



Essays on Henry Sidgwick.

Review Author[s]:
Peter Singer

Ethics, Vol. 104, No. 3 (Apr., 1994), 631-633.

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Ethics is currently published by The University of Chicago Press.

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that the objection to such a choice would not disappear if it turned out that no actual person's interests were injured. Further, Heyd's view also implies that if it is not contrary to the interests of actual people to deplete drastically the earth's resources, thereby causing future potential people to lead miserable lives, then it would not be wrong to perform such an action. But this implication of Heyd's view strikes me as repugnant. Further still, because Heyd rejects impersonal conceptions of value, his approach to genetical problems leaves unjustified the strongly felt conviction that a world of a million people leading flourishing lives is better than a world of a million people leading hellish lives.

Heyd's response to these and other counterexamples to his view is to say, first, that they are highly unrealistic given plausible assumptions about human nature and, second, that rival views are even more unacceptable. As I have already suggested, I think Heyd fails to show that all rights-based views are without promise, and so his second response is not established. Further, I think his first response is not one that is legitimately available to him. As I pointed out above, one of the main reasons he rejects impersonal values is because they lead to deeply counterintuitive and paradoxical results when applied to genetical problems. But to demonstrate the counterintuitive nature of impersonal approaches to solving genetical problems, Heyd relies on several rather unrealistic thought-experiments. But if such thought-experiments are legitimately employed against impersonal views, it should also be legitimate to use them when assessing Heyd's person-affecting approach. Alternatively, if Heyd feels that these unrealistic counterexamples should not be employed against his view, it is difficult to see why one could legitimately employ them against an impersonal approach. And if they cannot be so utilized, then Heyd will not be able to employ his primary argument against impersonal approaches to these problems. Consequently, impersonal approaches to genetical problems may also hold some promise. Thus, it seems to me that Heyd's claim that the only way to solve genetical problems is by appealing to their effects on actual people is not convincingly established. A person-affecting approach such as his seems to be unable to resolve genetical problems satisfactorily, and many rival approaches to solving such problems remain viable possibilities.

In conclusion, this book contains the most sustained argument for a person-affecting solution to genetical problems in the literature. For those interested in such problems, this alone is reason enough to read Heyd's book. But, in the final analysis, I found Heyd's favored approach to these problems to be inadequate.

DORAN SMOLKIN
Kansas State University

Schultz, Bart, ed. *Essays on Henry Sidgwick*.
 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Pp. 421. \$65.00 (cloth).

This substantial volume of scholarly papers is the outcome of a conference, "Henry Sidgwick as Philosopher and Historian," claimed by its organizer/

editor to be the first meeting ever devoted solely to Sidgwick. If so, such a meeting was long overdue. Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics* has few rivals for the care and thoroughness with which it examines its subject matter, and the issues with which it grapples are now recognized as central to our understanding of ethics and practical reason. Sidgwick may have lacked the reforming zeal of Jeremy Bentham, or the easy style of John Stuart Mill, but he was a better philosopher than either of them.

The book begins with a long and wide-ranging introduction by the editor that places Sidgwick's work in the context of issues raised by such contemporary philosophers as Derek Parfit, Thomas Nagel, John Rawls, and Richard Rorty. Then come four essays grouped under the heading "Common-sense Morality, Deontology, Utilitarianism"—in other words, essays on Sidgwick's confrontation with nonconsequentialist moral theories. Three of these (by Marcus Singer, J. B. Schneewind, and Alan Donagan) are substantially or entirely previously published works. Marcus Singer's essay is an attempted coupling of part of his entry titled "Nineteenth-Century British Ethics" from the recently published *Encyclopedia of Ethics* edited by Lawrence Becker and Charlotte Becker ([New York: Garland, 1992], pp. 510–15), and part of an article from *History of Philosophy Quarterly* ("Common Sense and Paradox in Sidgwick's Ethics," vol. 3 [1986], pp. 65–78). The former portion reads very much like an encyclopedia entry, and on the whole, I think the marriage is an unhappy one. Schneewind's article appeared in the *Monist* in 1974 ("Sidgwick and the Cambridge Moralists," vol. 58, pp. 371–404), and although it shows the author's usual scholarly virtues, serious Sidgwick scholars will already know it, or the same author's treatment of this territory in his splendid *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977). Alan Donagan's essay, "Sidgwick and Whewellian Intuitionism," has also been around for a long time, coming from the 1977 volume of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (vol. 7, pp. 447–65). Russell Hardin's is a relatively brief essay that supports Sidgwick's opposition to radical moral change; instead, Hardin concludes, moral theories must accept most of the existing moral order and seek to build outward.

The next section is on egoism and the famous "dualism of practical reason" that Sidgwick finds to hold between egoism and impartial benevolence. This begins with John Mackie's justly celebrated essay "Sidgwick's Pessimism," an essay that ends "The Cosmos of Duty is Indeed a Chaos." I leave it to readers who do not know this work to find out why. William Frankena then offers a historical treatment of the dualism, drawing on Sidgwick's *Outlines of the History of Ethics* as well as *The Methods of Ethics*. David Brink's long contribution is a careful examination and defense of Sidgwick's view that egoism can be rational, despite attacks (of the type later developed by Nagel and Parfit) from those who deny that the egoist can simultaneously insist on impartiality between her own present and future moments of existence, but partiality between her own interests and those of other sentient beings. This is certainly one of the most philosophically significant new essays in this volume. Another serious philosophical contribution is the next essay, by John Deigh, on Sidgwick's intuitionist account of the nature of ethical judgment. This essay began life as comments on Brink's essay, but clearly developed its own theme and a distinctive interpretation of Sidgwick's intuitionism.

The third section is on the goal: "Hedonism, Good, Perfection." Thomas Christiano dissects Sidgwick's argument for the claim that pleasure is the good, offering illumination, criticisms, and suggestions for reconstruction. In Christiano's version, we can affirm that pleasure is the good in the sense that we have more evidence for this conception of the good than for any other. The other two essays in this section, by T. H. Irwin and Nicholas P. White, discuss Sidgwick's understanding of Greek ethics. Irwin argues that Sidgwick's philosophical views distorted his understanding of Aristotle, while White argues convincingly that the difference between modern and ancient ethics over the imperative nature of ethics is not as great as Sidgwick (and many contemporary philosophers, e.g., G. E. M. Anscombe) have believed.

The final section of the book focuses on Sidgwick's historical and political writings and consists of two revised versions of previously published essays, by Stefan Collani and James Kloppenberg.

In summary, only true Sidgwick scholars will want to read this book from cover to cover. Unless they have deep pockets, they might have preferred a slimmer volume with the new essays only. Of these new essays, however, it can at least be said that many of them advance the discussion of important issues not only in Sidgwick's ethics, but in ethics simpliciter.

PETER SINGER
Monash University

Nagel, Thomas. *Equality and Partiality*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. x+186. \$19.95 (cloth).

Nagel, in this book, extends to political philosophy the general treatment of philosophical problems he gave in *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). The central problem of political philosophy, he tells us, concerns conflict between the interests of individuals and the demands of collective life. To resolve this problem, we seek an ideal political union, one that would receive the endorsement of every member and that would, through its collective arrangements, satisfactorily meet the needs of each. Finding such an ideal, however, requires striking the right balance between the requirement that each individual be given enough space to pursue his or her idea of the good life and the requirement that the benefits and burdens of society be fairly shared among all. What the right balance is and whether it could be struck are the two prongs of political philosophy's central problem.

Nagel believes this problem, like central problems in other branches of philosophy, is traceable to a tension, which exists within each human being, between a view of things from the standpoint of that person's current, local situation, the personal standpoint, and a view of things from the standpoint of complete objectivity with respect to the person's situation and everyone else's, the impersonal standpoint. In moral and political philosophy this tension is realized in Sidgwick's dualism of practical reason. It comes from the disharmony in the motives that derive from these standpoints, between personal desires and attachments, on the one hand, and a benevolent inclination toward