Dear Kadish Workshop participants,

What follows is Chapter 5 ("The Beginnings of Analytic Metaethics and the Analytic/Continental Divide") and the beginning of Chapter 6 ("The Origins of Twentieth-Century Phenomenology: Brentano, Husserl, et al") of a book (Modern Moral Philosophy After Kant) that I am working on. I include a list of the projected chapters on the next page. The book is the second of a two-volume history of ethics in the West from roughly the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the twentieth. The first volume, Modern Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to Kant, was published by Cambridge University Press at the end of May (in the UK—it will be available in the US in August).

Abstract: G. E. Moore’s Principia Ethica (1903) marks the beginning of analytic metaethics. Moore’s focus on conceptual and metaphysical fundamentals and his use of the “open question argument” to reveal the irreducibly normative character of ethical concepts set the agenda for the anglophone ethical philosophy that followed, energizing debates that continue today between naturalist and nonnatural realists, expressivists, constructivists, and error theorists. Moore’s portrayal of idealist approaches of Kant and post-Kantian idealists manifested a fundamental confusion, however. He simply did not appreciate the distinctive character of idealist phenomenology, and his mischaracterization of the method helped foster a divide between analytic and “continental” approaches that lasted for much of the twentieth century.
MODERN MORAL PHILOSOPHY AFTER KANT

Introduction

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5. THE BEGINNINGS OF ANALYTIC METAETHICS AND THE ANALYTIC/CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

G. E. Moore (1873-1958) published *Principia Ethica* in 1903. From our perspective over a century later, *Principia* seems a revolutionary work. It did not seem that way at the time, however. Moore’s claims about the irreducibility of good struck his contemporaries as familiar (Hurka 2003: 599). And *Principia’s* reviewers thought Moore’s objections to ethical naturalists like Mill and Spencer were “the standard criticisms” (Wilde 1905: 582).¹ In these respects and several others, *Principia Ethica* was, as Thomas Hurka has brilliantly shown, solidly within a tradition of British moral philosophy “that [ran] roughly from the first edition of Sidgwick’s *Methods of Ethics* in 1874 to [W. D.] Ross’s *Foundations of Ethics* in 1939” (Hurka 2003: 600; 2014).

Moore acknowledged that he was not original in insisting that all ethical concepts have an irreducible ethical core that cannot be reduced to naturalistic concepts. He did not appreciate the roots of this thought in eighteenth-century intuitionists like Clarke, Balguy, and Price, not to mention sentimentalists like Fordyce and Hume (Darwall 2023: 209, 237-256). But Moore did see himself as following Sidgwick. Sidgwick was, Moore said, the “only ...ethical writer” who had clearly appreciated the irreducibility of ethics’ defining notion (Moore 1993a: 69). I shall suggest, however, that Moore misrepresents Sidgwick as holding, like Moore, that the fundamental ethical notion is that of good. Sidgwick held, as we saw in the last chapter, that the conceptual core of all “ethical judgments” is “the fundamental notion represented by the word ‘ought’” (Sidgwick 1967: 25). This turns out to mark a basic difference between Sidgwick and Moore.

I shall also suggest that Sidgwick rather than Moore was right about this. Even so, the ethical philosophy of the twentieth century looked considerably more to Moore than it did to Sidgwick. This was partly due, no doubt, to *Principia’s* radical self-presentation at the century’s outset—the sense it gives of wiping the slate clean, exposing the fallacies of all prior ethical thought. But the main reason, I think, is *Principia’s* exemplification of Moore and Russell’s general program of *philosophical analysis*, which would prove so influential in twentieth-century anglophone philosophy. This brought ethical philosophy into dynamic relation with analytical trends in metaphysics and the philosophies of language and mind in ways that would dramatically affect how ethics was conceived and practiced as a subject. Among other things, it gave *Principia* a readership that extended far beyond consumers of systematic ethical thought, including many who were relatively unfamiliar with the tradition stemming

¹ Bernard Bosanquet also termed Moore’s criticisms of Mill “not quite original” (Bosanquet 1904: 261). And J. S. Mackenzie remarked that Moore’s critical observations of Spencer, Mill, and Green “have already been brought out by other critics” (Mackenzie 1904: 378). I am indebted for these references to Hurka 2014.
from Sidgwick that Hurka describes. In many ways, Moore begins what came to be known analytic metaethics.

With Moore and Russell, we also see the beginning of what would emerge as a sharp divide between (largely anglophone) analytic philosophy and the so-called “continental philosophy” that carried forward the phenomenological traditions of Fichte, Hegel, and others working in their wake, including Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, as well as the British Idealists (Hylton 1990). Ironically, both Moore and Russell first began philosophizing under the influence of J. M. E. McTaggart’s idealism. Moore quickly rejected idealism, however, and his “The Nature of Judgment” and “Refutation of Idealism” played important roles, first, in turning Russell away from idealism, and then, in making idealism a virtual dead letter in anglophone philosophy during much of the twentieth century (Moore 1989, 1903a).

Moore’s Principia spawned a remarkable flowering of analytic ethics. Many of the major figures surrounding Moore—W. D. Ross (1877-1971), H. A. Prichard (1871-1947), C. D. Broad (1887-1971), and A. C. Ewing (1899-1973)—disagreed with him on many fronts. Ross and Prichard, for example, were prominent defenders of deontological ethical theories that contrasted with Moore’s consequentialism. And all of these writers followed Sidgwick rather than Moore in holding that ‘ought’ rather than ‘good’ expresses the fundamental ethical notion. Finally, although Sidgwick’s (and so Ross’s and Broad’s) conception of ought is not the distinctively deontic ought of moral obligation, Ewing shows how this latter idea can be explicated in a way that both maintains its deontic normativity as well as relates it to the fundamental idea of ought that is at the center of any and every ethical notion.

Clear as Sidgwick was about the centrality of ought to ethical concepts, however, he did not give analysis of ethical terms and concepts the methodological emphasis it had in Moore. The priority of analysis is front and center in Principia. Moore begins the Preface by citing the failure to appreciate its importance as the major obstacle to progress in prior ethical thought.

[In Ethics, as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements, of which its history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause: namely to the attempt to answer questions, without first discovering precisely what question it is that you desire to answer (Moore 1993a: 33).

Metaethics’ development as a potentially freestanding area of philosophical inquiry can be traced to Moore, therefore, in a way that it cannot even to such analytically minded predecessors as Sidgwick. After Moore, it became possible to pursue metaethical questions independently of issues of normative ethics and possible also to specialize in this area without any interest in normative issues whatsoever, at least, any philosophical interest. Charles Stevenson introduced his Ethics and Language in 1944 by saying that he was concerned “with a narrowly specialized part” of ethics,
whose purpose is “to send others to their [normative-ethical] tasks with clearer heads” (Stevenson 1965: 1). By 1970 the “linguistic turn” had become so dominant that a philosopher could expect to raise no eyebrows in introducing a book (titled, coincidentally, Modern Moral Philosophy) by saying that “a moral philosopher . . . thinks and speaks about the ways in which moral terms, like ‘right’ and ‘good’ are used by moralists when they are delivering their moral judgments” (Hudson, 1970: 1). This not only proclaimed the legitimacy of metaethics as an independent philosophical area; it read normative ethics out of the philosophical canon altogether.

This was hardly Moore’s intention. (Happily, after Rawls’s A Theory of Justice appeared in 1971, there was no longer any chance of that happening.) Indeed, Moore’s defense of consequentialism in Principia has exercised a powerful influence over normative ethical philosophy to the current moment. But Moore insisted that metaethical clarity was an essential propaedeutic. In the next section, we turn to examining Moore’s views, followed by later sections devoted to Prichard, Ross, Broad, and Ewing.

MOORE

G. E. Moore entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1892, initially to study Classics. He spent his entire academic career there, forming with Russell and, later, Wittgenstein, a group that effectively became, together with Frege, the founders of analytic philosophy. It was in Principia Ethica that Moore initially applied the method of philosophical analysis to ethics. We will mainly be interested in Principia’s philosophical effect, but we should note also that Moore’s and Principia’s influence extended well beyond academic philosophy, most notably to a group of intellectuals known as the Bloomsbury Group, whose members included John Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, and Leonard and Virginia Wolf (Regan 1986). Keynes remarked that Principia’s “effect on us . . . dominated . . . everything else,” being at once “overwhelming,” “exciting,” and “exhilarating” (Keynes 2010: 435), Keynes and his friends felt they were at “the beginning of a renaissance, the opening of a new heaven on a new earth, we were the forerunners of a new dispensation, we were not afraid of anything” (435).

There is an obvious sense in which Moore’s Cambridge predecessor and teacher, Sidgwick belonged to the nineteenth century and Moore to the twentieth. Sidgwick’s Methods is filled with references paying homage to earlier thinkers, whereas Principia’s central message is that virtually all prior ethical philosophy had been riddled by a common failing, what Moore dubbed the “naturalistic fallacy,” a term he aptly applied to attempts to reduce ethical claims to naturalistic ones, as in Bentham and Mill. Moore thought, however, that the very same kind of fallacy was committed by idealists like Kant, Hegel, and the British Idealists, whom he called “metaphysical” ethicists. Moore interpreted these thinkers as attempting to reduce ethical claims to substantive metaphysical propositions about “existents” having “supersensible reality” (Moore
This, I shall argue, misconstrued the phenomenological tradition in a way that helped foster the analytic/continental divide.

Moore thought he was doing something in *Principia* that was entirely new, and even if it did not always appear that way to Moore’s elders, those in his own generation tended to agree. Lytton Strachey wrote to Moore that “*Principia* has not only wrecked and shattered all writers on Ethics from Aristotle to Herbert Spencer and Mr. Bradley, it has [also] . . . laid the true foundations of Ethics” (Moore, 1993a, xi). Even more important, Strachey thought, was the “method” that Moore employed, which Strachey characterized as “the scientific method deliberately applied for the first time, to Reasoning.” “I date from Oct. 1903,” Strachey wrote, “the beginning of the Age of Reason” (xi).2

**Principia’s Analytical Project**

Moore’s central metaethical claim in *Principia* is that the fundamental ethical concept is that of good and that the property of (intrinsic) goodness is a “simple, ‘unanalysable’” notion and, therefore, that no normative ethical proposition can be analytic (58). In addition to this conceptual claim, Moore also makes the metaphysical claim that “the fundamental principles of Ethics declar[e] what things, and in what degree, possess a simple and unanalysable property which may be called ‘intrinsic value’ or ‘goodness’” (109).

This means that ethics, for Moore, is fundamentally axiological. It does not countenance deontological notions of right and wrong unless these can somehow be analyzed in terms of good. Moore will end up advancing a version of consequentialism on these grounds. In *Principia*, it is a form of *analytical* consequentialism, one that defines the right in terms of the good.

This is very different from Mill, who understands the fundamental task of ethics to be to formulate “the criterion of right and wrong” (Mill 2002: I.1). And different also from Sidgwick, who takes the defining feature of modern moral philosophy, as opposed to ancient Greek ethics, to consist in deontic, “quasi-jural,” moral theory (Sidgwick: 1967: 6; see Darwall 2023: 4-5).

Remarkably, even though Moore claims that the fundamental ethical notion is that of good, he says at the outset of *Principia* that “the sense of the word [‘good’] which is of far the greatest importance for Ethics” is the one that relates to “conceptions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’” (Moore 1993a: 5). Moore canvasses a number of other senses, but concludes that the sense on which he should focus “has to the conceptions of ‘right’

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2 Moore agreed with Strachey’s characterization. He had “endeavoured to write,” he said, a “Prolegomena to any future Ethics that can possibly pretend to be scientific” (35).
and ‘wrong,’ a relation, which makes it the sense which is of the most fundamental importance for Ethics” (6). Neither is this simply window dressing adopted to draw readers in at the beginning. Deontic vocabulary figures throughout *Principia* (4, 5, 33, 53, 54, 76, 77, 165, 166, 197, 198, 211, 229).

In the important Preface to a projected second edition, Moore dubs the concept of good, G (5). ‘G’ expresses the sense of good that is distinctively relevant for ethics because it necessarily bears, Moore says, on right and wrong “conduct” (53). Moore also calls this concept “intrinsic value” (22). And he makes it clear that by intrinsic value he means a kind of goodness that things can have only in virtue of “the intrinsic nature of the things that possess it” (22) (see also 1993b). Moore’s analytical consequentialism thus holds that whether an action is right or wrong depends entirely on whether it brings about the most intrinsic value.

Presently, we will consider Moore’s arguments for his claim that G is the fundamental ethical notion and that ‘G’ expresses a simple, unanalyzable property. Again, Sidgwick holds that this is a mistake and that the fundamental ethical notion is expressed by ‘ought’. However, we should note that Moore also identifies intrinsic value with an ought. To claim that something has intrinsic value, he says, is to claim that that “thing ‘ought to exist’” for its own sake (68). Philosophers generally read Moore, and understand the kind of consequentialism he proposes, as holding that the kinds of things that have intrinsic value and disvalue are state of affairs. Moore himself rarely uses this vocabulary, though he does sometimes (“state of things” (269)). Since we can speak indifferently of something existing or the state of affairs of its existing obtaining, we can easily express Moore’s consequentialism in terms of the intrinsic value of states of affairs that alternative acts would bring about.

Moore’s use of ‘ought’ in referring to intrinsically valuable things as what “ought” to exist does not, however, diminish his distance from Sidgwick. Sidgwick holds, together with the great majority of philosophers before and after him, that ought never attaches to states of affairs considered in their own right. It is always agents, conceived broadly to include havers of attitudes more generally, who are subject to oughts. As Frankena will point out in arguing that Moore’s “open question” argument cannot establish that good is a simple property, ‘ought’ invariably expresses a relation between an agent, an attitude, an object of the attitude in question, and a presenting situation as an agent might consider it from the perspective of making up their mind what attitude to have toward the object in the relevant situation (Frankena 1942: 105-107).

This ultimately marks a deep difference with Moore that will also help to explain Moore’s failure to grasp plausible strains of idealism and the phenomenological tradition. As Moore is thinking of it, all questions of intrinsic value concern what ought to exist, as if from God’s perspective in creating a world rather than from the point of

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3 “Conduct is undoubtedly by far the most generally the most common and generally interesting object of ethical judgments” (54).
view of agents who might inhabit that world. Moore’s project in *Principia*, therefore, is, first, to argue that G is the fundamental ethical concept, that moral right and wrong can be defined in terms of G as what maximizes intrinsic value, second, to argue for a theory of intrinsic value that prioritizes beauty and personal relationship, and, third, to argue on that basis for an act consequentialist theory of right that, however unexpectedly, ends up recommending compliance with a relatively conservative version of commonsense morality. Bloomsbury was thrilled by Moore’s axiology, but not by his recommendations of conduct.

The (Allegedly) Simple, Unanalyzable Property of Good and the “Open Question” Argument

“Naturalistic fallacy” and “open question argument” are the terms most widely associated with Moore’s central metaethical claim that G is a simple, unanalyzable concept and property. As Frankena pointed out “fallacy” is a misleading term for what Moore had in mind (Frankena 1939). What Moore was referring to was not so much an error in reasoning, as a conceptual or metaphysical error of misidentification, mistakenly identifying G with some other nonethical concept or property (65). This is clearest in the case of what Moore calls “natural” properties, by which he means properties that are intrinsic to the nature of whatever spatiotemporal existents can intelligibly be said to have intrinsic value or disvalue. But Moore points out that the very same fallacy is involved in identifying G with any “metaphysical” property, that is, he says, properties constituting things that actually “exist,” although, unlike natural properties, not in time (91, 162). They are, if you like, supernatural properties like omnibenevolence, that are supposed to help constitute existents, though not in spacetime.

Moore argues plausibly that the concept of good cannot be identical to any naturalistic or metaphysical concepts, as he understands them. Any ethical concept that contains the concept of good must differ from any concept that constitutes something as an existent, whether in spacetime or not. Moore therefore calls G a “non-natural” concept or property, since it is not natural in the broad sense with which the “naturalistic fallacy” is concerned.

Moore has two basic arguments for this antireductionist claim at the level of concepts. One is the “open question” argument, which has been much discussed by philosophers, but that Moore himself does not state in its most forceful terms (66-68). We shall consider this presently. The other is an argument that Moore presents in the Preface to *Principia*’s projected second edition and in “On the Concept of Intrinsic

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4 I will rely on the reader to be able to tell whether I am using ‘G’ to refer to a concept or to a property. Moore does not tend to distinguish these, although philosophers who want to grant his claims about conceptual irreducibility but deny his metaphysical conclusions for this frequently do. More on this presently.
Value” (Moore 1993a: 1-32; 1993b). We will begin with that, since it can be stated very straightforwardly.

Good or intrinsic value consists, again, in a kind of value that “depends only on the intrinsic nature of the things which possess it” (22). Now the lesson of the naturalistic fallacy in its broadest sense is that the concept of G differs from any natural or metaphysical concept (in Moore’s sense). But that just means that it is not identical with any concept the instantiation of which a thing’s intrinsic value depends on (on the assumption that natural and metaphysical concepts exhaust the field of concepts that express properties that constitute existents as existents). This is virtually identical to a second major claim that Moore makes in the same Preface, which Moore states at the level of properties rather than concepts, namely, that though G depends only intrinsic properties of things that have it, “it is yet itself not an intrinsic property” (22).

This pretty much follows at the conceptual level. If we consider any natural or metaphysical concept or concepts, in any combination we like, that combination will define some part of natural and metaphysical space, an intrinsic nature in Moore’s broad sense. It seems clear, moreover, that any such nature must have intrinsic value, intrinsic disvalue, or be intrinsically neutral in value. It follows from Moore’s definition of intrinsic value that the concept of that nature’s value cannot be identical with the concept of its (natural and/or metaphysical) nature. Its value or disvalue must be a concept that expresses a further property.

To take a simple example, imagine the state of affairs of someone enjoying the warmth of the sun on a cool day and suppose that this state has intrinsic value. That state has intrinsic features that make it the state that it is. It follows from Moore’s conception of intrinsic value that if that state has intrinsic value, that will be owing to its intrinsic features. The latter will explain or ground the state’s intrinsic value; they will be the state’s intrinsic-value-making features. But a property cannot simultaneously be an intrinsic-value-making property and be the property of being intrinsically valuable itself. It follows that intrinsic value cannot be identified with any property that helps constitute the nature of what has it, any “natural” property in Moore’s extended sense.

This can be further explicated in the terms of Principia’s “open question” argument. About any natural or metaphysical concept, we can intelligibly ask of something instantiating that concept, whether it is good, bad, or neutral. To put it another way, for any natural or metaphysical concept, we can intelligibly deny of something instantiating it that it has some specific value or disvalue (or none at all) without falling into contradiction. It follows that G cannot be identified with anything natural or metaphysical, at the conceptual level, at least.

Moore gives as an example the concept of being “that which we desire to desire” (66). If this concept were identical with G, then we could not intelligibly ask of something we know to be something we desire to desire, whether it is good or not.
Neither could we deny of something we know we desire to desire that it is good without contradicting ourselves. These must therefore be distinct concepts.

Moore concludes on this basis that G is a simple, unanalyzable concept. Frankena argues against this that very thing that gives the open question argument force at the level of concepts shows why Moore’s conclusion cannot be correct. “What makes ethical judgments seem irreducible to natural or metaphysical judgments,” Frankena says, “is their apparently normative character; that is, the fact that they seem to be saying of some agent that he ought to do something” (Frankena 1942: 102). (This is one of the first uses I know of “normative” in its current sense as implying “normative reasons” and oughts in the general sense that can apply to any attitude.) The knowledge that something instantiates some natural or metaphysical concept leaves it an open question whether it is something one has normative reason or ought to take some specific attitude toward—if, say, it is a state of affairs, whether one ought to desire that it obtain or seek to bring it about.

But if that is right, then, contra Moore, G cannot be a simple, unanalyzable concept, since ‘ought’ itself expresses a relation between an agent, an object, an attitude, and a presenting situation (in the case of intrinsic value, the intrinsic properties of the thing with respect to which the question arises whether one ought to desire the existence of something having those intrinsic properties) (105; see also Scanlon 2014: 36). The concept of intrinsic value is, thus, analyzable. To say that some state of affairs has intrinsic value is to say that one ought to desire that it obtain. The point nonetheless remains that the concept is not analyzable in non-normative terms.

This and kindred arguments had great influence in the metaethics that followed Moore on up to the present day (see, e.g., Gibbard 1990: 16). Moorean arguments are clearly in the background of the major forms metaethical anti-realism, as we will appreciate better in Chapters 7 and 11. All varieties of expressivism—from the earliest forms of noncognitivism to the most sophisticated versions, such as those of Blackburn and Gibbard—as well as Mackie’s error theory are clearly motivated by Moorean antireductionist arguments. But so also are Moore’s and Sidgwick’s arguments in the background of contemporary forms of realist or cognitivist non-naturalism. Even recent forms of metaethical naturalism have been shaped by these arguments, since even when they disagree with Moore’s conclusions, naturalists agree that they have somehow to account for the arguments’ apparent plausibility.5

In Chapter 11 we will see how metaethical naturalists have been able to accommodate Moore’s arguments and nonetheless maintain their naturalism. The

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5 For an excellent account of how the major metaethical positions in the twentieth century were shaped by the open question argument, see Fogelin 1967. Remarkably, Fogelin there sketches a kind of alternative that, like Blackburn’s quasi-realism and Gibbard’s non-non-cognitivist expressivism, says that “value judgments are assertions, though they do not ascribe a property to the thing evaluated” (Fogelin 1967: 138). Fogelin’s Evidence and Meaning appeared in 1967, long before Gibbard 1983 and Blackburn 1984.
central idea involves distinguishing, as Locke does, between “nominal essence,” which is a conceptual or semantic matter, and “real essence,” which is a matter of metaphysics (Locke 1975: 418). Moore uses ‘G’ to refer indifferently both to the concept and to the property of intrinsic good. But these are in fact very different. In Locke’s terms, one concerns good’s “nominal essence”—the meaning of ‘good’ or the concept of good—and the other concerns good’s “real essence”—the property that ‘good’ actually refers to.

Now Moore holds that there are no analytic truths about intrinsic value. It follows from this that, strictly speaking, good does not really have a nominal essence in Locke’s sense. It is this feature of Moore’s view that led noncognitivists to conclude that the function of the word ‘good’ is not to express anything having cognitive content, but rather to express noncognitive attitudes. But from facts about nominal essence, that is, meaning or conceptual content, nothing follows about real essence or metaphysical reality. This is a point that became virtual orthodoxy when Putnam, Kripke, and others pointed out later in the century that a term like ‘water’ will have as its meaning or nominal essence, something like “the substance that flows in the rivers and streams,” but that its reference in actual reality is the chemical compound H2O (Putnam 1975a, 1975b, Kripke 1980). The latter is a substantive truth that was uncovered by empirical inquiry. This opens up the possibility that even if the concept of good is irreducible, the actual property of good may not be; it may indeed be reducible to some feature of actual reality, whether natural or supernatural.

This created the space for later naturalists to argue that ethical properties, including good, are indeed natural properties. They could grant the conceptual force of Moore’s open question argument and maintain their ethical naturalism even so. Some hold that this is the case even if ethical properties are not reducible to non-ethical properties (Boyd 1988; Brink 1989; Sturgeon 2006). And others offered naturalistic reductions of ethical properties (Brandt 1979; Railton 1986). Often these are offered as “reforming definitions” that grant that the semantic content of terms like ‘good’ is irreducible to naturalistic concepts. The reformed definitions are offered as metaphysically respectable content that ‘good’ might be better used to refer to. Obviously, a similar strategy is open to metaethical supernaturalists, like theological voluntarists.

**MOORE’S REDUCTION OF RIGHT TO GOOD**

Moore held that all ethical notions must include the concept of good; he does not, like Sidgwick, accept an independent notion of ought. It follows that when Moore comes to analyze the concept of the desirable, he cannot, as Sidgwick plausibly does, understand it in terms of what one ought—or what one has normative reason to—desire. Rather, Moore says that ‘desirable’ means “‘what it is good to desire’” (Moore 1993a: 119).
Fairly clearly Sidgwick rather than Moore is right about this (Darwall 2008a; Hurka 2014: 52-53). Moore’s analysis gives a “wrong kind of reason” for holding that something is desirable and, hence, for desiring it. The instances of the “wrong kind of reason” problem that philosophers have focused on in recent decades mostly concern instrumental reasons for desiring, like the fact that one can win a valuable prize by desiring something manifestly undesirable, like eating unpalatable food. Here, it is said, the fact of the prize gives one a reason of the wrong kind to eat the food, since it bears in no way on the food’s desirability. At best, it is said, it gives one a reason to desire to desire to eat the food (Rabinowicz and Ronnøw-Rasmussen 2004). It would not change things, however, to consider the possibility of its being intrinsically good to eat the food. That too would bear in no way on whether the food is desirable.

This is a perfectly general problem with Moore’s metaethical views. As the case of the desirable shows, good is far from being the fundamental ethical notion. In fact, there actually is no single concept of good. Something can be intrinsically good in the desirability sense: it may be intrinsically desirable. But there are also other forms of intrinsic goodness, intrinsic estimability, for example. And there are even different notions of intrinsic desirability, as Sidgwick’s metaethics themselves demonstrate, since we can desire things from different points of view. Sidgwick’s dualism of practical reason proceeds from the fact that we desire can things from our own agent-relative points of view or from an agent-neutral points of view, like Sidgwick’s “point of view of the Universe” (Sidgwick 1967: 382). What is desirable from the former, Sidgwick argues, is our own greatest pleasure over time, and from the latter, the greatest net pleasure of all.

But even these hardly exhaust our concepts of desirability. Not only can we desire things from different points of view, we can also desire things for someone’s sake, that is, out of care or sympathetic concern for them. This is the perspective from which the idea of someone’s good or welfare gets purchase (Darwall 2002). So this is yet another idea of good, the good of a person or of any being that can have a welfare. This illustrates yet another weird feature of Moore’s metaethical views. If there is any view in ethics that can lay claim to having been the default view throughout its history it would be some version of ethical egoism or eudaimonism, the idea that all normative reasons for acting spring from the agent’s good or welfare. As we shall see presently, however, Moore argues that egoism involves a conceptual confusion and that the idea of welfare can only be understood in terms of intrinsic value.

And there are further concepts of good yet. Something can be estimable, that is, such that one ought, or that there is normative reason for one, to esteem it. And innumerable ethical notions that are not concepts of good in any of these senses. One obvious one is the idea of the kind of value, dignity, that Kant and his followers hold all human persons have. It is of course fine to speak of dignity as a kind of intrinsic value, but, as even consequentialists can admit, it is a kind of value whose normative profile is

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6 See the discussion in Chapter 4.
not that there is reason to desire or promote it, but one that there is reason to respect in the sense of recognizing it as a source of claims (Pettit 1989). This idea can obviously not be understood as an intrinsic value in Moore’s sense, as something that “ought to exist for [its] own sake” (Moore 1993a: 33). Indeed, as discussions of assisted suicide illustrate, one might further someone’s non-existence out of respect for them and their wishes.

If, as I have suggested, following Frankena, Sidgwick’s idea that the fundamental ethical notion is ought is a more plausible proposal than Moore’s that it is good, we might then understand ethical ideas as involving the idea of ought conjoined with different attitudes: desire, esteem, blame, (recognition) respect, and so on, to form the desirable, the estimable, the culpable, dignity, and so on (Frankena 1942, Anderson 1993; Gibbard 2003; Darwall 2022).

This brings us to Moore’s claim, as the foundation of his consequentialism, that “I am morally bound to perform this action’ is identical with the assertion ‘This action will produce the greatest possible amount of good in the Universe’” (Moore 1993a: 197). This makes act consequentialism true by definition. Against Moore’s analytical consequentialism, W. D. Ross argued that Moore had committed a fallacy of exactly the same form as Moore claimed the naturalists had. What Ross could have called the “consequentialists fallacy” misidentifies two distinct concepts, the right and a complex concept including good, as can be shown by the very same Moorean open question argument (Ross 2002: 8). We may know full well that an act will produce the greatest possible good and still intelligibly ask whether we ought to do it. Neither is it true that the proposition that a given act ought to be done is identical in content to one saying that the state of affairs in which it is done is one that ought to exist. The latter proposition reduces to the proposition that anyone ought to desire or bring about the state of its existing. 7

As we shall see, Ross rejected not only Moore’s analytical consequentialism but also any form of act consequentialism as a substantive normative moral theory. In its place, he joined other analytical moral philosophers—H. A. Prichard, C. D. Broad, and A. C. Ewing—in maintaining forms of deontological moral theories on the same intuitionist basis that Sidgwick and Moore had pursued. We will consider these when we have completed our review of Moore. It will turn out, perhaps surprisingly, that when Ross and Broad reject Moore’s consequentialism they are not employing the distinctively deontic ought of morality.

**INTUITIONISM AND AGENT-NEUTRALITY**

7 Moore later gave up his analytical consequentialism though maintained act consequentialism as a normative moral theory even so (Moore 1985, as Ross notes Ross 2002: 10).
Moore’s philosophical “method,” in Sidgwick’s terms, was a form of intuitionism that, while not quite so general as Sidgwick’s “philosophical intuitionism,” was also definitely unlike the forms of “dogmatic intuitionism” pursued by Ross, Broad, and Ewing (Sidgwick 1967: 360). Moore’s intuitionism employed an isolation test. To decide “what things have intrinsic value,” Moore held, “it is necessary to consider what things are such that, if they existed by themselves, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good” (Moore 1993a: 236). Applying this test led Moore to the normative value theory that Bloomsbury found so inspiring. “By far the most valuable things,” Moore held, “are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects” (237).  

Both illustrate Moore’s “principle of organic unities,” “that the intrinsic value of a whole is neither identical with nor proportional to the sum of the values of its parts” (233). The pleasures of human intercourse consist in not just any kind of pleasure, or even in pleasure taken to be in a human relationship. It is rather an organic whole consisting of a pleasurable appreciation of an actual relationship. Whatever value the pleasure and relationship might have considered independently and summed together is increased when they organically comprise a whole. And the same is true of the pleasurable appreciation of beautiful objects.

“The ultimate and fundamental truth of Moral Philosophy,” Moore wrote, is that “it is only for the sake of these things . . . that anyone can be justified in performing any public or private duty” (238). When Keynes wrote that Bloomsbury found Principia “exciting,” “exhilarating,” and “marking the beginning of a new renaissance,” it was to these passages that he referred (Keynes 2010: 435). When it came to the actual moral advice that Principia offered its readers, however, Moore’s proposals were hardly so thrilling. Moore’s views about public and private duty were quite conventional and conservative. That he thought that the objectively right act in any circumstances was whichever one would produce the greatest net intrinsic value, including the intrinsic values Bloomsbury prized, was true enough. But he also thought that we are almost never in a position to know what the long run consequences of any act will actually be. Moore concluded, therefore, that “the individual can therefore be confidently

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8 A moving illustration of these two Moorean claims is provided by Oliver Sacks’s description of twins who had been variously diagnosed as autistic, psychotic, or severely retarded and institutionalized since the age of seven (Sacks 1985). When Sacks first got to know the twins, they were twenty-six years old and considered to be relatively uninteresting idiot savant calculators, whose “trick” was that they were able instantly to calculate the day of the week of any date within the past, or the next, 40,000 years. It was thought that they did this by mechanically applying an algorithm. The more Sacks got to know them, however, the clearer it became to him that the twins actually had a remarkable intuitive feel for mathematical structure and a rich shared imaginative life contemplating its beauty together. Sacks describes how one would offer a six digit number, which the other would then contemplate and begin to smile when he realized it was prime. Then he would return the favor. Sacks himself was able to join them by relying on a book of primes he owned. Together, they became a beauty-contemplating threesome. For a more extensive discussion, see Darwall 2002: 100-102).
recommended *always* to conform to rules which are both generally useful and generally practiced” (Moore 1993a: 213). This part of Moore’s views, Keynes writes, he and the rest of Bloomsbury simply ignored (Keynes 2010: 435).

Moorean intrinsic value is agent neutral in the sense that it creates reasons for any agent to promote it that are fundamentally independent of their relation to it. In this way, it is unlike, for example, considerations of the agent’s own good or welfare, which have often been thought to provide a reason for the agent to act that they do not for others. In the last three decades of the twentieth century there arose a philosophical debate about the very possibility of agent-relative values, norms, and reasons that had been anticipated decades before by Moore’s claim in *Principia* that all value is agent neutral and a critical response to this claim by C. D. Broad.

The more recent debate begins with Nagel’s *The Possibility of Altruism* in 1970, which argued, like Moore, that all values and reasons are agent neutral. Both Moore and Nagel were disputing moral and philosophical common sense. Eudaimonism or egoism, which is an agent-relative view, has been, if anything, the default position in the history of ethics. And agent-relative deontic restrictions or constraints, like the obligation to keep one’s promises, are part of moral common sense. (What makes something agent relative rather agent neutral, again, is that it includes an ineliminable reference to the agent (so considered—i.e., not to the person who the agent happens to be).)

What has come to be known as the “paradox of deontology,” was formulated by Robert Nozick. “Isn’t it *irrational,*” Nozick wrote, to accept a[n agent-relative] side constraint C rather than a view that directs minimizing the violations of C” (Nozick 1974: 30; see also Scheffler 1982). The latter would plainly promote more agent-neutral value. Moore had advanced an idea in the same vein over seventy years earlier.

It is plain that when we assert that a certain action is our absolute duty, we are asserting that the performance of that action at that time is unique in respect of value. But no dutiful action can possibly have unique value in the sense that it is the sole thing of value in the world; since, in that case, *every* such action would be the *sole* good thing, which is a manifest contradiction. And for the same reason its value cannot be unique in the sense that it has more intrinsic value than anything else in the world; since *every* act of duty would then be the *best* thing in the world, which is also a contradiction. It can, therefore, be unique only in the sense that the whole world will be better, if it is performed, than if any possible alternative were taken (Moore 1993: 197).

Although Moore did not put his point in terms of agent-neutrality, Broad noted that this was its thrust. He characterized what he called Moore’s “ethical neutralism” as follows:
Ethical neutralism assumes that there is a certain **one** state of affairs—the sole good—at which all **everyone** ought to aim as an **ultimate** end. Differences in the proximate ends of different persons can be justified only in so far as the one ultimate end is best secured in practice by different persons aiming, not directly at it, but at different proximate ends of a more limited kind (Broad 1968: 46).

As we shall see in the next section, Broad joined Ross in rejecting Moore’s agent-neutralism. Like Ross, he held that we have special “self-referential” obligations to our family, friends, community, and country (Broad 1971:279).

Moore argued also on agent-neutralist grounds against egoism, indeed, against the very intelligibility of an idea of a person’s welfare or good that gives reasons to them alone. “In what sense can a thing be good for me?” Moore asks (Moore 1993a: 150). “It is obvious,” Moore responds, “that the only thing which can belong to me, which can be mine, is something which is good, and not the fact that it is good” (150). The only sense that Moore can give to a person’s good is the person’s having some relation to something that is intrinsically valuable agent-neutrally. He therefore regards egoism as “self-contradictory,” since “when I declare a thing to be my own good, I must be declaring it to be **good absolutely or else not good at all**” (43).

**MOORE’S REJECTION OF IDEALISM AND THE ANALYTIC/CONTINENTAL SPLIT**

It was Moore’s focus on analyzing ethical concepts as an essential prelude to normative theorizing that gave birth to analytic metaethics. But Moore gave important impetus also to the general program of philosophical analysis throughout anglophone philosophy. Important as well in the fostering of the analytic/continental divide was his rejection of idealism and his failure to grasp the phenomenological character of German idealism, which stemmed from Kant’s “Copernican turn.” Kant’s critical philosophy is **perspectival**. It proceeds by drawing out the inescapable presuppositions of theoretical and practical thought from standpoints within the world—that of a being having experience as of a world or of an agent deliberating about what to do—rather than from an external, “God’s-eye” point of view.

There is a reason why modern moral philosophy is especially likely to be pursued perspectivally. That there is a conceptual connection between deontic morality, accountability, and moral blame is a theme that runs through canonical moral philosophers, as well as critics like Anscombe, Nietzsche, and Williams. One especially vivid example is Mill’s claim that “we do not call anything wrong unless we mean to imply that a person ought to be punished for doing it . . . [for example], by the reproaches of his own conscience” (Mill 2002: 5.14). Only with Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment,” however, does it become clear that holding someone, including oneself, accountable with “reactive attitudes” like guilt and “reproaches of . . . conscience” is necessarily from a “participant’s” (or second-personal) standpoint
(Strawson 1968, Darwall 2006). If this is right, then the perspective of (deontic) moral thought must always be, or be formulative within, a second-person perspective.

As we will see in the next chapter, the “continental” philosophy that continues the idealist tradition of Kant and the German idealists into the twentieth century, carries forward the phenomenological aspect of their thought. When, however, Moore attempts to characterize the views of Kant and “modern writers whose views . . . are mainly due to the influence of Hegel,” he does so in terms they would not recognize (Moore 1993a: 161). These philosophers, Moore says, hold “that Ethics should be based on *Metaphysics*” (162). Taken just so far, this might not be objectionable. But Moore goes on to clarify that what he means by metaphysics is something such that to base ethical propositions on it is to commit the same kind of error as the naturalistic fallacy. Moore’s idealist “metaphysicians” differ from naturalistic ethical philosophers in that they deny that the objects and properties with which they are concerned “exist in time” (162). But from the point of view of the fallacy Moore identifies, they hold a view of the same general kind, since though the objects and properties they hypothesize do not exist in time, Moore holds that metaphysical ethical philosophers hold that ethical properties do nonetheless exist, albeit supernaturally. From Moore’s perspective, this is just as bad as what naturalist ethical philosophers believe. Both hold that ethical concepts and properties (or “objects”) can be reduced to or identified with concepts or properties of *existents.*

By contrast, Moore’s claim is that ethical propositions do not simply concern what exists, whether in sensible or in supersensible reality. The failure to see this, he thinks,

has been encouraged by the failure to distinguish between the assertion ‘This good,’ when it means ‘This sort of thing is good,’ or ‘This would be good if it existed,’ and the assertion ‘This existing thing is good.’ The latter proposition obviously cannot be true, unless the thing exists (170). The ethical content of the proposition has nothing whatsoever to do with, and so cannot depend upon, anything existent. It can be put entirely in counterfactual terms (see also Scanlon 2014: 22).

This is what drives the open question argument. To put it in Moorean terms, about anything that *does* exist, we can always sensibly ask whether it *should* exist. It is the latter that is the distinctively ethical question, and it cannot be settled by any proposition or fact about existents, whether natural or supernatural. Moore to the contrary notwithstanding, however, there is every reason to think that Kant and the German (and British) idealists would agree. When, for example, Fichte argues that an *Aufforderung* or summons puts summoner and summoned alike into a second-person standpoint from which both will be committed to a universal principle of right, he clearly

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9 “They have in general supposed that whatever does not exist in time, must at least exist elsewhere, if it is to be at all—that, whatever does not exist in Nature, must exist in some supersensible reality, whether timeless or not” (Moore 1993a: 162).
is not to be understood as making inferences from metaphysical facts about existents that can be appreciated “from nowhere.” And similarly for Kant’s argument in *Groundwork* III that an agent’s (first-personal) deliberative point of view commits them to autonomy as an inescapable presupposition.

The idealists’ phenomenological approach proceeds by drawing out inescapable posits from specific points of view. And the philosophers who anticipate existentialism, like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, though they are less concerned with articulating systematic theories than are the idealists, nonetheless are concerned with *lived* human experience, which is necessarily from an embodied human point of view. Moore’s ethics, by contrast, eschews perspectives of any kind. The claim that something has intrinsic value, is that it “ought to exist for its own sake.” Though we might seek to understand this as the normative claim that any person has reasons to desire that thing—i.e., that it is desirable in what Parfit calls the “impartial reason-involving sense,” from an impartial point of view, that is not how Moore must understand it (Parfit 2011: I.148-153). For Moore, claims about the desirable are claims about desires that instantiate intrinsic value and that means that *such desires ought to exist for their own sake.*

In this way, Moore read the phenomenological approach right out of ethics and virtually guaranteed that the analytic metaethicists who followed him would reject “continental” approaches as failing to engage with the subject. Anglophone analytic philosophers who got their understanding of the idealist tradition from Moore, would have been put off it almost for good. Fortunately, Wittgenstein on practices and “forms of life” and the American pragmatists would bring idealist ideas back into anglophone philosophy in new forms at mid-century. And, of course, phenomenology flourished on the Continent, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In a way, this is an ironic result, since Moore and the phenomenologists were actually united in holding that ethics cannot be pursued by identifying truths, either natural or supernatural, about actual existents. In *Principia*’s Preface, in fact, Moore says that Brentano’s *Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong* contains “opinions far more closely resembling my own, than those of any other ethical writer with whom I am acquainted” (Moore 1993a: 32). In a review of Brentano’s book, Moore writes that of “all the previous moralists, only Sidgwick is any respect superior to [Brentano] (1903b: 115). Brentano’s signal insight, Moore says, is that “that all truths of the form "This is good in itself" are logically independent of any truth about what exists” (116).

However, Moore failed to see how perspective is built into normative questions by their very nature. To take up a deliberative perspective in making up one’s mind on anything, whether to believe, what to do, or what to feel, is necessarily to ask a “normative question” (Korsgaard 1996a). And the reverse is true as well, normative questions always involve an implicit deliberative perspective from which they are asked.
Moore’s tone deafness to phenomenology is akin, and to a degree related, to his relative lack of interest in the history of ethics. In this way, he very much contrasted with Sidgwick, as we noted above. Moore was convinced that all earlier moral thinkers other than Sidgwick had run afoul of the naturalistic (or supernaturalistic) fallacy, which corrupted their metaethical thought. Although Moore’s contemporaries, Prichard, Ross, and Ewing were all very much interested in the history of their subject, the next generation of anglophone ethical philosophy would be much less historically informed. Also, as we noted earlier, that generation’s ethical philosophy would be predominantly metaethical, almost to the exclusion of normative ethical thought, and so more connected to metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of language than to social and political theory and to history. It was only with Rawls in the second half of the twentieth century that anglophone moral philosophy returned to reflection on its historical roots.

ROSS, PRICHARD, AND BROAD: ANALYTICAL DEONTOLOGY

W. D. Ross and H. A. Prichard were Moore’s contemporaries, but they spent their academic careers at Oxford rather than Cambridge. Although both were much influenced by Moore’s analytical approach and, in Ross’s case, by Moore’s account of intrinsic value, both were opponents of Moore’s consequentialism, both as a normative moral theory and of Moore’s attempt to ground that in analytical consequentialism. As we have seen, Ross used Moore’s own open question argument against Moore himself, showing that Moore could hardly define right in terms of the production of good (Ross 2002:8). Both Ross and Prichard defended a form of deontological moral common sense, which they advanced along intuitionistic lines not very different from Moore’s intuitionist epistemology. Both were in Sidgwick’s terms “dogmatic intuitionists,” or “intuitive moralists,” in Mill’s (Sidgwick 1967:360; Mill 2002: 1.3). Ross’s theory of “prima facie duties” became the very model of intuitionistic deontology for the modern moral philosophers who followed him.

C. D. Broad came from the next generation. Like Moore, he was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, and he remained at Cambridge throughout his career. Broad too was an intuitionist deontologist, of which his “self-referential altruism” was an instance (Broad 1971: 279). Also from Broad’s generation was A. C. Ewing, another Cambridge philosopher, whose views on the metaethics of moral obligation we will encounter toward the end of this chapter.

ROSS’S INTUITIONIST DEONTOLOGY

When philosophers speak of “intuitionism” in ethics, or of “intuitionist deontology,” it is usually Ross’s version that they have in mind. Ross’s defense of moral common sense on intuitionistic grounds is the kind of view that Mill labeled the
“intuitive school” and that reforming utilitarians like Mill and Bentham argue against (Mill 2002: I.3). Rawls called Ross’s the “definitive presentation” of “intuitionism” (Rawls 1971: 40).

In rejecting consequentialism on intuitionist grounds, Ross followed Butler whose arguments against Hutcheson’s claim that virtue could be summed into benevolence anticipate Ross’s against act consequentialism in detail (Darwall 2023: 198). Ross’s version was his theory of “prima facie duties,” according to which there is an irreducible plurality of considerations that tend to “make right acts right” (Ross 2002: 16-64). Wiggins usefully summarizes these as follows:

1. Duties resting on previous acts of my own, either (a) promises or implied promises, entailing duties of fidelity, or (b) wrongful acts, entailing duties of reparation.
2. Duties deriving from the acts of others, such as duties of gratitude (or, as one might say with greater generality, of reciprocity).
3. Duties of distributive justice.
4. Duties of beneficence.
5. Duties of self-improvement.
6. Duties of care not to injure others or non-maleficence, rightly perceived by Ross as not reducible to duties of type (4) or beneficence. (‘Even when we have come to recognize the duty of beneficence, it appears to me that the duty of non-maleficence is recognized as a distinct one, and as prima facie more binding. We should not in general consider it justifiable to kill one person in order to keep another alive, or to steal from one in order to give alms to another’ (Ross 2002: 22; Wiggins 1998: 264-265).

“The essential defect of [Moore’s] ‘ideal utilitarian’ theory,” Ross held, “is that it ignores, or at least does not do full justice to, the highly personal character of duty” (Ross 2002: 22). Moore’s consequentialism or “ideal utilitarianism” is an agent-neutral theory; so it “should make no difference” whether goods one is in a position to bring about concern someone to whom one has a special relation or not (Ross: 2002: 22). Moore’s “neutralism” is thus at odds with moral common sense, according to which various “prima facie duties” take an agent-relative form. One that Ross emphasizes is the agent-relative character of the prima facie duty to keep one’s promises (2). When someone fulfills a promise because he thinks he ought to do so, it seems clear that he does so with no thought of its total consequences, still less with any opinion that these are likely to be the best possible. He thinks in fact much more of the past than of the future. What makes him think it right to act in a certain way is the fact that he has promised to do so —that and, usually, nothing more (17).

That one has promised to do something is an agent-relative consideration. In this way, Ross’s view was close to Broad’s idea of “self-referential altruism,” though both would
distinguish between fidelity to promises and beneficence (Broad 1971: 279). Both reject neutralism because, as Ross puts it, neutralism seems to simplify unduly our relations to our fellows. It says, in effect, that the only morally significant relation in which my neighbours stand to me is that of being possible beneficiaries by my action. They do stand in this relation to me, and this relation is morally significant. But they may also stand to me in the relation of promisee to promiser, of creditor to debtor, of wife to husband, of child to parent, of friend to friend, of fellow countryman to fellow countryman, and the like; and each of these relations is the foundation of a prima facie duty, which is more or less incumbent on me according to the circumstances of the case (19).

A “prima facie” duty,” for Ross, is a deontic moral property that an act can have by virtue of “being of a certain kind (e.g. the keeping of a promise)” that would make the act “a duty proper if it were not at the same time of another kind which is morally significant” (19). Ross realized that “prima facie” misleadingly suggests something epistemic. Philosophers nowadays tend to call what Ross had mind “pro tanto” duties. Another way of putting Ross’s idea would be to say that an act may tend to be a duty proper or “sans phrase” in virtue of being an instance of a kind like “the keeping of a promise” (19).

Ross was a pluralist deontologist, holding that there is an irreducible plurality of right- and wrong-making features. These will, however, sometimes conflict. Perhaps I can save someone’s life only if I break a promise. So far, Ross’s theory just tells us that insofar as such an act would be a promise breaking, it will tend to be wrong, and insofar as it is a saving of a life, it will tend to be morally right. But what would be the status of such a complex act, all things considered?

It helps to clarify Ross’s view, but also theories of moral right more generally, to observe a distinction that Ross makes between acts and actions. Ross uses “act” to refer to the thing done and “action” to refer to the doing of it (Ross 2002: 156; Wiggins 1998: 263). Acts are specific kinds of things that can be done, however complex, and actions are doings in their full particularity, including their motives, particular agents, and so on. A theory of morally right conduct concerns acts, that is, alternative lines of conduct that might be pursued in specific kinds of situation as these might be considered from the agent’s perspective at the time, or retrospectively, when we

10 Although Ross opposed Moore’s ideal utilitarianism, there was at least one way in which he remained under Moore’s spell (Wiggins 1998, Darwall 1998b). The common-sense duty of beneficence is an obligation to promote the good or welfare of others (or perhaps of everyone, impartially considered). As Ross construes it, however, it becomes a duty to promote Moorean intrinsic value. This only becomes clear in Chapter 5 of The Right and the Good, “What Things Are Good?” There Ross does not even the discuss the category of intrinsic benefits, that is, things that are intrinsically good for people, things that improve their welfare. This suggests that he accepted Moore’s idea that the idea of benefiting someone can only be understood in terms of bringing about some intrinsically valuable state that concerns them.

11 Hare regiments the usage of ‘specific’ and ‘particular’ in this way (Hare 1980: 60).
wonder whether we or others did the right thing. Actions are particular doings; this is the subject of a theory of morally good actions, which considers not just, or even perhaps primarily, the thing done, but a doing of it, together with the agent’s motivation, on some particular occasion. “Moral goodness is quite distinct from and independent of rightness,” therefore, since the latter, unlike moral goodness, “belongs to acts not in virtue of the motives they proceed from, but in virtue of the nature of what is done” (Ross 2002: 156).

Now a theory of morally right conduct requires, in addition to an account of prima facie duties, some account of how these can be combined into an overall verdict of what it would right or wrong for an agent to do, all things considered. But here, Ross has little of substance to say. There are some systematic considerations that can be advanced concerning the relations between different prima facie duties. For example, since Ross regards the duties of self-improvement and of beneficence both to derive from a (Moorean) duty to promote intrinsic value, “these duties rest on the same ground” (Ross 2002: 26).

Ross is an intuitionist not just in the sense that he believes that there is an irreducible plurality of right- and wrong-making consideration, but also in the sense that he thinks that the claims he makes about prima-facie duties are “self-evident” (30). These are claims whose truth is, he says, a matter of “apprehension,” about which we can be no less certain than we are about uncontroversial claims of mathematics (30). However, “our judgements about our actual duty in concrete situations have none of the certainty that attaches to our recognition of the general principles of duty” (30). The most we can do when we seek to determine what a person’s all-things-considered moral duty is in any (kind of) situation in which more than one prima facie duty is involved, is to seek to think about the question in the same way Butler proposed: to deliberate as dispassionately and disinterestedly as we can—most profitably, with others who can check us our biases and prejudices (Darwall 2023: 191-192).

For several decades, arguably until Rawls’s A Theory of Justice, published in 1971, intuitionist deontology and various forms of consequentialism were the main competitors in anglophone normative moral theory. Prichard, whose “Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?” provided a powerful riposte to anyone who would seek to ground deontic morality in self-interest, by and large, shares Ross’s intuitionist deontology, though he repeats H. W. B. Joseph’s characterization of it that it makes our obligations “an unconnected heap” (Joseph 1931: 67; Prichard 1912; 2002: 185). Prichard decisively rejects “teleological” theories, like Moore’s, that hold that all right-making considerations concern the goodness of consequences (Prichard 2002: 185-196). And he opposes also the only systematic alternative to consequentialism that he considers, Kant’s Categorical Imperative, which he interprets as the almost empty injunction that we perform acts of kinds that “can be done by everyone” (Prichard 2002: 59). In the end, he is prepared, like Ross, to be left with an “unconnected heap” of prima facie duties. Only with Rawls will anglophone moral philosophy be provided a
systematic form of deontology that, like utilitarianism and other forms of consequentialism, seeks to provide more fundamental deontological principles that can make moral duties more than “unconnected heap.”

BROAD, EWING, FITTINGNESS, AND DEONTIC MORAL NORMATIVITY

Recall from our discussion of Sidgwick in Chapter 4 that although he held that the “quasi-jural” notion of moral right and wrong is a distinctive aspect of modern moral philosophy, in contrast with the ethical philosophy of the ancient Greeks, when it came to laying out is own view and his “dualism of practical reason,” it was in terms of the general notion of ought that Gibbard calls “flavorless” (Sidgwick 1967: 6; Gibbard 1990: 7). We find a similar phenomenon with the early twentieth-century intuitionist deontologists we have been considering. As Hurka has pointed out, they tended to hold, with Sidgwick, that “there was just one basic ‘ought’” (Hurka 2014: 25).

However, Broad and Ewing tended to use “fittingness” or “appropriateness” to express their fundamental ethical concept. Hurka observes that Broad “said that to call an act right is to say it is appropriately or fittingly related to the agent’s situation, while Ewing gave a similar account of ‘ought’ (Broad 1962: 164-165; Ewing 1939: 4,14; 2012a: 132-133, 135-137; Hurka 2014: 23). The idea that an act can be fitting to its circumstances in the sense of being choiceworthy in them, or that an attitude can be analogously fitting to its object in the presented situation, harkens back to Smith’s idea of propriety (which is virtually identical) (Smith 1982; Darwall 2023: 224-231). It also plays a significant role in current metaethical discussion (e.g., D’Arms and Jacobson 2000a, 2000b; Howard 2019).

In contemporary metaethical debates about normativity, there tend to be three major positions about the fundamental normative concept: “reasons firsters” hold that the basic concept is that of a normative reason; what we might call “ought firsters,” follow Sidgwick in holding that the fundamental normative concept is that of ought; and there are followers of Broad and Ewing who hold that the basic concept is that of fittingness (Parfit 2011; Scanlon 2014; Schroeder 2021; Sidgwick 1967: 25; Broome 2018; Howard 2019). We need not be concerned with the details of this debate. What matters for our purposes is that whatever the fundamental ethical or normative concept is, it differs from the deontic concept of moral obligation or duty. Deontic moral concepts like the notions readers of Ross have in mind when they encounter his “prima facie duty” and “duty sans phrase” have a conceptual connection to accountability and blameworthiness that the concept of what one ought to do or what

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12 Note that Broad makes this remark in the process of discussing Sidgwick on ought.
13 Sometimes philosophers say that value is the fundamental ethical notion. However, that proposal founders on the fact that, as Anderson has shown, there are many different concepts of value that must themselves be understood in terms of a more fundamental ethical notion (Anderson 1993).
one has most normative reason or what it is fitting that one do simply does not have (Darwall 2006, Parfit 2011: I, 165). It is a conceptual truth that an act is wrong if, and only if, it is an act of a kind that it would be blameworthy to perform without excuse. As Mill pointed out, “we do not call anything wrong unless we mean to imply that a person ought to be punished for doing it . . . [for example], by the reproaches of his own conscience” (Mill 2002: 5.14).

Ewing was the only one of the intuitionist deontologists to grasp this difference between ‘ought’ in the flavorless sense that expresses the normative core of any ethical concept and ‘ought’ in the distinctively deontic moral sense. In The Definition of Good, first published in 1947, Ewing wrote that “‘ought’ really covers two different concepts, the concept of fittingness and of moral obligation” (Ewing 2012b: 132). As Hurka notes, Ewing did hold that the concept of moral obligation was reducible to that of fittingness, but not, crucially, to fittingness of action, but rather to the fittingness of moral disapproval. In Hurka’s words, Ewing held that “you have a moral obligation to do an act if it is fitting for you to do it and not doing it makes you a fitting object of moral disapproval” (BET: 23).

Hurka notes also that even later, in Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy (1959), Ewing gave up the claim that deontic moral ideas were analyzable in terms of such fitting attitudes, but note first how he there distinguishes the distinctive deontic idea of moral obligation in just these terms.

It is not just reasonable to abstain from a brutal murder, though I do not deny that it is reasonable” (Ewing 2012b: 95).

I do not wish to deny that it in a very important sense it is also unreasonable to demand for yourself what you would not concede to others, . . . but one feels that when one has said of this sort of action that it is ‘unreasonable’ one has not spoken nearly strongly enough in condemnation of it” (95).

But, Ewing there gave up the view that “the distinctively moral concept of ought” can “be reduced to a mere combination of any other concepts. If anything is unique, this is unique. To say that I ought to do A in this sense of ‘ought’ is not just to say either that it is reasonable to do A or that it would be reasonable to blame me for not doing A” (96).

The reason Ewing gives for taking this view is that although what I am morally obligated to do is what I am justifiably blamed for not doing, “I ought to blamed for not doing it only because it was morally wrong not to do it” (96, emphasis added). If to be

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14 Again, Ross’s official position is that there is only one ought; he does not distinguish the deontic ought from the “flavorless” ought.

15 See Darwall 2016 for an argument that this way of analyzing deontic moral notions in terms of blameworthiness (fitting blame) enables one to show, on conceptual grounds, that there can never be sufficient normative reason to fail to comply with an all things considered moral obligation.
wrong is to be something one is justifiably blamed for doing, lacking excuse, he seems to think, then we cannot say that we are justifiably blamed \textit{because} what we have done is wrong.

We need not be concerned with whether Ewing was right to give up his earlier view that deontic moral concepts can be analyzed in terms of the fundamental normative concept of fittingness and moral blame.$^{16}$ The crucial point is that Ewing saw, in a way that Ross, Prichard, and Broad seemed not to, that there has to be a conceptual distinction between the fundamental ethical notion expressed by ‘ought’ or ‘fittingness’ and the distinctively deontic moral ‘ought’. All of the intuitionist deontologists, however, saw how Moore could not possibly have been right in saying that the concept of good or intrinsic value is the most basic ethical concept. Even so, one thing that Moore definitely did accomplish, as Ross, Prichard, Broad, and Ewing all exemplify, was the origination of analytical metaethics in anglophone moral philosophy of the twentieth century.

$^{16}$ The cost of taking this position is that it then becomes mysterious how deontic moral concepts can be understood as normative ethical concepts, since they cannot be analyzed in terms of the fundamental normative ethical concept (Darwall 2021).
6. THE ORIGINS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY PHENOMENOLOGY: BRENTANO, HUSSERL, ET AL

We noted in the last chapter that Moore’s rejection of idealism, both in essays like “The Refutation of Idealism” and in his treatment of “metaphysical” ethics in *Principia Ethica*, played a significant role in the relative disappearance of idealism from the anglophone philosophical scene in the first half of the twentieth century. I suggested that this was due to Moore’s failure to grasp idealists’ phenomenological approach, interpreting them as succumbing to an error formally the same as the “naturalistic fallacy.” Although idealists deny that ethical properties “exist in time,” they nonetheless hold, Moore thinks, that ethical properties “must exist in some supersensible reality” (Moore 1993a: 162). Moore claimed by contrast that ethical propositions do not fundamentally concern what exists at all, whether in sensible or in supersensible reality. The failure to see this, he says,

has been encouraged by the failure to distinguish between the assertion ‘This is good,’ when it means ‘This sort of thing is good,’ or ‘This would be good if it existed,’ and the assertion ‘This existing thing is good.’ The latter proposition obviously cannot be true, unless the thing exists (170).

The fundamental *ethical* content of the proposition has nothing whatsoever to do with, and so cannot depend upon, anything existent. It can be put entirely in counterfactual terms (see also Scanlon 2014: 22).

I noted that Kant and the idealists who followed him actually agree with this. They hold that ethical propositions are made true not by facts about actually existing reality, irrespective of any perspective or point of view. Rather, they treat normative properties and facts as inescapable presuppositions of the standpoints from which we think and reason about what to do, think, and feel. Thus, Kant argues in *Groundwork* III that autonomy is a necessary presupposition of practical deliberation from the agent’s point of view. And Fichte holds that it takes a summons from another person, which places summoned and summoner into a second-person perspective relating to each other to gain an awareness of themselves as free agents mutually bound by relations of right.

The “continental” phenomenological approach was carried into the twentieth century by Franz Brentano (1838-1917). Brentano strongly influenced Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and, through Husserl, Edith Stein (1891-1942), Max Scheler (1874-1928), Nicolai Hartmann (1892-1950) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), among others.

Brentano sharply distinguished between what he termed “descriptive psychology,” which he also called “descriptive phenomenology,” and “genetic psychology,” which he used to refer to empirical psychology as we ordinarily understand it, namely, as an empirical science pursued from an observer’s standpoint, as if from nowhere (Brentano 1995: 137-138). In Moorean terms, the latter is concerned with perspective-independent “existents,” whereas the former is concerned with presuppositions of thought and feeling from perspectives we occupy, some inescapably.
In the last chapter, we noted that despite Moore’s rejection of idealism, he had high praise for Brentano’s *The Origin or Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis), originally published in 1899 (Brentano 1969). Remarkably, Moore says in *Principia*’s Preface that Brentano’s book contains “opinions far more closely resembling my own, than those of any other ethical writer with whom I am acquainted” (Moore 1993a: 32). In a review of *Origin in Mind*, Moore writes that of “all the previous moralists, only Sidgwick is any respect superior to him (1903b: 115). Even more remarkably, Moore says that Brentano’s signal insight is “that all truths of the form ‘This is good in itself’ are logically independent of any truth about what exists” (116). This means that Moore himself realized that Brentano’s view differed from Moore’s own characterization of the Idealist tradition. This is powerful evidence that Moore simply did not appreciate the distinctive character of the idealists’ and Brentano’s phenomenological approach.

In this chapter, we shall be considering the views of the early twentieth-century “continental” phenomenological tradition that carried forward the broadly idealist approach of Kant and post-Kantian idealism to which Moore so influentially objected. Owing in significant part to Moore’s influence, there was relatively little anglophone engagement with the figures we shall be considering—Brentano, Husserl, Stein, Scheler, Hartmann, and Heidegger, together with Martin Buber (1878-1965) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963), whom we shall discuss briefly.\(^{17}\) This group had a profound significance, most directly for other continental figures to follow, such as Sartre, Beauvoir, Løgstrup, Levinas, and others, but indirectly for later anglophone philosophy as well, as we shall see in later chapters. Even the anglophone metaethics of the mid-twentieth century, which we shall consider in the next chapter, was very much influenced by Wittgenstein’s idea of a “form of life” or *Lebensform*, which is a close cousin to Husserl’s notion of a *Lebenswelt* or “lifeworld.” Crucial to both is the idea that thought and language always proceeds within the point of view of public practices shared with others rather than the impersonal perspective of Moorean ethical philosophy. All uses of ethical language must therefore be understood from that perspective.

An especially significant example, again, is P. F. Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment,” which Philip Pettit called “perhaps the most influential philosophical paper of the twentieth century” (Pettit 2007). The leading idea of Strawson’s essay is that the attitudes through which we hold people morally responsible are held from a “participant’s” perspective, the standpoint we take up when we relate to others, what I call a “second-person standpoint” (Strawson 1968; Darwall). Strawson’s approach is phenomenological in something like the sense that Brentano employs and contrasts with “genetic psychology.” Strawson’s distinction between thought and inquiry from a participant’s second-person perspective and that from the “objective stance” is much like Brentano’s between “descriptive psychology” or “phenomenology, on the one hand, and “genetic psychology,” on the other.

Many other examples of phenomenology’s influence within analytic moral philosophy and psychology might be cited. Another excellent one is Christine Korsgaard’s work on

\(^{17}\) Doubtless there were other world-historical factors as well, including World War I and its aftermath.
necessary features of practical reasoning from the agent’s point of view (Korsgaard 1996a, 1996b). This too can be seen as a kind of phenomenology.

Although there are important differences between Brentano, Husserl, Scheler, Hartmann, and Heidegger, there are common themes that run through many if not all of them. One concerns their relation to Kant and their shared wish to be able to give ethics *a priori* foundations without Kant’s formalism. Husserl, for example, grounds ethics in a “material *a priori*” in place of Kant’s formal *a priori* principles. Against Kant’s claim that “material practical principles” can only be subjective, *a posteriori*, and irreducibly self-regarding because grounded in the agent’s desires, Brentano and Husserl stress that practical attitudes are always directed to their “intentional objects” and that they can be objective in the requisite sense (Kant 1996b: 5:21). And in place of Kant’s formal “Categorical Imperative,” they advance a fundamental principle that it is given material content by motives—desires or “loves”—that they regard as giving it a consequentialist, even utilitarian, character. In *Origin*, Brentano formulates what he calls “the principle of the summation of the good” as “to further the good throughout this great whole so far as possible,” where the relevant “whole” includes “every living thing on earth” (Brentano 1969: 32). Husserl takes much the same line, though he formulates it somewhat differently at different points.

Brentano and Husserl take motivation to be internal to ethical judgment and perception. It is through attitudes that Brentano calls “love” and “hate,” that we judge value and disvalue, and these motivate us directly to take action in relation to their intentional objects, which we unavoidably see as good and bad, respectively. Brentano and Husserl and their followers are, however, eager to avoid any form of “psychologism” that might identify the content of evaluations with, or seek to reduce them metaphysically to, mental states. Our states of mind almost all have intentional objects—presenting us with a world that is shot through with value and disvalue—which they move us to promote and prevent, respectively.

With this, Moore could fully agree. What he especially admired in Brentano was Brentano’s claim that ethical judgments, such as that something one desires is good, should be understood as claiming that a desire for that thing is *correct*. “We call a thing *good* when [we believe] the love relating to it is correct” (Brentano 1969: 18). “In the broadest sense of the term,” he continues, “the good is that which is worthy of love, that which can be loved with a love that is correct” (18).

As Moore appreciated, Brentano’s view nicely captures the idea underlying the open question argument. For any mental state directed toward something you like (whether that thing can be actualized naturally or in some “metaphysical” reality), we can ask whether the thing is worthy of being the object of the state, that is, whether the state’s being directed toward the object is “correct.” “Correct” operates as a normative term for Brentano, indeed, as *the* normative term.

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18 Elsewhere, he calls this “the fundamental ethical principle” (Brentano 1973: 204).
Contemporary metaethicists will recognize Brentano’s “correct” as a synonym for what they and, as we saw in the last chapter, Ewing and Broad, mean by “fitting.” Brentano is thus offering a “fitting attitude analysis” of ethical claims of a kind that many find appealing today (Jacobson 2011). It is a (further) irony that Brentano may have been the first philosopher to put forward an attractive and plausible metaethical thesis in the process of a phenomenological ethical philosophy that analytical philosophers of the time mostly ignored.

A remarkable feature of early twentieth-century phenomenology, however, is that it seems itself to largely ignore, and perhaps to be ignorant of, the currents of thought that first led to modern moral philosophy, namely, its focus on deontic moral concepts of the right (Darwall 2023: 1-14). I have already noted the end- and good-based character of Brentano and Husserl’s fundamental ethical principles. This runs pretty much throughout the figures we will consider in this chapter. Thus Scheler holds that “all ‘necessity of oughtness’ has its foundation in the insight into a priori interconnections holding among values” (Scheler 1973a: 75). Rejecting Kant’s formalism, he adds that “Values are never based on the necessity of the ought! . . . What is good can become ‘duty’: or it is because it is good (in the ideal sense) that it is necessarily “ought” to be” (75). Similarly, Hartmann holds that all “Ought-to-Do”s are grounded in “Ought-to-Be”s (Hartmann 1958: I.99). Ought-to-Do’s are simply unfulfilled Ought-to-Be’s. The “unfulfilled value” is a “requirement” (199).

Hartmann and Scheler thus turn Kant’s formalist doctrine of the autonomy of the will on its head. “True autonomy,” Scheler says, “is first and foremost a predicate of the person” rather than of practical “reason” (therefore, will, according to Kant) (Kant 1996a: 4:412). It consists in “personal insight into good and evil” and willing on that basis (Scheler 1973a: 494-495).

Despite their rejection of Kantian formalistic ethics, Scheler and Hartmann are nonetheless concerned to maintain a version of Kant’s doctrine of the distinctive value of persons. Scheler calls his view “ethical personalism” for which his major ethical work, Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values is, he says, a “new attempt to provide a foundation” (Scheler 1973a: title). And Hartmann says that the concept of “personal being” is, “together with the concept of value and the Ought” that follows from it according to him, “is the central concept of ethics” (Hartmann 1950: 99,317). Hartmann calls “personality” “a dignity of a peculiar kind” (266).

There is, of course, controversy about how precisely to understand Kant’s doctrine of the dignity of persons. The usual interpretation is that it is “rational nature” that gives all rational agents dignity (Kant 1996a: 4:427-431). However, there are other passages where Kant seems to say that it is not the capacity for morally worthy action, but the excellent exercise of this capacity, i.e., that only good wills have dignity (Kant 1996a: 4: 435,437-438; Dean 2006; Darwall 2013e).

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19 See, e.g., Howard 2019.
However we should interpret Kant’s view, Hartmann is clear that he thinks that the dignity of “personality” “inhere[s]” not in moral “subjects” having the capacity for moral agency, but first in well-motivated actions and therefore, in persons who are motivated to achieve the highest values or best ends (Hartmann 1950: 267). Differently from Kant, actions having moral worth are motivated not by duty, but by “love” (267). The worth, he says, “inhere in the personality of the one who loves” (267).

In the place of Kant’s “kingdom of ends,” Scheler and Hartmann sketch a conception of ethical community as an organic whole—the “collective person,” Scheler calls it—that is realized when “coresponsible” agents follow a “principle of solidarity” and instantiate a value-realizing form of life together (Scheler 1973a: 496-497,519-520). A collective person, in Scheler’s sense, consists in co-responsible agents realizing the distinctive value of personality—to which, Scheler says, all other values are “subordinated”—together (xxiii).

We saw in the first chapter how the German idealists, Fichte and Hegel, criticized Kant’s moral philosophy as excessively abstract and as attempting (impossibly) to ground morality in an agent’s first-person perspective, whereas moral and ethical life require reciprocal recognition between agents, which is necessary to give them a common life and which cannot be achieved first personally. This theme is carried through all of the philosophers we consider in this chapter. An especially important and influential aspect is the way the early twentieth-century phenomenologists theorize the direct perception of others through empathy.

Although empathic phenomena were certainly discussed by earlier writers, notably by Hume and Adam Smith, they were only really integrated into philosophy with terms having their current meanings after Theodor Lipps took over the term Einfühlung (“feeling into”) from Robert Vischer’s coinage in aesthetics and made it available for contemporary phenomenologists, most especially Husserl, his student, Edith Stein, and Scheler. Stein and Scheler’s work on the subject is especially searching and subtle (Stein 1989; Scheler 1973b).

The problem of “other minds” is a chestnut of modern philosophy. How can we know that other people having minds exist?, it is asked, when the only direct evidence we have is their bodily behavior, or even more radically, the sense experiences we take bodily behavior to cause. Husserl, Stein, and Scheler argue forcefully that this position is mistaken and that we perceive others’ mentality directly and non-inferentially through empathy. It is a central thesis of twentieth-century phenomenology deriving from Husserl and his followers that no “veil of perception” separates us from either the physical world or the psychic one.

This means that any self-other asymmetry of the kind one finds in, say, rational egoism cannot get purchase in the phenomenological approach. For phenomenologists like Husserl, self, other, and world are a package deal, both metaphysically and, through empathy, ethically. Husserl argues that intersubjectivity is necessary for the very idea of objectivity (Husserl Hua 9:431, 14:389; Zahavi 2003: 110). Similarly, Heidegger holds that our (Dasein’s) Being necessarily includes our being in relation to others. Being-in-the-world essentially includes Being-with-others (Heidegger 1962: 327). Others, Heidegger says, “are there with us” (152). For Heidegger, as for Husserl, self, other, and world all require each other.
As we shall see, however, Buber criticizes Heidegger’s account of Being-with-others on the grounds that it “knows nothing of any essential relation with others or any real I-Thou with them which could breach the barriers of the self” (Buber, 2002: 206). Buber appreciates the second-personal character of the ethical/moral life in a way he thinks Heidegger does not. Although others are “with us,” for Heidegger, they are not necessarily in second-personal relationship to us. This difference between Heidegger and Buber is reminiscent of the different conceptions of recognition in Hegel and Fichte that we noted in Chapter 1. The second-personal character of ethical community is, however, a central theme of Husserl, Scheler, and Hartmann, as we shall see.

An especially significant example of this aspect of Heidegger’s views are his extraordinarily revisionist accounts of conscience and guilt. These are, of course, core features of the moral psychology of deontic morality and central aspects of mainstream modern moral philosophy, especially in Pufendorf, Butler, Smith, and the British rationalists (Darwall 2023). Heidegger acknowledges, better emphasizes, that this is the form conscience takes in what he calls the “everyday” form of Being of “the they,” which he contrasts with the shape conscience and guilt have in the “authentic,” non-alienated” way of living that Heidegger holds more fully realizes Dasein’s Being. Conscience does feature, Heidegger holds, a second-personal “call.” However, authentic conscience “summons Dasein’s Self from its lostness in the ‘they’” to be its authentic self (Heidegger 1962: 319). It is decidedly not a form of mutual accountability in which the moral agent calls themselves from the shared perspective of fellow moral agents.

This might recall Nietzsche’s Übermensch who achieves genuine autonomy and responsibility for themselves, as we saw in Chapter 2. As we shall see, presently, however, Heidegger’s call to authenticity is not a rejection of Bradleyan “my station and its duties,” as much as a call to relate to them in self-affirming way. As John Richardson notes, by 1933, the year he assumed the position of Rector at Freiburg, at least, Heidegger was applying the idea of authentic choice not to individuals but to a people. As Richardson puts it, Heidegger, by that point anyway, has adopted a kind of “communitarianism in which it is the Volk that unifies itself by acts of authentic choice” (Richardson 2012: 40). This is perhaps one place where Heidegger’s notorious support for National Socialism finds resonance in his philosophy. In any case, it is clear that Heidegger was not a modern moral philosopher in the sense of someone who was attempting to theorize equal dignity, the moral law, and mutual accountability.

One thread that runs throughout all the philosophers we shall discuss in this chapter is that they saw themselves as practitioners of phenomenology, as we shall see, beginning with Brentano. Heidegger dedicates Being and Time to Husserl, arguably phenomenology’s first systematic theorist. Scheler employs the phenomenological method to underwrite his notion of an “a priori given in intuitive content” (Husserl’s “material a priori”) (Scheler 1973: 47-53). And Hartmann follows in Husserl’s and Scheler’s train, pursuing what he calls a “phenomenology of morals” (Hartmann 1950: 47)

**BRENTANO**
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