

THREE DUALISMS: SIDGWICK, GREEN, AND BRADLEY¹

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Henry Sidgwick famously concludes *The Methods of Ethics* by recognizing a dualism of practical reason between two of his methods of ethics — egoism and utilitarianism.² Both are forms of consequentialism, one egocentric and the other impartial. Egoism says that an agent has reason to do something insofar as that would advance her own personal good or happiness, whereas utilitarianism says that an agent has reason to do something insofar as it would advance aggregate personal good or happiness. One might understand Sidgwick's dualism in purely structural terms, as a contrast between egocentric and impartial consequentialisms, abstracting from assumptions about the nature of the personal good or happiness. However, Sidgwick clearly embraces hedonism as a theory of the good, which shapes how he conceives of the two forms of consequentialism forming the dualism of practical reason. Because of the difference between egocentric and impartial demands, Sidgwick's dualism also represents a conflict between self and others.

By contrast, the British idealists T.H. Green and F.H. Bradley defend a perfectionist ethics of self-realization and reject hedonistic utilitarianism.³ Both reject Sidgwick's dualism by embracing his egocentric conception, rather than the impartialist one, but interpreting the good in perfectionist, rather than hedonistic, terms. Though the ethics of self-realization is egocentric, the perfectionist character of the idealist conception of the good means that they conceive of the good of each as only being fully realized in a community. In this way, both Green and Bradley think that the good of each depends on a common good, though they differ in their conceptions of the common good. Green stresses a Kantian formulation invoking the Humanity Formula of the Categorical Imperative and its insistence that agents treat each other as ends in themselves and never merely as means. Bradley stresses a more Hegelian conception of *sittlichkeit* in which the personal good of individuals cannot be understood apart from the community in which they live. In these different ways, both Green and Bradley believe that the proper understanding of self-realization will reconcile the demands of self and others.

Unfortunately, Sidgwick did not have much patience with the British idealists. In *The Methods* he regards appeals to self-realization and perfection as too indefinite to justify sustained examination. However, in *Lectures on Ethics of T.H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau* Sidgwick did subject Green's idealist commitments to greater scrutiny.⁴ Though he recognized that Green thought his ethics of self-realization would reconcile the demands of self and others, Sidgwick claimed that Green was nonetheless committed to his own dualism of practical reason between the perfection of the agent and the perfection of others.

I want to reconstruct and assess the prospects of British idealism for overcoming Sidgwick's dualism of practical reason. Sidgwick is right that the idealists cannot eliminate the tension between self and others. Nonetheless, a perfectionist version of the dualism may be less intractable than Sidgwick's hedonistic version.

¹ I am pleased to contribute an essay in honor of Peter Nicholson, in appreciation of his excellent work on the political philosophy of the British idealists and John Stuart Mill and his generous feedback on my own work on T.H. Green.

² Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* [1874], 7th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907), hereafter *ME*.

³ My discussion of Green and Bradley will focus on their principal ethical works: T.H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics* [1883], ed. D. Brink (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), hereafter *PE*, and F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* [1876], 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), hereafter *ES*.

⁴ Henry Sidgwick, *Lectures on Ethics of T.H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau* (London: Macmillan, 1902), hereafter *Lectures*.

1. SIDGWICK'S DUALISM

In *The Methods* Sidgwick aims to provide an impartial examination of different principles about what it is ultimately reasonable to do that are recognized, perhaps implicitly, by commonsense morality and by various philosophical figures and traditions (*ME* v, 14). Sidgwick focuses on three methods — *egoism, utilitarianism, and intuitionism*. Egoism claims that one ought to do that action that most promotes one's own good or happiness, whereas utilitarianism claims that one ought to do that action that most promotes aggregate good or happiness. Intuitionism comes in wide and narrow varieties: in its wide form, intuitionism designates a foundationalist moral epistemology in which moral knowledge rests on self-evident moral beliefs; in its narrow form, intuitionism claims that a plurality of deontological moral rules or precepts are self-evident. Sidgwick is critical of the narrow, deontological form of intuitionism but defends the wider, epistemological form of intuitionism. In particular, he defends a form of epistemological intuitionism known as *philosophical intuitionism* that locates fundamental intuitions at the level of first principles. As an epistemological doctrine, philosophical intuitionism is normatively neutral. Sidgwick believes that the two remaining methods of ethics — egoism and utilitarianism — is each the object of a fundamental intuition, which is what produces the dualism of practical reason.⁵

Sidgwick's understanding of the dualism is informed by his hedonistic theory of the good. He takes the good to consist in pleasure and evil to consist in pain. A pleasure is any agreeable sensation or feeling that the subject likes and is disposed, other things being equal, to continue, whereas a pain is any disagreeable sensation or feeling that the subject dislikes and is disposed, other things being equal, to discontinue (*ME* 42-43, 125-27, 398).⁶ Sidgwick's dualism consists in the conflict between hedonistic versions of egoism and utilitarianism.

How exactly Sidgwick understands the dualism depends on how he understands a method of ethics. At several points, he describes a method as a principle or procedure determining "what an individual ought to do" or what it is "ultimately right" or "reasonable" or "rational" for him to do (*ME* v, 1, 4, 6, 8-9 77, 83-84, 96, 496). There are several assumptions that Sidgwick might be making here. First, it is noteworthy that in these passages he seems to equate moral requirements with demands of reason. Insofar as this is true, Sidgwick is a *rationalist* about morality. It also suggests that he uses <ought> in a way that is *univocal* or *unitary*, identifying ethical demands as demands of practical reason. At least in these passages, he doesn't seem to be a pluralist, who thinks that moral demands

⁵ I explore Sidgwick's epistemological commitment to intuitionism in David O. Brink, "Common Sense and First Principles in Sidgwick's Methods" *Social Philosophy & Policy* 11 (1994): 179-201. In a fuller discussion, some care would need to be taken about exactly which precepts Sidgwick regards as objects of fundamental intuitions. Sometimes, Sidgwick distinguishes between axioms of prudence and benevolence and his associated methods of egoism and utilitarianism, leaving it somewhat unclear how we get from the axioms, which are the objects of intuition, to the associated methods; at other times, he doesn't distinguish between the axioms and methods (*ME* 379-82). For useful discussion of these issues, see Jerome Schneewind, *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), ch. 10, esp. 304-09, and Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007-09), vol. III §§1185-96.

⁶ This oversimplifies Sidgwick's conception of the good in one important respect. He says that terms "pleasure" and "happiness" differ in meaning, "however closely their denotation may coincide" (109). He goes on to identify the meaning of "the good" as whatsoever is the object of anyone's desire (109), eventually claiming "A man's future good on the whole is what he would now desire and seek on the whole if all the consequences of all the different lines of conduct open to him were accurately foreseen and adequately realised in imagination at the present point in time [111-12]." This introduction of an idealized desire-satisfaction conception of the good introduces a puzzle inasmuch as hedonism and ideal desire-satisfaction are rival conceptions of the good. The solution to the puzzle depends on Sidgwick's distinction between meaning and denotation or, we might say, concept and substance. He says that the concept of goodness or the meaning of the term 'good' consists in being the object of idealized desire. But what the term picks out, because what satisfies this description, according to Sidgwick, is pleasure. This reconciliation requires him to make the substantive claim that the one and only thing that is the object of idealized desire would be desirable consciousness (*ME* 113).

involve one kind of <ought> and demands of rationality involve another kind of <ought>. Second, there is a question of how to understand Sidgwick's focus on what is *ultimately* reasonable to do. This might indicate a *verdictive* interest in what is all-thing-considered or on-balance right or reasonable.⁷ Alternatively, it might indicate an interest in what is *non-derivatively* right or reasonable. Different interpretations of the dualism result from different ways Sidgwick might be understanding the commitments of egoist and utilitarian methods.

According to one interpretation, Sidgwick thinks that both methods use <ought> verdictively and univocally — call this the *verdictive-unitary reading*. On this reading, the dualism consists in rival claims about the ultimate right-making property: egoism says that it is the property of maximizing the agent's own happiness, and utilitarianism says that it is the property of maximizing aggregate happiness. Moreover, the two methods yield conflicting directives as long as the two methods are not extensionally equivalent.⁸

In his discussion of happiness and duty (*ME* II.v) and in his Concluding Chapter, Sidgwick examines attempts to reconcile the requirements of egoism and utilitarianism. He argues that there are often good egocentric reasons for agents to conform to the requirements of other-regarding morality, because we each have egocentric reasons to comply with familiar other-regarding moral norms of cooperation, forbearance, and aid, even when doing so involves costs. Each individual has an interest in the fruits of interaction conducted according to these norms. Though it might be desirable to reap the benefits of other people's compliance with such norms without incurring the burdens of one's own, the opportunities to do this are infrequent. Noncompliance is generally detectable, and others won't be compliant toward those who are known to be non-compliant. For this reason, compliance is typically necessary to enjoy the benefits of the continued compliance of others. Moreover, communities can improve this reconciliation by monitoring compliance and encouraging compliance and discouraging non-compliance.

However, the coincidence between self-interest and duty is imperfect (*ME* 175, 503). The egocentric justification of other-regarding morality is limited in scope and fragile. Sidgwick considers the possibility that though the earthly coincidence of duty and interest is imperfect, God might ensure their perfect coincidence by ensuring that virtue is rewarded and vice punished in the afterlife. While Sidgwick thinks that the truth of this theological claim might resolve the dualism, he is skeptical or at least agnostic about its truth. We might have reason to want these theological claims to be true, but an independent ethical science must appeal to reason, not wishful thinking (*ME* 507). This leads Sidgwick to conclude, reluctantly, that we must accept the dualism (*ME* 507-08).

If Sidgwick accepts the veridical-unitary reading, it's somewhat puzzling that he thinks that these theological claims could remove the conflict between the two methods. For, as C.D. Broad notes, the perfect coincidence of the two methods would not seem to remove their theoretical inconsistency, because, even if their demands coincided perfectly, they would still make incompatible explanatory claims about the ultimate right-making property.⁹

There is another problem involving the dualism on the verdictive-unitary reading. The dualism depends on egoism and utilitarianism each being an object of an intuition. On the verdictive-unitary reading these two methods make incompatible claims, whether or not there is a perfect coincidence in their demands. But it is a condition of self-evidence that self-evident claims, taken together, are mutually consistent (*ME* 341). This seems to introduce an incoherence in the doctrine of the dualism that rests on several assumptions.

⁷ Thomas Hurka, *British Ethical Theorists from Sidgwick to Ewing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014) claims that Sidgwick believed that <ought> is both unitary and verdictive.

⁸ See, for example, William Frankena, "Sidgwick and the Dualism of Practical Reason" *The Monist* 58 (1974): 449-67.

⁹ C.D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Routledge, 1930), pp. 159, 253.

1. <Ought> is verdictive.
2. <Ought> is unitary.
3. Hence, egoism and utilitarianism make incompatible claims about the ultimate right-making factor.
4. The dualism consists in egoism and utilitarianism each being the object of a fundamental intuition.
5. Fundamental intuitions must be consistent.

These five claims are mutually inconsistent, which means that something has to go.

Perhaps Sidgwick resists (4) and claims that the alleged intuitions of egoism and utilitarianism are only apparent, not real. But then why think we have a dualism of practical reason? There could still be an epistemic conflict about which if either principle to accept, given that they can't both be self-evident. But this would be revisionary inasmuch as Sidgwick's dualism involves a normative, rather than an epistemic, conflict.

A second interpretation of the dualism results if we reject the verdictive reading of <ought>. The verdictive reading is one interpretation of the Sidgwick's claim that the methods articulate principles about what is "ultimately" reasonable to do. Sidgwick thinks that first principles articulate claims about ultimate or non-derivative moral factors. But if we read him this way, we need not accept the verdictive reading of moral principles. We might call the resulting reading of the dualism the *ultimate-unitary reading*.¹⁰ This reading allows us to understand moral principles as making claims about *an* ultimate right-making factor, rather than incompatible claims about *the* ultimate right-making property. On this reading, the dualism is a form of pluralism about ultimate right-making factors. There is nothing inconsistent about recognizing multiple right-making factors, so this reading avoids the worry about the verdictive-unitary reading that egoism and utilitarianism cannot each be an object of a fundamental intuition, because intuitions cannot be inconsistent. But, of course, that raises the question in what sense the dualism, on this reading, poses a conflict. The proponent of ultimate-unitary reading of the dualism should say that the conflict is *practical*, rather than theoretical. Provided the two methods are not extensionally equivalent in their demands, the practical problem is that one cannot always satisfy both sets of demands. Moreover, it does seem that if God could ensure that their coincidence was perfect, then this practical problem would vanish, but Sidgwick thinks we can have no independent scientific grounds for confidence in this divine reconciliation.

Yet a third interpretation of Sidgwick's dualism results from rejecting the unitary assumption that all methods and all <oughts> are of the same kind.¹¹ This yields a *pluralist* reading, which can be combined with either a verdictive or ultimate reading of <ought>. Sidgwick frequently describes the dualism as involving a conflict between duty and interest (*ME* xv-xvi, 5, 163-75, 503, 508). That suggests that utilitarianism is a theory of moral duty and that egoism is a theory of individual rationality. On this reading, the dualism represents the traditional amoralist worry about whether it is rational to be moral. If so, there are two kinds of <ought> in play — the moral <ought> and the <ought> of individual rationality. This means that the two methods can both be true, because they make different claims about different domains, rather than rivals claims about the same domain. So, this pluralist reading avoids the theoretical inconsistency that is hard to square with Sidgwick's belief that each method is the object of a fundamental intuition, which plagued the verdictive-unitary reading. But if there is no theoretical incompatibility between utilitarian morality and rational

¹⁰ Irwin's treatment of Sidgwick's dualism in *The Development of Ethics* §§1153-61, 1201-06 seems to be an ultimate-unitary reading.

¹¹ See David O. Brink, "Sidgwick's Dualism of Practical Reason" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1988): 291-307 and "Sidgwick and the Rationale for Rational Egoism" in *Essays on Henry Sidgwick*, ed. B. Schultz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

egoism, we need to ask what kind of conflict the pluralist reading can recognize. The pluralist reading, like the ultimate-unitary reading, can recognize a practical conflict. There is a practical conflict between the two methods just in case the coincidence in their demands is imperfect. For then it will not always be possible to act so as to satisfy the demands both of morality and rationality. Here too, a divine reconciliation of the demands of utilitarianism and egoism would remove the practical conflict, though Sidgwick thinks we have no good evidence of this supernatural hypothesis.

Unless we are prepared to treat Sidgwick's dualism as a mere epistemic conflict, we have good reason to avoid the verdictive-unitary reading. We should reject either the verdictive assumption, the unitary assumption, or both. There is good reason to prefer the non-derivative reading of ultimacy to the verdictive reading. We could then accept the ultimate-unitary reading of Sidgwick's dualism, treating the conflict as practical, rather than theoretical. But insofar as Sidgwick also treats the dualism as a conflict between duty and interest, rather than as conflict between duty and duty, there is also reason to take seriously the pluralist reading of the dualism, which rejects the unitary reading. The pluralist reading will also treat the dualism as a practical, rather than theoretical, conflict. In effect, the choice is between a rationalist reading of the dualism that is unitarian about <ought> but treats methods of ethics as ultimate but non-verdictive and a pluralist reading that treats the dualism as raising questions about the rational authority of morality. Each of these readings has an anchor in Sidgwick's text, and I don't see any clear evidence resolving the matter.

Fortunately, we need not decide between these two interpretations for purposes of assessing whether the British idealists face their own dualism. Both readings of Sidgwick's dualism treat it as a conflict between egocentric and impartial demands and, hence, as a conflict between self and others.

2. GREEN ON SELF-REALIZATION AND THE COMMON GOOD

Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* critiques empiricism and its ethical expression in hedonistic utilitarianism and defends a form of perfectionism that aims to synthesize the best elements in ancient and modern traditions in ethics. After a general attack on empiricist metaphysics and epistemology, he criticizes forms of ethical naturalism that ground morality in a science of desire and pleasure. Green rejects the hedonist conception of motivation, relying on Bishop Butler's distinction between the *power* and *authority* of desire.¹² Agents need not act on their strongest desires; they can and should act on the basis of a judgment about what it is best for them to do. This, Green claims, is to act on a conception of one's own overall good. Here, Green aligns himself with the Greek eudaimonist tradition, which he interprets in terms of self-realization. Because Green derives the demand for self-realization from an understanding of agency itself, he regards its demands as categorical, rather than hypothetical, imperatives. He agrees with those Greeks, such as Aristotle, who claim that the agent's own good requires a concern with the good of others, especially the common good. However, Green thinks that the Greeks had too narrow a conception of the common good. It is only with Christianity and enlightenment philosophical views, especially Kantian and utilitarian traditions in ethics, Green thinks, that the universal scope of the common good is made explicit. This leads him to claim that full self-realization can take place only when each rational agent regards all other rational agents as ends in themselves on whom his own happiness depends. In such a state, there can be no conflict or competition among the interests of different rational agents. Green thinks that moral progress consists in the gradual recognition and advancement of the common good.¹³

¹² Bishop Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at Rolls Chapel and A Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue*, ed. W.R. Matthews (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1953), Sermon II, paragraph 14.

¹³ For a fuller treatment of Green's perfectionism, see David O. Brink, *Perfectionism and the Common Good: Themes in the Philosophy of T.H. Green* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

Implicit in this narrative is a reconciliation of the dualism between the agent's own good and the good of others. The key components of this reconciliation are Green's conception of moral personality, his perfectionist conception of the good, and his recognition of the common good as contributing to the agent's own self-realization.

Moral personality involves agency and requires capacities for practical deliberation, which require self-consciousness. Non-responsible agents, such as brutes and small children, act on their strongest desires or, if they deliberate, deliberate only about the instrumental means to the satisfaction of their desires (§§86, 92, 96, 122, 125). By contrast, responsible agents must be able to distinguish between the *power* and *authority* of their desires, deliberate about the appropriateness of their desires, and regulate their actions in accord with these deliberations (§§92, 96, 103, 107, 220). Here, Green shows the influence of Butler's conception of human nature as involving the capacity to act on superior principles (*Sermons* Preface 13-24; II 14) and Kant's conception of rational nature as the capacity to resist determination by empirical motives and to set ends.¹⁴ This requires one to be able to distinguish oneself from particular desires and passions to frame the question about what it would be best for one on the whole to do (§§85-86).

Green thinks that the process of forming and acting on a conception of what it is best for me on the whole to do is for me to form and act from a conception of my own overall good (§§91-92, 96, 128).

A man, we will suppose, is acted on at once by an impulse to revenge an affront, by a bodily want, by a call of duty, and by fear of certain results incidental to his avenging the affront or obeying the call of duty. We will suppose further that each passion ... suggests a different line of action. So long as he is undecided how to act, all are, in a way, external to him. He presents them to himself as influences by which he is consciously affected but which are not he, and with none of which he yet identifies himself So long as this state of things continues, no moral effect ensues. It ensues when the man's relation to these influences is altered by his identifying himself with one of them, by his taking the object of one of the tendencies as for the time his good. This is to *will*, and is in itself moral action ... [§146].

Much as Kant thinks that rational nature provides both the ground and content of the moral law (*G* 427-29), Green thinks that moral personality as rational nature is not only a condition of agency but also the natural object of the will. Green criticizes various forms of hedonism, denying that agents must aim at their own pleasurable consciousness and recognizing "ideal goods" that involve an agent's activities and her relations to other members of her community (*PE* §§159-61, 357). He believes that self-realization, rather than pleasure, is the appropriate object of the will (§176). Moral personality involves a will that is expressive of the self. But if this self is a rational self, capable of acting on superior principles, then an agent's will should aim at activities that reflect and realize these superior principles. This explains why Green thinks that the good for an agent is a life of activities that involve rational control of thought and action (§§175, 180, 199, 234, 238-39, 247, 283).

This justification of self-realization also explains why Green treats the imperative of self-realization as a categorical imperative. Like Kant, Green seeks an account of the agent's duties that is grounded in her agency and does not depend upon contingent and variable inclinations. The goal of self-realization, Green thinks, meets this demand.

At the same time, because it [self-realization] is the fulfilment of himself, of that which he has in him to be, it will excite an interest in him like no other interest, different in kind from any

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trs. M. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), hereafter *G*, Prussian Academy pagination, 427-29, 446-48, 457, 459-60.

of his desires and aversions except such as are derived from it. It will be an interest as in an object conceived to be of unconditional value; one of which the value does not depend on any desire that the individual may at any time feel for it or for anything else, or on any pleasure that ... he may experience. ...[T]he desire for the object will be founded on a conception of its desirableness as a fulfilment of the capabilities of which a man is conscious in being conscious of himself. ... [Self-realization] will express itself in [the] imposition ... of rules requiring something to be done irrespectively of any inclination to do it, irrespectively of any desired end to which it is a means, *other than this end, which is desired because conceived as absolutely desirable*. [§193].

Because the demands of self-realization depend only on those very deliberative capacities that make one a responsible agent, they are categorical imperatives.

Self-realization is an *egocentric* doctrine. But Green insists that proper self-realization should aim at a *common good*, which includes the good of other rational agents. A self-realizing agent does not act on passing whims or passions but acts for the sake of ends perceived as valuable and perseveres on their behalf, making short-term investments and sacrifices for the sake of these ends. This is to value goals and projects in which I am involved that have some degree of permanence. Green thinks that the right sort of association with others extends this permanence in a natural way (§199). Indeed, Green regards interpersonal permanence as a kind of counter-balance to mortality or surrogate for immortality.

That determination of an animal organism by a self-conscious principle, which makes a man and is presupposed by the interest in permanent good, carries with it a certain appropriation by the man to himself of the beings with whom he is connected by natural ties, so that they become to him as himself and in providing for himself he provides for them. Projecting himself into the future as a permanent subject of possible well-being or ill-being — and he must so project himself in seeking for a permanent good — he associates his kindred with himself. It is this association that neutralises the effect which the anticipation of death must otherwise have on the demand for a permanent good [§231].

Green claims that interpersonal permanence is an extension of intrapersonal permanence, implying that the right sort of interpersonal association makes the good of one's associate part of one's own. Interpersonal association undermines the popular contrast between self-love and love of others (§232) and gives each associate a reason to pursue a *common good* (§202)

So far, this extension of the agent's interests outward is limited to family members and those with whom one has close associations. But Green thinks that agents have egocentric reasons to seek interpersonal permanence with *wide scope*. He believes that Aristotle recognized the way in which justice is connected with a common good, but he thinks that the Greeks had too narrow a conception of the common good.

The idea of a society of free and law-abiding persons, each his own master yet each his brother's keeper, was first definitely formed among the Greeks, and its formation was the condition of all subsequent progress in the direction described; but with them ... it was limited in its application to select groups of men surrounded by populations of aliens and slaves. In its universality, as capable of application to the whole human race, an attempt has first been made to act upon it in modern Christendom [§271].

Green sees moral progress as consisting in the gradual extension of the scope of the common good, which is only complete when each respects the claims made by other members of a maximally inclusive community of ends (§§214, 216, 244, 332). In this respect, Green's belief that an egocentric

concern with self-realization can and should support cosmopolitan concern for others may seem closer to the Stoic than the Aristotelian view.¹⁵

Green thinks that we each have reason to promote a common good. But he goes further, claiming that the common good involves no conflict between the good of the agent and the good of others.

[T]he only good in the pursuit of which there can be no competition of interests, the only good which is really common to all who may pursue it, is that which consists in the universal will to be good The conviction of a community of good for all men can never be really harmonized with our notions of what is good, so long as anything else than self-devotion to an ideal of mutual service is the end by reference to which those notions are formed [§244].

If the common good was genuinely non-competitive, this would eliminate any dualism between the agent's own good and the good of others.

At bottom, Green is a monist about practical reason, because his conception of practical reason and the personal good is egocentric. Though the ultimate ground of ethical concern is an egocentric form of self-realization, true self-realization involves interpersonal permanence and the pursuit of a genuinely universal conception of the common good in which there can be no competition among interests.

3. GREEN'S OWN DUALISM

In the course of defending hedonism, Sidgwick briefly addresses alternative conceptions of the personal good, including ones that understand the personal good to consist in self-realization, perfection, or virtue. Sidgwick nonetheless dismisses such conceptions as too indefinite (*ME* 91-2). Only hedonism, he thinks, is sufficiently definite to inform a serious method of ethics.

While *The Methods* discusses Green's critique of hedonism only in passing and simply dismisses Green's positive ethical doctrine, Sidgwick offers a more sustained assessment of Green's views in his *Lectures on the Ethics of T.H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau*. There, Sidgwick explains and criticizes the metaphysics, epistemology, and ethical theory of the *Prolegomena*. At one point, Sidgwick argues that Green cannot avoid his own dualism of practical reason. Despite limitations in Sidgwick's engagement with perfectionism, this criticism of Green deserves to be taken seriously.

Sidgwick detects an ambiguity in Green's conception of perfection between *perfection simpliciter* — the exercise of the full range of an individual's rational capacities — and *moral perfection* — the exercise of specifically moral capacities connected with the common good (*Lectures* 47, 61, 71). Sidgwick thinks that Green's waffling between perfection and moral perfection explains Green's vacillation about whether the virtuous person is really self-sacrificing (*Lectures* 65-68). If the agent's own good involves only moral perfection, then it's hard to see how morality could demand genuine self-sacrifice, as it seems to. However, if the agent's good consists in perfection generally, and not just moral perfection, then there is an element of the agent's good that morality might sacrifice. Sidgwick clearly thinks that the most plausible form of perfectionism must include non-moral elements and that morality can demand sacrifice. For this reason, Sidgwick thinks that despite all of Green's talk about a common, non-competitive good, Green cannot avoid recognizing his own dualism of practical reason between perfection of the agent and perfection of others (*Lectures* 57-58, 65, 69, 78, 106).

¹⁵ For some discussion of Greek commitments about the scope of the common good, see David O. Brink, "Eudaimonism and Cosmopolitan Concern" in *Virtue, Happiness, and Knowledge: Themes from the Work of Gail Fine and Terence Irwin*, ed. D. Brink, S. Meyer, and C. Shields (Oxford: Clarendon Press, forthcoming).

This seems right. On Green's view, proper self-realization implies that the good of each includes in part the good of others. This conclusion, he thinks, undermines the popular contrast between self-love and benevolence (*PE* §232). We should view those with whom we participate in such associations as "alter egos," for whom we care as we care about ourselves (§§191, 200). We should weigh their interests with our own and see ourselves as compensated when we make what would otherwise be sacrifices to them for the sake of the common good (§376). But Green goes further, claiming that when each is engaged in proper self-realization, there can be no conflict or competition of interests (§244).

But a completely non-competitive conception of the common good is hard to sustain. Even if the good of others is a necessary and distinctively valuable part of an agent's overall good, it can only be a proper part of the agent's good and cannot exhaust it. For if the good of each consisted only in the good of others, there would be nothing to ground anyone's good. A's good would refer to the good of B-D, B's good would refer to the good of A and C-D, and so on. To make sense of the good of each being part of the good of each, there must be some part of the good of each that can be characterized independently of the good of others. But then even if the good of others is part of an agent's overall good, it appears to be one aspect of an agent's overall good that must interact and may compete with more self-confined aspects. When I expend intellectual, emotional, and financial resources on meeting the legitimate claims of others, this may contribute to my overall good in distinctive ways. But it also consumes resources that might have been spent on my own education, vocation, or avocations. There are opportunity costs to every commitment, even especially important commitments, and sometimes the opportunity costs of important commitments are themselves important.

This vindicates Sidgwick's claim that perfection and moral perfection are distinct. But then many sacrifices that the perfection of others demands will be genuine, and not all of them will be fully compensable. And this is enough to raise the specter that there will be a kind of dualism of practical reason, not exactly between self and others, but between self-confined and other-regarding aspects of one's own perfection.

As long as the dualism of practical reason does not result in inconsistency or incoherence, it need not be a fatal flaw. But the question remains whether it's better to think of the conflict between self and others in hedonistic terms, as Sidgwick does, or in perfectionist terms, as Green does. There is a large conceptual gap for Sidgwick between the agent's own pleasure and aggregate pleasure. The gap can be narrowed by appeal to strategic considerations. But there is no intrinsic connection between the two ends and no reason the two demands cannot regularly conflict. By contrast, the conceptual gap between Green's two demands seems smaller. Self-realization has an essential other-regarding component such that one cannot fully realize himself without seeking a larger, permanent, and interpersonal good. Moreover, the common good is conceived in terms of the Kantian Humanity formula, which requires that one respect the rational agency of others and never treat other persons as mere means (*PE* §§214-17). That implies a conception of the common good in which each must participate and which cannot use some as a mere means to the improvement of others. This gives us some reason to think that any dualism that Green must recognize is not as stark as the dualism that Sidgwick recognizes.

4. BRADLEY ON SELF-REALIZATION AND MY STATION AND ITS DUTIES

Like Green, Bradley accepts a form of compatibilism about determinism and responsibility, he rejects psychological egoism and hedonism, and he defends an ethics of self-realization that he thinks eliminates or reduces the conflict between the individual's own good and the good of others. It is often said that Green and Bradley mix their Kant and Hegel in different ratios, with Green being significantly more Kantian (and Aristotelian) than Hegelian and Bradley being significantly more

Hegelian than Kantian (*Lectures* 3).¹⁶ This contrast is on display in Bradley's account of the role of a social or common good in self-realization in *Ethical Studies*.

In *Ethical Studies* Bradley claims that the end of ethical life is self-realization (*ES* 125, 224-25) and criticizes both hedonistic and Kantian conceptions of the end (essays III-IV). In the essay "My Station and its Duties" he argues that our social world is what supplies the content for the morality. He begins by criticizing individualism as a metaphysical and moral thesis, claiming that one's personality and character are shaped from the beginning by the communities — especially the family, civil society, and the state — to which one belongs (*ES* 163-74).

What we mean to say is, that he is what he is because he is a born and educated social being, and a member of an individual social organism; that if you make an abstraction of all this, which is the same to him and in others, what you have left is not an Englishman, nor a man, but some I know not what residuum, which never has existed by itself, and does not so exist [*ES* 166].

Bradley thinks that this sort of social embeddedness supplies the content of self-realization. Because each is essentially part of a community (or communities), her self-realization requires embracing her "station and its duties" (*ES* 173).

Leaving out of sight the question of a society wider than the state, we must say that a man's life with its moral duties is in the main filled up by his station in that system of wholes which the state is, and that this, partly by its laws and institutions, and still more by its spirit, gives him the life which he does live and ought to live [*ES* 174].

In this way, Bradley claims, socially embedded self-realization solves the problem of emptiness in Kantian ethics (*ES* 174-76).

Bradley thinks that this conception of self-realization also allows us to overcome what would otherwise be the dualism between my good and the good of others. For someone like Sidgwick, who conceives of the good hedonistically, my own good and the good of others are conceptually independent, which makes the dualism between duty and interest especially recalcitrant. But if the good of each consists in performing her social role, then there seems to be no inherent competition in the good of different individuals. Bradley asks why socially embedded self-realization does not recognize a conflict between duty and interest.

It is because "my station and its duties" teaches us to identify others and ourselves with the station we fill; to consider that as good, and by virtue of that to consider others and ourselves good too [*ES* 181].

This doctrine also paves the way for the Hegelian value of *reconciliation*, which allows agents to overcome alienation toward and affirm membership in their social world (*ES* 184).

5. BRADLEY'S OWN DUALISM

Sidgwick had even less patience with Bradley than with Green, so there is no sustained engagement with Bradley of the sort we find with Green in Sidgwick's *Lectures*.¹⁷ Nonetheless,

¹⁶ Also see A.E. Taylor's obituaries of Bradley in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 11 (1925-25): 458-68 and *Mind* 34 (1925): 1-12 and D.G. Ritchie, *The Principles of State Interference: Four Essays on the Political Philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer, J.S. Mill, and T.H. Green* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1891), 139-40.

¹⁷ Sidgwick reviewed *Ethical Studies* — Henry Sidgwick, "Bradley's *Ethical Studies* *Mind* 4 (1876): 545-49. He describes Bradley's aim as "not merely directly dogmatic, but even vehemently propagandist," observes that

Sidgwick's claim that the ethics of self-realization cannot avoid its own dualism applies to Bradley too. There are at least two kinds of worries about my station and its duties that prevent Bradley from avoiding a dualism of self and others.

One worry concerns Bradley's *anti-individualism*. Individuals may be parts of groups, but it is wrong to identify their interests with that of the group. A group pursuing its own interests can harm its members. One might well agree that individuals are raised and develop within groups, that their natures are profoundly affected by group membership, and that they tend to prosper in groups. But this is compatible with recognizing that social groups are composed of individuals, that the nature of the groups can depend on the nature and contributions of individual members, and that groups can harm the interests of their individual members. This requires seeing individual interests as potentially independent of group interests.

Another worry concerns Bradley's *conservatism*. He seems to think that existing social relations — my place in a social network — determines not only *to whom* I have duties but also *the content* of these duties. But what if my social group is hierarchical and discriminatory or my role in my family or political community is that of subordinate with responsibilities to others and no rights or privileges? Bradley seems to think that it is my duty to conform to existing social roles. But it's hard to see why that should be my moral duty or why I should conceive my good to lie in that direction. Perhaps my good is socially embedded in the sense that I can only achieve a fuller more permanent good for myself (to use Green's language) by participating in a larger group that extends beyond me. Perhaps my existing social relations even determine whose good I should make my own. But why should the social role I've inherited be perpetuated if that is not in my interest or theirs? Here the Kantian idea that I have interests as a moral person that have authority over my contingent and partly socially determined interests and desires, which Green embraces and Bradley rejects, provides one basis for criticizing existing forms of social organization and interpersonal relations.

This conservatism fits with Bradley's Hegelian historicism, according to which it is philosophy's job to understand the world and its social condition, not to change or reform it.

How do I get to know in particular what is right and wrong? And here again we find a strangely erroneous preconception. It is thought that moral philosophy has to accomplish this task for us Well, we first remark, and with some confidence, that there cannot be a moral philosophy which will tell us what in particular we are to do, and also that it is not the business of philosophy to do so. All philosophy has to do is "to understand what is," and moral philosophy has to understand morals which exist, not to make them or give directions for making them [ES 193].

At some moments, Bradley suggests that this conservative role is appropriate for moral philosophy because there is no distinction between positive morality and critical morality, no moral standard independent of the mores of a given historical period and society (ES 189-90). If so, he abandons the standard of practical reason that Kant and Green think allow us to measure the adequacy of existing institutions and relationships and call for progressive reforms.

Though Bradley's claims about my station and its duties are open to these criticisms, it is noteworthy that he concludes this essay by suggesting that the moral doctrine of my station and its duties is incomplete (ES 202-06). In particular, he mentions four concerns about the claim that performing my socially defined role assures my personal good (ES 203-04).

"just at the *nodes* of his argument, he lapses provokingly into mere debating-club rhetoric," and concludes that "really penetrating criticism, especially in ethics, requires a patient effort of sympathy which Mr. Bradley never learned to make, and a tranquility of temper which he seems incapable of maintaining" (545). One can sympathize with Sidgwick's assessment while recognizing value in Bradley's discussion.

1. My community and socially defined role might be objectionable.
2. In the best community, the interests of the individual and the interests of the whole are generally but imperfectly coincident.
3. Even a good community cannot prevent bad fortune from befalling individuals.
4. Members may have to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the community.

These claims take back much of what went before.

(1) contradicts or at least qualifies Bradley's historicism and relativism. It presupposes a standard against which existing communities can be measured and on the basis of which reforms might make sense. Perhaps the standard itself is imminent in history and imperfectly embodied at particular historical moments, as Hegel thought freedom is. If so, it is problematic to appeal to existing social relations to determine the content of one's moral obligations.

(2) implies that the good of individuals and of the groups of which they are a part can come apart, and (4) implies that concern for others may require individual sacrifice. Earlier, Bradley claimed that because I am essentially part of a group my good must be specified in terms of my role within the group. However, (2)-(4) imply that an individual's good is not exhausted by his social role. But then it's doubtful that Bradley's anti-individualism fully overcomes the dualism between the agent's good and the good of others.

These issues are pursued further in the next essay, "Ideal Morality," in which Bradley suggests that the picture of self-realization involving my station and its duties is one-sided.¹⁸ Though the details are not clear, he claims that self-realization has both social and non-social dimensions (*ES* 219). Because he thinks that morality is pervasive, extending to every conceivable practical issue (*ES* 216-17), this is apparently a distinction within moral duty, not one between duty and interest (*ES* 224-25). The chief part of the non-social element of perfection seems to be the pursuit of truth and beauty embodied in the personal pursuit of sciences and arts (*ES* 222-23). This rather intellectualist conception of non-social good seems overly narrow, but it is not clear if it is meant to be exhaustive. It does open up the possibility of conflicts between moral perfection and other aspects of perfection. He supposes that such conflicts will be limited, though the grounds for this optimism are unclear. Sidgwick's concern that Green must recognize his own kind of dualism between self and others applies equally to Bradley.

6. CONCLUSION

Sidgwick reluctantly embraced a dualism of practical reason between egocentric and impartial hedonism. By contrast, the British idealists criticized hedonism and embraced a perfectionist ethical theory of self-realization that they believed overcame the dualism between self and others. At the foundational level, self-realization is an egocentric ethical theory. But for both Green and Bradley agents can only fully perfect their nature in a community, which establishes a common good on which the self-realization of each depends. In this way, Green and Bradley think that perfectionism resolves Sidgwick's dualism. However, Sidgwick is right to think that the idealists must face their own dualism between the agent's own perfection and the perfection of others. Even if the perfection of each does depend on the perfection of others, there is no conception of the common good that is coherent and attractive that will preclude conflicts between the agent's own good and the good of others.

That doesn't mean that the idealists simply reproduce Sidgwick's dualism. A perfectionist dualism is different than a hedonistic dualism. The hedonist sees no inherent or intrinsic connection between the good of different people. As a result, Sidgwick's dualism produces a gap between self and others that can be bridged only by instrumental means that establish the strategic advantages of

¹⁸ This point is rightly emphasized in Peter Nicholson, *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 6-7, 23, 33-39.

other-regarding concern. By contrast, the perfectionist can understand ways in which the right forms of interpersonal association extend an agent's interests and contribute constitutively to her self-realization. This may not eliminate potential conflict between the perfection of the agent and others, but it constrains its extent.

For these reasons, Green's dualism may be less stark than Sidgwick's. But that depends in part on Green's Aristotelian and Kantian claims about perfection and the common good, which both explain the agent's interest in the common good and ensure a conception of the common good that is sensitive to the self-realization of each. It's harder for Bradley to justify his optimism about the congruence of social and non-social aspects of self-realization, at least insofar as his conservative and anti-individualist commitments tend to undercut the basis for self-realization. If so, Green may be in a stronger position than Bradley to transform, if not eliminate, Sidgwick's dualism of practical reason.