

PREFACE BY C. D. BROAD

I would begin by expressing my thanks to Professor Cheney, who initiated the idea of publishing a sequence of my various occasional writings on ethical topics. I received the first suggestion in a letter from him dated March 10, 1970. Since then we have had much correspondence on matters of detail, all of it friendly and helpful. I am most grateful to Professor Cheney for all the trouble that he has taken, and for the efficiency with which he has carried out the detailed work involved in getting the various permissions needed to enable these papers to be re-published.

In a letter of June 18, 1970, Professor Cheney informed me that Messrs. Allen & Unwin had agreed to publish the collection as a book in their series *The Muirhead Library of Philosophy*. After this I came in contact by letter with Professor H. D. Lewis of King's College, London, and I would like to thank him for all the help which he has given in his capacity of Editor of that series of philosophical works.

Lastly, in recording my obligations, I would thank all those persons, institutions, and firms of publishers, whose consent has been so kindly given for the reprinting of the various papers contained in the present collection.

It will be noted that the period covered by the 16 papers here reprinted is exactly 50 years, stretching from 1914, when I was in my 27th year, to 1964, when I was in my 77th. This period may be sub-divided into the following five successive sub-sections, viz. (i) before World War I, (ii) during World War I, (iii) between World Wars I and II, (iv) during World War II, and (v) after World War II.

Into sub-period (i) there falls only one of the papers here reprinted, viz. 'The Doctrine of Consequences in Ethics'. Into sub-period (ii) there also falls only one paper, viz. 'On the Function of False Hypotheses in Ethics'. If I am not mistaken, both of these appeared in the long since defunct *International Journal of Ethics*, then under the editorship of the late Professor J. S. Mackenzie (1860-1935). Later, when I had become professor in Bristol, I came to know him personally. I also came to know that extremely original and gifted lady his wife, and her very remarkable brothers and sisters, the Bristol Hughes's.

To the sub-period (iii), i.e. between the two World Wars, belong Papers III, IV, V, and VI. Of these I will mention only the following two. That entitled 'Determinism, Indeterminism, and Libertarianism' was the inaugural lecture which I gave on becoming Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge. This seemed to me to be an appropriate occasion for trying to get my mind clear on a number of inter-related topics which have always been of fundamental importance for ethics.

The other paper belonging to this sub-period which I will mention is that entitled 'Ought we to Fight for our Country in the Next War?' By 1936 it had begun to seem considerably more likely than not that the situation contemplated in the title would become actual in the fairly near future. It was fashionable at that time among left-wing intellectuals to believe, or to talk as if they believed, that the next war in which England would be engaged would

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be one against Russia, a country which was then supposed in those circles to stand for all that was best and highest in social and political life. And it was common form for those who held such views to say that they would refuse to fight for their country in any such war. A symposium was held at King's College, Cambridge, on the subject in question, and this paper was my contribution to it.

Papers VII, VIII, and IX belong to sub-period (iv), i.e. to the six years of World War II. During nearly the whole of that time I was mainly occupied as Acting Junior Bursar of Trinity College, Cambridge, in the absence of David Hinks, the real Junior Bursar, on important military duties. Of these three papers only the first, viz. 'Conscience and Conscientious Action', was called forth by the circumstances of the war in which England was involved. Tribunals had been set up to deal with the cases of persons who claimed exemption from military service on grounds of conscientious objections to it. This furnished the occasion and the motive for me to reflect more carefully than I should otherwise have done on the notions of 'conscience' and of 'conscientious action', and to publish the results of my reflexions.

The remaining papers, viz. X to XVI, were written and published in the period after World War II. Of these I will comment only on the following, viz. XI and XII, and XVI.

Papers XI and XII, 'Egoism as a Theory of Human Motives' and 'Self and Others', may be said to complement each other in the following way. The first is concerned with what Sidgwick called '*Psychological Egoism*'. The second deals with various topics all of which come under what he called '*Ethical Egoism*'. As regards Paper XVI, 'Obligations, Ultimate and Derived', I would say this. In its original form it dates from 1950. On May 6th of that year I read it to a meeting of the now defunct Philosophical Society of England, and it was afterwards published in their journal *The Philosopher*. Later I re-wrote it in its present form, and I see that the new version was completed on June 23, 1962.

The 50 years covered by these papers have witnessed a very remarkable revival, both in England (more especially in Oxford) and in the USA, of interest in and speculation upon fundamental questions of ethical theory. One might put the fundamental issues which have been discussed in the form of the following question: 'What is expressed by seriously uttering or writing a moral sentence in the indicative, such as, e.g. "Stealing is *wrong*", "He *ought* not to have done that", "To desire the happiness of others is *good*", and so on?' Such sentences, by their verbal form, naturally suggest that a predicate (whether a quality or a relational property) is being ascribed to a certain subject (generally an action or an experience of a certain kind).

One type of answer, and that which was most usual at the beginning of the period, was to take for granted that this *prima facie* appearance is correct. On that assumption one can raise questions as to the nature of the predicate. Is it of a unique and peculiar kind? Or is it analysable into a combination of qualities and/or relational properties which occur severally in *not* specifically moral contexts? In Cambridge this line of thought was followed by G. E. Moore, and in Oxford by H. A. Prichard (a man of immense ability whom I have always regarded as the Oxford Moore) and by W. D. Ross.

A later type of answer has been to contend that the grammatical form of

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moral sentences in the indicative is fundamentally misleading. According to this view, the utterance of such a sentence does *not* express a judgment ascribing a certain predicate to a certain subject. Any such view as this at once leads to questions of the following kind. Why should what is in fact expressed by uttering a moral sentence in the indicative be literally couched in this misleading grammatical form? If such utterances do not in fact express judgments, what do they in fact express? In what sense, if any, can the notions of *truth* and *falsity* be applied to that which such utterances really express? In what sense, if any, can that which is really expressed by one such utterance stand in *logical relations* (e.g. negation, implication, etc.) to that which is expressed by another such utterance? Very different answers have been given by different thinkers in England and USA who have agreed in accepting the basic negative premiss. Among the most eminent of these writers still living may be mentioned in England Professor R. M. Hare of Oxford, and in USA Professor C. L. Stevenson of Ann Arbor, Michigan. As is usual in philosophy, nothing approaching general agreement has been reached. But alternatives have been suggested and defended which had not before been seriously considered.

I will end this Preface on the following personal note. Experience as a member of many committees in Cambridge and elsewhere has taught me the desirability of retiring before one has become too 'ga-ga' to realize just how 'ga-ga' one is becoming. I am now approaching the end of my 83rd year, and prudence and laziness combine in advising me not to expose myself further in print.

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