be concerned with the earlier Sartre, whose philosophical endeavor centered on his massive *Being and Nothingness*.

Sartre, like Camus, finds man's lot in the world absurd. Since there is no God, life can have no ultimate meaning and there can be no objective knowledge of good and evil. We cannot "decide a priori," or find out by investigation, what we are to do. Man in his forlornness and freedom imposes values. The choices man makes, the projects he forms for himself, and the sum of his acts constitute his values. There is no good and evil to be intuited or in any way discovered by the human animal. Man in anguish creates his values by his deliberate choices, and, to add to his anguish, in making his choices "he involves all mankind." That is to say, Sartre stresses the Kantian claim that moral judgments, in order to be moral judgments, must be universalizable, but, as Sartre adds in his lecture "Existentialism Is a Humanism" (1945), though their "form is universal . . . the content of ethics is variable" and there is no rational way of justifying the acceptance of moral principles with one content rather than another.

Sartre thinks this position is simply a matter of drawing out in a nonevasive manner the implications of a consistent atheism. Only if there were a God could values have an objective justification, but without God "everything is permissible" and "as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to." In this, Sartre is surely mistaken. It does not follow that if there is no God, nothing matters, or that everything is permissible. It is not a contradiction to assert, "Though there is no God, the torturing of children is still vile," and the nonexistence of God does not preclude the possibility of there being an objective standard on which to base such judgments.

Sartre asserts flatly, in good Moorean spirit, "Ontology itself cannot formulate ethical precepts. It is concerned solely with what is, and we cannot possibly derive imperatives from ontology's indicatives." (All the same, his account of morality in *Being and Nothingness* and his account of human action relevant to morality are immersed in "the language of being.") In fact, Sartre goes on to point out that ontology and what he calls existential psychoanalysis can in a given situation constitute "a moral description, for it presents to us the ethical meaning of various human projects." This method of description—though hardly the descriptions themselves—is very like the phenomenological method practiced by Scheler and Hartmann. Yet to proceed in this way hardly constitutes a violation of the is/ought distinction, since Sartre's descriptions of moral evaluations—descriptions of man's ethical life—need not themselves be evaluative, though given the language Sartre uses, they often are.

"Man," he tells us, "pursues being blindly by hiding from himself the free project which is this pursuit." Existential psychoanalysis can reveal to man the real goal of his pursuit. Horrified by the "death of God," man attempts in his anguish to be God. He flees from his freedom—he does not wish to be a creator of values—but in what Sartre ironically calls the spirit of seriousness, he seeks to deny human subjectivity and attributes to value some independent

cosmic significance. To the extent that we are caught up in this spirit of seriousness, we will try to fuse "being-for-itself" with the brute facticity of "being-in-itself." (The odd phrase "being-in-itself" is simply the label for the self-contained reality of a thing, while its mate, "being-for-itself," is the label for the realm of consciousness that perpetually strives to transcend itself.) But if we pursue this line, we still condemned to despair, for we "discover at the same time that all human activities are equivalent . . . and that all are on principle doomed to failure." Phenomenological analysis reveals to man that though he perpetually tries to become a thing, a brute existent, the fact that he has consciousness makes this impossible. Given this ability to think and to feel, man, whether he likes it or not, is slowly led to see that without God he can have no essential nature; that is, though he may form his own projects, there is and can be no purpose to life.

It should be noted that Sartre's view of man's lot is even grimmer than Camus's, for Sartre contends that even in community with others there is no surcease from suffering and alienation, for human relations are essentially relations of conflict and estrangement.

In *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Sartre tries to work out a new kind of Marxism and a new materialist conception of man. But he wishes to integrate his existentialist conceptions into a Marxist materialism in such a way that the latter can come to have a truly "human dimension." Marxism, he argues, must purge itself of its deterministic conceptions of man and acknowledge a rational conception of human freedom. Sartre, in a reversal from *Being and Nothingness*, now argues that there is nothing intrinsic in human nature that makes conflict, war, and a reign of terror inescapable, though, like a good Marxist, he does argue that conflict is a basic factor in human history. It is scarcity, scarcity of goods and materials, that triggers human conflict. Only under these conditions of scarcity is social conflict inescapable and a rational social order impossible. Men make their own history by the choices they make in the face of problems created by history. But man remains the rider, not the horse. Human choices—human projects— are still free choices for which men remain responsible.

RECENT VIEWS ON MORAL DISCOURSE

Linguistic philosophy. As has frequently been noted, there are at least superficial resemblances between the existentialists and the otherwise very different, self-consciously metaethical theories of such linguistic philosophers as R. M. Hare, P. H. Nowell-Smith, Bernard Mayo, Alan Montefiore, and John Hartland-Swann.

There is, indeed, this much similarity between these linguistic philosophers and the existentialists. All of the former make the following contentions, all of which would be welcome to the latter:

(1) Moore was essentially right about the naturalistic fallacy. That is to say, moral statements cannot be deduced from any statement of fact, whether biological, historical, psychological, sociological, or religious.

(2) No moral choice or question of value can ever be guaranteed by logical rules.

(3) We are free, as far as language or logic is concerned, to apply evaluative or prescriptive terms to anything we wish to commend or condemn, criticize or approve, prescribe or forbid.

(4) Moral utterances are generalizable decisions, resolutions, or subscriptions.

Given that a man accepts certain moral principles, other moral principles can, together with certain factual statements, be derived from the above principles. But like Ayer and the existentialists, these linguistic philosophers hold that there must be some moral principles which are not derived from any other principles—moral or otherwise— and, being fundamental moral principles, they are not even verifiable in principle. They express moral commitments and can have no rational ground, for what is deemed worthy of acceptance ultimately depends on the very commitments (generalizable decisions, resolutions, or subscriptions) an agent is willing to make.

Many people have thought that such a view of morality is either directly or indirectly nihilistic—that both the linguistic philosophers and the existentialists espouse what is in effect an irrationalism that would undercut the very possibility of a rational normative ethic.

If we consider a reply linguistic philosophers typically make to such criticisms, we will become aware of a crucial dissimilarity between them and the existentialists and a fundamental defect in existentialist ethics.

Linguistic philosophers have frequently claimed that the existentialists have merely dramatized a logical point. That moral principles are expressions of commitment or choice, that man cannot simply discover what is good or evil or know a priori that a certain thing must be done but must "create his own values," is not a worrisome fact about the human predicament; it is a conceptual truth concerning the nature of moral discourse. It is not a fact of the human condition that man is born into a world alien and indifferent to human purposes. What is a fact is that the phrases "the universe has a purpose" and "value and being are one" are unintelligible phrases. To say "man creates his own values" is in reality only to say in a dramatic way that a judgment of value is an expression of choice. This statement, it is argued, is not an anguished cry of the human heart but is merely an expression of a linguistic convention.

To say "If *x* is a judgment of value, then *x* is an expression of choice" is not to say "Any choice at all is justified," "Anything is permissible," or "All human actions are of equal value." These latter statements are themselves value judgments and could not follow from the above-mentioned statement, for it is not itself a statement of value but a nonnormative metaethical statement about the meaning of evaluative expressions, and, as Sartre himself stresses, one cannot derive an "ought" from an "is." In general, Hare and Nowell-Smith, as well as Ayer and Stevenson, stress the normative neutrality of metaethical statements.

Hare. R. M. Hare in two very influential books, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford, 1952) and *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford, 1963), has developed a very closely reasoned metaethical analysis of the type that has been discussed. In *The Language of Morals*, Hare views moral utterances as a

species of prescriptive discourse, and he feels that we can most readily come to understand their actual role in the stream of life if we see how very much they are like another form of prescriptive discourse, namely, imperatives. Imperatives tell us to do something, not that something is the case. Moral utterances in their most paradigmatic employments also tell us to do something. Imperative and moral utterances do not, as the emotivists thought, have the logical function of trying to *get* you to do something. Rather, they *tell* you to do something. Furthermore, there are logical relations between prescriptive statements, just as there are logical relations between factual statements.

Moral judgments are viewed as a kind of prescriptive judgment but, unlike singular imperatives, moral judgments (as well as all value judgments) are universalizable. Hare means by this that such a judgment "logically commits the speaker to making a similar judgment about anything which is either exactly like the subject of the original judgment or like it in the relevant respects."

Hare stresses that while almost any word in certain contexts can function evaluatively, "good," "right," and "ought" almost always so function. The evaluative functions of these terms are distinct from their descriptive functions and are an essential part of their meaning. In fact, the distinctive function of all value words is that they in one way or another commend or condemn. But while "good" is a general word of commendation, the criteria for goodness vary from context to context and are dependent on what it is that is said to be "good."

The meaning of "good" or any other value term is never tied to its criteria of application. There is nothing in the logic of our language to limit the content of a moral judgment. As far as logic is concerned, any universalizable prescription that expresses a deep concern or commitment is *ipso facto* a moral prescription, and we can decide without conceptual error to do anything that it is logically or physically possible to do. If we treat the resulting decision as a decision of principle, that is, a universalizable prescription, then it is a value judgment that is in good logical order. As Nowell-Smith has well put it in discussing Hare's theory, "Nothing that we discover about the nature of moral judgments entails that it is wrong to put all Jews in gas-chambers."

Criticism of Hare. Probably the most persistent dissatisfaction with Hare's theory has resulted from the belief that it makes moral reasoning appear to be more arbitrary than it actually is. To say "Nothing that we discover about the nature of moral judgments entails that it is wrong to put all Jews in gas-chambers" is, it will be argued, a *reductio* of such a position. Hare would reply that to argue in such a way is to fail to recognize that he is talking about entailment, and that he is simply making the point that from nonnormative statements one cannot deduce normative ones.

Hare argues that his thesis about the logical status of moral utterances does not commit him to the position that there can be no rational resolution of basic conflicts in moral principle. Returning, in *Freedom and Reason*, to a stress on decisions (though with a new attention to inclinations), Hare contends that to have a morality we must have freedom. Specifically, we must have a situation in which each man must solve his own moral problems. (This is not to moralize about what we should do but to state a logical condition for the very existence of moral claims.)

Philosophers who have criticized Hare, including someone as close to him as Nowell-Smith, have suggested that Hare still has a far too Protestant conception of moral discourse. He fails really to take to heart the Wittgensteinian claim that here, as elsewhere in human discourse, we must have public criteria for what could count as a logically proper moral claim. As F. E. Sparshott—whose book *An Enquiry into Goodness* (Chicago, 1958) deserves more attention than it has received—notes: Hare's individualism leads him to neglect the fact that a morality, any morality, will necessarily incorporate "those rules of conduct that seem necessary for communal living." It is not the case that just *any* universalizable set of prescriptions can constitute a morality or a set of moral judgments.

The good-reasons approach. The last metaethical theory we shall discuss has been dubbed the good-reasons approach. Stephen Toulmin, Kurt Baier, Henry Aiken, Marcus Singer, Kai Nielsen, A. I. Melden, A. E. Murphy, and John Rawls may be taken as representative figures of this point of view. It is an approach which obviously has been deeply affected by the philosophical method that we have come to associate with the work of the later Wittgenstein. These philosophers have centered their attention on the logic of moral reasoning. Their central question has been "When is a reason a *good* reason for a moral judgment?" Accordingly, the crucial problems center on questions concerning the nature and limits of *justification* in ethics. These philosophers agree with the noncognitivists that moral sentences are used primarily as dynamic expressions to guide conduct and alter behavior. And they would also agree with ethical naturalists that moral utterances usually, at least, also make factual assertions. But they believe that the primary use of moral utterances is not theoretical or just emotive but practical. Hare and Nowell-Smith are right in stressing that they are designed to tell us what to do.

Yet while moral utterances typically tell us what to do, language with its complex and multifarious uses does not neatly divide into "the descriptive" and "the evaluative," "the constative" and "the performative," "the cognitive" and "the noncognitive." These are philosophers' specialized terms, and they do not help us to understand and clearly characterize moral discourse but actually distort our understanding of it. There can be no translation of moral terms into nonmoral terms, and the ancient problem of bridging "the is–ought gulf" is a muddle, for there is no clear distinction between such uses of language and no single function that makes a bit of discourse normative. Some moral utterances indeed bear interesting analogies to commands or resolutions, but they cannot be identified with them. It is a mistake to think ethical judgments are like scientific ones or like the judgments of any other branch of objective inquiry; yet cognitivist metaethicists were correct, not in pressing this analogy but in maintaining that there is a knowledge of good and evil and that some moral claims have a perfectly respectable objectivity. No matter how emotive or performative moral utterances may be, when we make a moral judgment, it must—logi-

cally must—satisfy certain requirements to count as a moral judgment. In making a moral judgment, we must be willing to universalize the judgment in question, and it must be possible to give factual reasons in support of the moral claim.

The advocates of the good-reasons approach in the general tradition of the later Wittgenstein did not take it to be incumbent on the philosopher to translate moral utterances into some clearer idiom. They did not believe that there was some other favored discourse or form of life that moral discourse or morality should be modeled on. What was expected of the philosopher was that he should describe morality so as to perspicuously display the living discourse at work. In particular, philosophers should concern themselves with a conceptual cartography of the nature and limits of justification in ethics. Before we can reasonably claim that moral judgments are at bottom "all subjective" or that no moral claim can be "objectively justified," we must come to understand what can and what cannot count as a good reason in ethics and what the limits of moral reasoning are.

Toulmin. Two books, Stephen Toulmin's *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge, 1950) and Kurt Baier's *The Moral Point of View* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1958), have most single-mindedly attacked the problem of moral reasoning. They may be taken as paradigms of the good-reasons approach. Toulmin argues that moral rules and moral principles are to be justified by discovering which of these rules or principles, if consistently acted upon, will most likely lead to the least amount of avoidable suffering all around. Those social practices which probably will cause the least amount of suffering for mankind are the social practices which ought to be accepted. Classical utilitarians maintained that a moral rule is justified if it tends to produce greater happiness all around than any alternative rule, but Toulmin favors the negative formulation because (1) though it is very difficult to determine what will make people happy or what they want, it is less difficult to determine what causes suffering, and (2) it is less the function of morality to tell men what the good life is than to tell them what *not* to do so that their interests, including their differing conceptions of the good life, can be realized to the maximum extent.

This theory about moral reasoning, while purporting to be metaethical, is very close to the normative ethical theory sometimes called rule utilitarianism.

Toulmin argues that if we examine closely the way moral reasoning is actually carried on, it will become evident that moral rules and practices are characteristically judged by roughly utilitarian standards, while many individual actions are judged by whether or not they are in accordance with an accepted moral rule or social practice. Utilitarians point out that it is of the greatest social utility that we characteristically judge moral acts in this seemingly nonutilitarian fashion. However, frequently a decision concerning how to act involves conflicting moral rules with no clear order of subordination, and in some situations there seems to be no moral rule—unless the principle of utility is taken as a moral rule—that is readily applicable. In such a situation, the thing to do is to act on a utilitarian basis when it is at all possible to make some reasonable

judgment of the probable beneficial consequences to the people involved of doing one thing rather than another. If that is not possible in a given situation, then we should act as a reasonable man would act. (The concept of a reasonable man, we should not forget, is itself very much a moral concept.)

Criticism of Toulmin. There certainly are a host of objections that spring to mind concerning Toulmin's account. First, it will be said that this is normative ethics, not metaethics: it tells us what we should do, what a good reason is, and how we can justify basic moral rules. Moreover, why should we accept it? Once we see through its modish trappings, it will become apparent that it has all the difficulties attendant on classical utilitarianism.

It could be replied that though the speech is in the material mode and sounds like normative ethics, in reality it is a brief description of how moral reasoning is actually carried on.

Even if this reply is accepted, there are difficulties here too, for viewed this way, Toulmin's account surely looks like an account of a basically sociological sort of how certain people in fact reason. That is to say, it appears to be an impressionistic bit of descriptive ethics and hardly a metaethical account of the *logic* of moral reasoning. It covertly and persuasively redefines as "moral" only a very limited pattern of reasoning—reasoning that expresses the historically and ethnographically limited views of a determinate group of people. The ethnocentric character of this linguistic analysis makes it implicitly, but surreptitiously, normative.

This contention will be rejected by many. It will be argued that moral reasoning, like any other mode of reasoning, is limited. To determine what the moral point of view is and what it is to reason morally, we need first to determine the function (purpose, over-all rationale) of morality.

The function of morality, Toulmin tells us, is to adjudicate conflicting interests and to harmonize desires (that is, moderate our impulses and adjust our demands) so as to reconcile them with our fellows, in such a way that everyone can have as much as possible of whatever it is that, on reflection, he wants.

Given this conception of the function of ethics, something like Toulmin's account of moral reasoning is very plausible, but it has been objected that morality has no *one* such function. Many people have ideals of human excellence that have nothing to do with such a conception of the function of ethics: many Jews and Christians, with their ideals of the love of God, do not conceive the function of moral living in this way, and the Buddhist community with its ideals of *arhat*ship certainly would not accept, either in theory or in practice, such a conception of the function of ethics. Morality is a much more complicated and varied activity. There are diverse and often conflicting functions of morality. Any attempt to claim one function or rationale of morality as *the* function or *the* purpose of morality so circumscribes what can count as moral considerations that its effect is unwittingly to advocate one limited moral outlook as the moral point of view.

Finally, even if Toulmin could make out a case for claiming that the function of morality, or the primary function of

morality, is such as he claims it to be, one could still ask, concerning this descriptive account of morality, "Why keep it as the sole or primary function of morality?" If altering the function of morality somewhat alters the meaning of "moral," then why should we be such linguistic conservatives? What is so sacred about that function of morality and its attendant conception of morality?

Toulmin could claim that now his critic has confused normative issues with metaethical ones. The issues here are complex and lead us into the heart of current discussion about the nature of moral reasoning. Yet a strong case can be made for the contention that there is more to be said for a general approach such as Toulmin's and Baier's than has commonly been thought.

It seems evident that much contemporary thinking about ethics, while devoted to Moore's exacting standards of making perfectly clear precisely what is being claimed, is concerned not with the very general question of the meaning of "good" or, for that matter, "right" or "ought" but with the rich texture of moral reasoning. This brings once more to the foreground the kind of detailed descriptions of the moral life distinctive of such phenomenologists as Scheler and Hartmann, but given the present care for actual conceptual distinctions, we may develop a kind of linguistic phenomenology which may be of major importance to an understanding of morality. Perhaps the most exciting endeavors from this point of view have been those of John Rawls, Philippa Foot, and Georg von Wright. Rawls, in a series of distinguished essays, has shown the central role of considerations of justice in moral deliberation and the way such considerations modify utilitarian patterns of reasoning; Philippa Foot, also in a series of much-discussed essays, has shown the importance of a discussion of the virtues and the vices and has reinvigorated ethical naturalism. Georg von Wright's recent masterful discussion of the varieties of goodness in his *The Varieties of Goodness* (London, 1963) has contributed immensely to our understanding of morality.

(See also ETHICS, PROBLEMS OF.)

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(*Ethics through the nineteenth century*)
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ETHICS, PROBLEMS OF. What ethics or moral philosophy is, and at best ought to be, has always been variously conceived by philosophers. There is no uncontroversial Archimedean point from which ethics can be characterized, for the nature and proper office of ethics is itself a hotly disputed philosophical problem. But there are some things which can be said on the subject that will elicit a wide measure of agreement, although in any description of ethics the emphasis and organization will display a particular philosophical orientation.

P. H. Nowell-Smith, in his widely read and influential book *Ethics* (1954), argues that in the past moral philosophers sought to give us general guidance concerning what to do, what to seek, and how to treat others. That is not to say that such philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Joseph Butler functioned like parish priests or a citizens' advice bureau: they did not seek to give detailed practical advice as to how we should behave on a particular occasion, but they did believe that they could communicate some general but crucial knowledge of good and evil. It was their belief that there is such a thing as a true moral code or a normative ethical system and that philosophers could show what it is. The philosopher's task, in their view, primarily consists in setting forth systematically the first principles of morality and in showing how it is possible to justify these principles. Such an exposition would include not only the philosopher's theoretical conception of the limits of moral justification but also his conception of the good life for man.

Traditionally, moral philosophy had a practical purpose; moral knowledge was not conceived as purely theoretical knowledge of moral phenomena but as practical knowledge about how we ought to live. The goal was not that we

should simply know what goodness is but that we should become good. (Some argued that to know what goodness really is, is to become good.)

Yet this still does not adequately characterize what is distinctive about moral philosophy, for novelists, poets, dramatists, and sometimes even historians, social scientists, and psychologists have functioned, in one way or another, as moral sages and have claimed to give us, in some manner, some knowledge of good and evil. It would be difficult to deny that such men as Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Sophocles and Shakespeare, Thucydides and Montaigne have sometimes been very perceptive in what they have said about morality. What distinguishes a specifically philosophical account of morality is its generality, its systematic nature, and its attempt to prove its claims.

Even within this traditional conception of the task of ethics, important disagreements have arisen. Such philosophers as Kant and Henry Sidgwick, unlike Bentham and Nietzsche, stressed the fact that it is not the philosophers' aim to discover *new* truths. Moral philosophy, they thought, should give a systematic account of the knowledge man already possesses; it should try to unify and show the ultimate rationale of the moral knowledge and practices man already has. There should be no wholesale rejection of practical moral claims, but an attempt should be made to unify and show the objective justification of most of these claims. Subjectivists, however, would challenge the latter aim, although in an important way there is less conflict between them and philosophers like Kant and Sidgwick than might at first be supposed. Subjectivists did not so much question specific moral practices as attempt to show, as did Edward Westermarck in his *Ethical Relativity* (1932), that the alleged objective foundations of these practices are in shambles. They maintained that common expectations notwithstanding, there is, and in reality can be, no such thing as ethics as a body of knowledge demonstrating how we ought to live. Traditional moral philosophers have been concerned to refute such general skeptical conclusions.

In attempting to do this, they tried to set forth a true moral code, that is, to determine the objective foundations of ethics and to show the sole grounds on which we can justify our moral beliefs. Skeptical moral philosophers tended to leave common-sense moral beliefs intact but questioned whether it was possible to give an objective underpinning to them.

Nietzsche stands out as stark exception to this in his conception of the task of a moral philosopher. He not only questioned the general methods of moral reasoning; he questioned, criticized, even rejected certain common-sense moral beliefs as well. He would not take morality itself as something given; he stressed the diversity of morals and did not seek to supply a rational foundation for our very common moral convictions but, rather, sought to discover new moral truths.

Yet, in spite of these differences, the writings of nearly all of these philosophers fit Nowell-Smith's over-all characterization of the traditional task of moral philosophy. They did not simply seek to clarify the use of moral discourse or to enable us to gain knowledge of moral phenomena but, skeptics and subjectivists apart, sought to give us objective practical knowledge about how we should live.