Schultz's Sidgwick

ANTHONY SKELTON
The University of Western Ontario

Bart Schultz's *Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Sidgwick. In this article, I direct my attention for the most part to one aspect of what Schultz says about Sidgwick's masterpiece, *The Methods of Ethics*, as well as to what he does not say about Sidgwick's illuminating but neglected work *Practical Ethics*. This article is divided into three sections. In the first, I argue that there is a problem with Schultz's endorsement of the view that Sidgwick's moral epistemology combines elements of both coherentism and foundationalism. In the second, I argue that Schultz has failed to do justice to Sidgwick's mature views in *Practical Ethics*. In the final section, I briefly say something about Schultz's suggestion that Sidgwick succumbed to both racism and dishonesty.

Bart Schultz has done much in the last decade and a half to promote the study of Henry Sidgwick. It is due in part to Schultz that Sidgwick studies are at present experiencing something of a renaissance. It is therefore with great anticipation that one reads *Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe. An Intellectual Biography*.[1] Schultz's general aim is to situate Sidgwick and his intellectual views in their historical and social context to determine how his '"inner intellectual life" ultimately evolved, how he became what he was' (3). He examines Sidgwick's personal life, his theoretical views, his social milieu, and their complex interrelations. The book is dense and wide-ranging. It presents the most comprehensive view of Sidgwick the man to date. It draws on his works in philosophy, economics, politics, history, literature, and parapsychology, among others. Schultz's approach relies as much on philosophical and scholarly texts as it does on diaries, letters and other archival material. The book displays an impressive grasp of Sidgwick's corpus, the trends and individuals that influenced him. It is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Sidgwick.

To do justice to its fullness would require more space than has been allotted to me here. I will have to pass over most of the illuminating discussion of Sidgwick's work on politics, economics and paranormal phenomena. I will say nothing specific about the discussion of Sidgwick's relationship with the gay poet and writer John Addington Symonds and other closeted homosexuals with whom Sidgwick fostered intimate relationships. Instead, I will direct my attention for the

[1] Bart Schultz, *Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe. An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, 2004). All bare parenthetical numbers in the text refer to this work.

© 2007 Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S0953820806002378
Utilitas Vol. 19, No. 1, March 2007
Printed in the United Kingdom

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

most part to one aspect of what Schultz does say about Sidgwick's masterpiece, *The Methods of Ethics*, as well as to what he does not say of Sidgwick's illuminating but neglected work *Practical Ethics*.[2]

This article is divided into three sections. In the first, I argue that there is a problem with Schultz's endorsement of the view that Sidgwick's moral epistemology combines elements of both coherentism and foundationalism. In the second, I argue that Schultz has failed to do justice to Sidgwick's mature views in PE. In the final section, I say something about Schultz's suggestion that Sidgwick succumbed to both racism and dishonesty.

I

Sidgwick's early life, especially his decade of 'storm and stress' (1859–69), is the focus of the book's early chapters. They provide much insight into the early forces shaping his intellectual views. Noteworthy is Schultz's discussion of how Sidgwick's participation during his undergraduate days in the clandestine group the Apostles made him a firm believer in the fecundity of exploring the 'deepest problems of human life' through candid, open debate with intimate friends (often well out of view of the public and religious authorities). The following matters troubled Sidgwick during his stormy decade: the truth of Christianity, the relationship between self-interest and duty, and the ethics of maintaining his Trinity College Fellowship given his doubts about Christianity.

Because of his anxieties about Christianity he embarked on an exhaustive study of biblical criticism, Hebrew and Arabic so that he might be better able to study the original sources of the Bible. These studies did not remedy his doubts, and by the middle of the decade his doubts turned to skepticism. The skepticism, in turn, led to an ethical crisis. Might he in good conscience retain his Fellowship despite his doubts about the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, subscription to which was then legally required of Fellows? In June 1869, after an attempt to consult Mill about the issue, he decided that he should resign his Fellowship, the beneficial retention of which was outweighed by the harm of dishonest subscription. The upshot was financially difficult but intellectually quite fruitful. 'I did my very best to decide the question methodically on general principles, but I found

[2] Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th edn. (London, 1907) and Henry Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics: A Collection of Addresses and Essays*, ed. Sissela Bok (Oxford, 1998). These works are hereinafter cited as ME and PE respectively. References to the first edition of ME take the form ME1. Abbreviations for other works are as follows: EP = 'The Establishment of Ethical First Principles', *Mind* 4 (1879); FC = 'Some Fundamental Ethical Controversies', *Mind* 14 (1889); PC = 'Professor Calderwood on Intuitionism in Morals', *Mind* 1 (1876).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

it very difficult, and I may say that it was while struggling with the difficulty thence arising that I went through a good deal of the thought that was ultimately systematized in the *Methods of Ethics*.'[3]

Schultz discusses ME in chapter 4. He spends much time reckoning with Robert Shaver's recent account of Sidgwick.[4] Among other things, Shaver defends a specific understanding of Sidgwick's moral epistemology, which Schultz endorses (190, 200–4).[5] This view holds that Sidgwick's moral epistemology combines elements of both foundationalism and coherentism. The idea is that Sidgwick grants probative status to common-sense morality and that he appeals to consistency or coherence between it and his intuitions (i.e. directly justified beliefs) in order to amplify the justification of the latter. Propositions so warranted are called higher certainties (190).[6]

Sidgwick claims that intuitions are indispensable to ethics (ME 97–8; PC 564). He seems to hold that self-evident propositions are the only object of intuitions (ME 341; PC 565). He is a fallibilist, however. He thinks that despite our best efforts, our intuitions may be erroneous. What we take to be intuitively justified or self-evident may in fact turn out to be false or incorrect (ME 211; EP 108). How do we avoid error in our intuitions? Enter Sidgwick's four 'conditions' for self-evidence (ME 338).[7] Error is avoided by insisting that the terms of the proposition in question be clear and precise (ME 338), and by ensuring that the self-evidence of the proposition is 'ascertained by careful reflection' unencumbered by distorting influences (e.g. bias, habit, etc.) (ME 339–41). The proposition in question must be consistent with other propositions found to be self-evident, and doubt or dissent from the proposition must be absent or explained away, since 'denial by another of a proposition that I have affirmed has a tendency to impair my confidence in its validity' (ME 341).

The foundationalism of the view is clear. Coherence considerations enter the picture through a particular understanding of conditions three and four. On the account favoured by Schultz, the application of the consistency and disagreement tests involves appealing in part to common-sense morality to amplify the justification of the intuition or

[3] Eleanor Sidgwick and Arthur Sidgwick (eds.) *Henry Sidgwick, A Memoir* (London, 1906), p. 38.

[4] Robert Shaver, *Rational Egoism: An Interpretive and Critical History* (Cambridge, 1999), ch. 3.

[5] Shaver, *Rational*, pp. 62–74. A similar view is defended in Roger Crisp, 'Sidgwick and the Boundaries of Intuitionism', *Ethical Intuitionism: Re-evaluations*, ed. Philip Stratton-Lake (Oxford, 2002).

[6] See also Shaver, *Rational*, pp. 64 and 66.

[7] It is important to be clear here. Sidgwick describes himself as using these tests to determine the self-evidence of certain propositions. However, this is misleading. His real concern is with using the tests to ascertain the truth of the propositions he examines. This is clear from the way in which he uses the tests.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

putatively self-evident truth previously arrived at (implying that the tests outlined above are for 'highest certainty' not self-evidence). Noting consistency with common-sense morality and agreement with others provides more reason to believe an intuition. The position relies on the idea that Sidgwick is appealing here to external criteria to amplify warrant rather than relying on these conditions as a means of arriving at an intuition *sans* error.

I find this understanding of the conditions problematic since Sidgwick (a) calls for consistency between only intuitions or self-evident truths[8] and (b) he holds that the 'absence of... disagreement must remain an indispensable *negative* condition of the certainty of our beliefs' (ME 342; italics added). When he notes that both Kant and Clarke agree to certain of his intuitions he does not say that he therefore has further reason to believe them; instead, he says only that were there disagreement he would 'rely less confidently' on them (ME 384).

The more pressing issue, however, is the fact that elements of the above view are in conflict with some of Schultz's remarks about Sidgwick's view of common-sense morality. According to the view that Schultz holds Sidgwick maintains that common-sense morality possesses 'imperfect certitude' or 'initial authority' (202).[9] Before Schultz can claim this, however, he needs to sort out the tension that exists between his endorsement of this view and the evidence that he provides for thinking that Sidgwick does not grant common-sense morality imperfect certitude or initial authority. He repeatedly claims, for instance, that Sidgwick has disdain for common-sense morality as evidenced in his discourse with Symonds and that he relies on it for merely strategic reasons (127, 181, 187, 249, and 511–12). He further claims that Sidgwick treats common-sense morality in the same way that Mill does in his *Utilitarianism* (185–7).[10] Indeed, Schultz claims that Sidgwick's view of common-sense morality occupies 'the Millian space between' Cumberland, on the one hand, whose handling of common-sense morality is 'too purely conservative', and Bentham, on the other, who is 'too purely destructive' (187). In Mill's view, however, common-sense moral beliefs represent no more than 'beliefs as to the effects of some actions on their [mankind's] happiness'.[11] This is, of course, to assign to common sense a different status from the one that the epistemology above relies on. This leaves it unclear what Schultz's view ultimately is. The question remains: what is Sidgwick's view of common-sense morality? Is it Millian or does it, contra Mill,

[8] See Shaver, *Rational*, pp. 65–6 for a different understanding of this test. For an objection to Shaver, see my 'Reasoning towards Utilitarianism: Learning from Sidgwick' (PhD Diss.: University of Toronto, 2005).

[9] See also Shaver, *Rational*, p. 70 and Crisp, 'Boundaries', p. 68.

[10] John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford, 1998), ch. 2, para. 24.

[11] Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2, para. 24.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

possess imperfect certitude or initial credibility? In the remainder of this section I'll provide some reasons for thinking that Sidgwick does not hold that common-sense morality possesses imperfect certitude.

The idea behind the mixed epistemology that Schultz subscribes to seems to be that common sense has some sort of built-in, though not final, epistemic authority for Sidgwick (FC 474, ME 373).[12] It is clear that Sidgwick rejects the idea that the principles of common-sense morality are self-evident. He claims that by 'direct reflection' he knows that they are 'not self-evident . . . they present themselves as propositions requiring rational justification of some kind' (ME 383). They are not intuitions (PC 565): part of the goal of ME is to demonstrate the 'non-intuitive character of what they [proponents of common-sense morality] took for intuitions' (PC 565). Indeed, he says 'the only moral intuitions which sound philosophy can accept as ultimately valid are those which at the same time provide the only possible philosophical basis of the Utilitarian creed' (PC 564).

When the rational justification of common-sense morality is at issue, he appeals to the intuitions that buttress utilitarianism or to utilitarianism itself. His examination of the rules of common-sense morality reveals 'in each case [that] what at first seemed like an intuition turns out to be either the mere expression of a vague impulse, needing regulation and limitation which it cannot itself supply, but which must be drawn from some other source: or a current opinion, the reasonableness of which has still to be shown by a reference to some other principle' (ME 343). Indeed, were common sense to have some independent justification itself, then it would be false to say that a fully coherent arrangement of common-sense moral norms is no more than 'an accidental aggregate of precepts' (ME 102).[13]

But isn't the morality presented in Book III, chapters IV–X in part the data that are called on to support whatever theoretical view of morality we arrive at?[14] Sidgwick denies this:

> It should be borne in mind throughout the discussion carried out in this and the next six chapters that what we are primarily endeavouring to ascertain is not true morality but the morality of Common Sense: so that if any moral

[12] The passages from FC 474 and ME 373 that seem to support this view require reinterpretation if what I go on to say is correct. I attempt this reinterpretation in 'Reasoning towards Utilitarianism'.

[13] In the same place where Sidgwick makes this statement he remarks that philosophical intuitionism accepts 'the morality of common sense as in the main *sound* . . . [while still attempting] to find for it a philosophic basis which it does not itself offer' (ME 102; italics added). Isn't this clearly a case in which Sidgwick grants common-sense morality probative status? Not necessarily, for he might be here equating being sound with being useful as a practical guide. He seems to do just this at various places. See ME xx–xi and 361.

[14] For this point, see J. B. Schneewind, *Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 350–1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

proposition is admitted to be paradoxical, the admission excludes it, – not as being necessarily false, but as being not what Common Sense holds. (ME 263n.)

The issue of truth enters only in Book III, chapter XI when Sidgwick endeavors to determine whether the rules of common-sense morality 'possess characteristics by which self-evident propositions are distinguished from mere opinions' (ME 338). He states: 'Before [referring to chapters IV–X of Book III], our primary aim was to ascertain impartially what the deliverances of Common Sense actually are: we have now to ask how far these enunciations can claim to be classed as Intuitive Truths' (ME 343). This seems to suggest that it is only at this point that he is concerned to determine the truth of the edicts of common-sense morality. After the application of the tests that I referred to above he finds that from 'such regulation of conduct as the Common Sense of mankind really supports, no proposition can be elicited which, when fairly contemplated, even appears to have the characteristic of a scientific axiom' (ME 360). Since for Sidgwick common sense fails to offer us any intuitions he claims that at best it may be 'adequate to give practical guidance to common people in common circumstances' (ME 361). He does not at this time suggest that common sense offers us partial truths or imperfect certitudes.[15] Indeed, the next time he discusses the dictates of common sense he contends that 'it would seem that the practical determination of Right Conduct depends on the determination of Ultimate Good . . . the commonly received maxims of Duty . . . are found when closely examined to contain an implicit subordination to the more general principles of Prudence and Benevolence' (ME 391). This suggests that the 'received maxims of Duty' (that is, common sense) rely on these other truths for their justification (ME 391).

Furthermore, it is not even clear what on Sidgwick's view could provide for the epistemic credibility of common-sense morality other than a fundamental intuition. It is ruled out that it is some sort of reflection for Sidgwick.[16] He finds that upon reflection the dictates of common sense require rational justification (ME 383; PC 565). Perhaps no reflection is required. Perhaps the fact that a dictate is part of common-sense morality is enough to provide it with some degree (however slight) of epistemic credibility.[17] This is implausible. It would mean granting probative value to a proposition on no other ground than that it is what people (unreflectively) simply happen to believe, and 'that we believe something' does not prima facie look

[15] But see below for more about this statement.
[16] *Pace* Shaver, *Rational*, p. 73.
[17] Crisp, 'Boundaries', p. 69.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to be an especially compelling reason in favour of belief. It would imply that all beliefs we hold are prima facie epistemic assets. Schultz claims that common-sense morality has initial credibility because 'it represents the experience of many generations, experience suggesting some presumptive evolutionary success' (202). But it is far from clear that this is Sidgwick's view, and Schultz provides no textual evidence to suggest that it is Sidgwick's view. Sidgwick does speak of the 'general presumption which evolution afforded that moral sentiments and opinions would point to conduct conducive to general happiness' (ME xxi). However, he takes this to be a reason in favour of using aspects of common-sense morality for practical guidance not for thinking that common-sense morality possesses imperfect certitude.

At the conclusion of his discussion of common-sense morality he remarks of common-sense morality that it '*may* still be perfectly adequate to give practical guidance to common people in common circumstances' even though it offers us no intuitions (ME 361; italics added; see also ME 466). It has been suggested that Sidgwick is here claiming that common-sense morality yields 'adequate [intuitive knowledge] for (most) practical purposes'.[18] But this is much too quick. Sidgwick says here only that common-sense morality 'may' be perfectly adequate for practice, so his claim can at most be that it 'may' provide us with adequate knowledge. The only stage at which he says that indeed common sense should be our decision procedure is after he has established that it has its 'basis' in utilitarianism because its main tenets are 'unconsciously' or 'inchoately and imperfectly' utilitarian (ME 424 and 427; see also 454 and 463).[19] This suggests that for Sidgwick common-sense morality *can* only serve as a practical guide, in so far as it is justified by utilitarianism (ME 460–1, 467).[20] But isn't it absurd to hold that we only know certain common-sense moral

[18] John Skorupski, 'Three Methods and a Dualism', *Henry Sidgwick*, ed. Ross Harrison (Oxford, 2001), p. 64.

[19] For a discussion of this claim see Allan Gibbard, 'Inchoately Utilitarian Common Sense: The Bearing of a Thesis of Sidgwick's on Moral Theory', *The Limits of Utilitarianism*, ed. H. B. Miller and William H. Williams (Minneapolis, 1982).

[20] In *Rational*, Shaver contends that Sidgwick has an 'evolutionary argument for the *approximate* reliability of common-sense morality' (p. 70). Sidgwick says that 'so far as any moral habit or sentiment was unfavorable to the preservation of the social organism, it would be a disadvantage in the struggle for existence, and would therefore tend to perish with the community that adhered to it' (ME 465). But it is unclear whether Sidgwick's point is here only that this fact is a sign of the approximate reliability of common sense as a means to general happiness rather than a sign that common sense is epistemically reliable. (He seems to mean the former; see ME xxi.) After all, he does raise this issue in the context of a discussion of what decision procedure utilitarianism should rely on. He goes on to suggest, in addition, that utilitarians should (if they were not held up by certain paradoxes) 'make a thorough revision of these rules' (ME 467). His acceptance of common sense seems to be based on practical rather than epistemic reasons (ME 467–74, xxi).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

rules, e.g. that gratitude is required if someone unexpectedly does you a good turn, by reference to utilitarianism?[21] It is not clear why this would be absurd. After all, many moral philosophers have wanted to maintain that such rules are justified or known only when derived from a higher or more abstract principle. Sidgwick appears to agree when he remarks of gratitude that it 'is enjoined by Utilitarianism . . . for experience would lead us to expect that no kind of onerous services will be adequately rendered unless there is a general disposition to requite them' (ME 437). Indeed, it is Sidgwick's view that one should be driven to accept this account of the ground of gratitude once one sees the exceptions that the requirement admits of and the conflicts it has with other of the requirements of common sense.

Sidgwick has of course emphasized the importance of using common-sense morality (at least provisionally) in practice (ME 361, 341, Book IV, chapters III–V; EP 109; PE 3–30). But it appears that he has different standards for what may be appealed to in practice and what may be appealed to for epistemic justification (EP 109). This is certainly the case with the claims that he makes about reliance on common sense in PE, where he explicitly tells us that his concern is with 'not knowledge but action' or practice (PE 5). He holds that the moral philosopher should 'always study with reverent care and patience . . . the Morality of Common Sense' (PE 22) and that the philosopher's *conclusions* should be 'aided, checked, and controlled by the moral judgements of persons with less philosophy but more special experience' (PE 20). Common sense provides salient information needed for the application of a 'philosophical' account of morality, information which 'finds no place in any statement of facts or reasoned forecast of consequences that . . . [common sense] could furnish; it is only represented in . . . [its] judgements as to what ought to be done and aimed at' (PE 21). But whatever is 'represented' in these judgements – and it is far from clear – it appears to be no more than the information necessary for applying moral views, not information pointing to what are initially credible or imperfectly certain moral truths.

II

As noted, Sidgwick began work on ME in the period before resigning his Fellowship. Shortly after his resignation he published a pamphlet – *The Ethics of Conformity and Subscription* – arguing for, among other things, the relaxation of the requirements of conformity and

[21] Skorupski put this objection to me when I delivered an earlier version of this argument at the International Society of Utilitarian Studies conference at Lisbon on 12 April 2003. See also Skorupski, 'Dualism', pp. 64–5 and ME 259–60.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

subscription for those legally required to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith.[22] He returned to this problem twenty-five years later in a paper delivered to one of the ethical societies that were then thriving in England. As Schultz rightly notes, 'Sidgwick bracketed his life with works on this subject; two of the central contributions to *Practical Ethics*, the last book he published during his lifetime, returned to it, and this in itself might indicate the inestimable importance of this theme in his life' (124). But what Schultz does not note is that Sidgwick seems to have changed his mind about the appropriate moral methodology to rely on in making decisions about practical moral matters. This view is to be gleaned from several essays in PE that touch upon the topic of method in practical ethics.[23]

In PE, Sidgwick's view is that resolving practical moral issues seems possible only if we 'give up altogether the idea of getting to the bottom of things, arriving at agreement on the first principles of duty or the Summum Bonum' (PE 5). In particular we need to refrain from appealing to positions that remain the object of 'fundamental disagreements' (PE 24; see also PE 6, 10, 25), such as 'the meaning of human life, the relation of the individual to the universe, of the finite to the infinite, the ultimate ground of duty and essence of virtue' (PE 4). He advocates beginning with what those who disagree on fundamentals can agree on, namely, 'the particulars of morality' (PE 7; see also PE 25–6). The point of departure is the 'broad agreement in the details of morality which we actually find both among thoughtful persons who profoundly disagree on first principles, and among plain men who do not seriously trouble themselves about first principles' (PE 6; see also PE 26). The object of the broad agreement is referred to as the 'region of middle axioms' (PE 7), and this is where practical moral debate is to begin. The so-called axioms are, roughly speaking, the rules of common-sense morality surveyed in Book III of ME, including rules regarding benevolence, veracity, good faith and just treatment, among others (PE 33, 42–3).

In part, Sidgwick's move away from appeal to controversial or disputed elements of moral theories or outlooks is driven by the recognition that astute, well-meaning, impartial inquirers can be led to fundamentally different conclusions about the ultimate requirements of reason (PE 6, 25).[24] These constitute 'fundamental controversies' (PE 10) or 'fundamental disagreements' (PE 24). His very own attempt to

[22] Henry Sidgwick, *The Ethics of Conformity and Subscription* (London, 1870).
[23] The first four essays of PE are especially relevant.
[24] Sidgwick is not it seems advocating that we abandon moral theories or fundamentals altogether. He seems to advocate that we refrain from appealing only to the elements upon which people do not converge. So, for example, if appeal to utilitarian considerations is agreed upon then the appeal is uncontroversial.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

'frame a perfect ideal of rational conduct' he concluded was 'foredoomed to inevitable failure' (ME1 473).[25] The failure results from the fact that he finds both rational egoism and utilitarianism to be equally plausible (but ultimately conflicting) claims about the ultimate demand of reason. He thinks it is 'reasonable' to hold either view (FC 486). His remarks in PE make it plausible to hold that he thought something like this of many other views as well. In the essay 'The Morality of Strife', for instance, he contends that

> the complexity of human relations, and the imperfection of our intellectual methods of dealing with them, precludes the hope that we can ever solve a problem of rights with the demonstrative clearness and certainty with which we can solve a problem of mathematics. The practical question therefore is, how we can attain a tolerable approximation to such a solution. (PE 53)

What constitutes a 'tolerable' practical solution? No specific solution follows from the recognition of fundamental and seemingly intractable disagreements. One option, of course, is to engage in a war of attrition. But this is not Sidgwick's strategy. He notes that to employ a moral theory or outlook in light of disagreement about it would be to invite 'the grave drawbacks of sectarian rivalries and conflicts' (PE 25). To remain fixed in one's favoured moral theory means impeding progress in solving important practical moral questions and refusing to cooperate (PE 24–6 and 59). It is clear that he does not think that his is a 'tolerable' manner by which to continue.

Indeed, he maintains that appeal to controversial fundamentals is a problematic way to approach practical ethics, since it is expressive of 'onesidedness' (PE 53).[26] The mark of a 'thoughtful' or 'moral' person – or a person embodying the 'spirit of justice' (PE 58, 59) – is a willingness to take an impartial stance to cooperate and forge lasting practical policies, 'to compromise . . . even when the adjustment [policy] thus attained can only be rough, and far removed from what either party regards as ideally equitable' (PE 61). The spirit requires 'reciprocal admissions' (PE 60), making any practical ethic that unfairly benefits some at the expense of others objectionable. He holds that in cases of disagreement thoughtful people should seek compromise, not enforcement of their own principles (PE 59–60). The spirit of justice requires 'sympathy, and the readiness to imagine oneself in another's place and look at things from his point of view; and . . . the

[25] See also ME 496–509.

[26] The remarks in this paragraph are drawn from the essay 'The Morality of Strife'. Although Sidgwick's main concern in the essay is to deal with the issue of war, he says that the principles for dealing with war are applicable to 'milder conflicts' (PE 49). My suggestion is that included among these milder conflicts are disagreements about which practical policies to adopt.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

intelligent apprehension of common interests . . . in this way we may hope to produce a disposition to compromise' (PE 61).

I think this is a plausible practical moral methodology that present-day practical ethicists would do well to consult.[27] Given the plausibility of this view and its relevance to Sidgwick's intellectual, practical and political work, it is unfortunate that Schultz does not give it any attention. Schultz might have explained whether Sidgwick's adoption of this view later in life was a result of his lifelong engagement with and exposure to people with diverse views and strong positions on practical matters. Were his discussions with Symonds about the ethics of coming out or homosexuality or hypocrisy or ethics or religion of consequence here? Were his failures in both parapsychology and ethics enough to make him search for a different and perhaps less sectarian practical methodology? Or, was it his exposure to the issues associated with Irish home rule or the racist views of his friends Pearson and Bryce? Still further, how is the practical methodology related to the esoteric morality or indirect utilitarianism that Sidgwick advocates and about which Schultz expresses some reservations (264–74)? Does Sidgwick adopt the practical methodology because he sees it as most likely to maximally promote aggregate well-being over the long run? Finally, is the appeal to the 'spirit of justice' and the demand to 'bracket' appeals to disputed moral fundamentals in practical moral methodology a natural terminus for someone so intent on finding a consensus of experts and others? Were some of the surface inconsistencies in Sidgwick's practical ethics due to his misgivings about the 'sensual herd', the 'dim, common masses' and the 'vulgar' that existed alongside his respect for democracy and a more open, educated and inclusive society? It is not clear what accounts for Schultz's lack of discussion of Sidgwick's practical moral methodology. Whatever its source may be it would have been nice to learn of Schultz's thoughts on these and related matters.

III

Schultz's *Eye* does a number of things extremely well. It rather nicely illustrates the connection between Sidgwick's ethical views (e.g. on suicide, sexuality and esoteric morality) and his personal relationships, especially with John Addington Symonds. It also displays his lesser-known views. Schultz's discussion of Sidgwick's views on political economy, political science and politics is on this score nothing short of excellent. It in addition sheds light on aspects of Sidgwick's character

[27] For a sharply critical reaction to Sidgwick's practical ethics see Sissela Bok, 'Henry Sidgwick's Practical Ethics', *Utilitas* 12 (2000). For a response to Bok, see my 'Henry Sidgwick's Practical Ethics: A Defense', *Utilitas* 18 (2006).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not commonly known. In his discussion of his political views Schultz reveals that many of Sidgwick's views were 'at the least highly Eurocentric, and quite possibly racist' (662). Sidgwick was impressed by the prospect that colonization by the English could perform the 'noble task of spreading the highest kind of civilization', 'better religion and . . . truer science' (633). He did not 'actively protest' a colleague's proposal that evidence for paranormal phenomena supplied by 'Asiatics' and 'the lower races' should be discounted (316–17). In addition, he used the term 'niggers' in correspondence; he often referred to non-European societies as 'uncivilized or semi-civilized' or 'savage', and he drew distinctions between 'superior' and 'inferior' races (622, 647, 626, 635, 636). Schultz's well-researched and penetrating account of the relationship between Symonds and Sidgwick reveals that the latter was dishonest: 'Sidgwick may have had a reputation, during his lifetime and since, for saintly honesty and candor. But he did not deserve it', because of the prominent role he played in helping Symonds's biographer represent his sexual agonizing as religious agonizing (713).

The latter charge does not serve to impugn Sidgwick's character. He had good reasons for lying (which Schultz seems to be aware of): he would protect his friend's reputation, remain loyal to Symonds's wishes, protect his family and their wishes, Sidgwick's own reputation, and free Sidgwick's other endeavors (e.g. the promotion of women's higher education) of guilt by association (709–14). The charge of Eurocentrism and racism is perhaps more difficult to shake given Sidgwick's praise for and lack of critical engagement with Charles Henry Pearson's rather racist *National Life and Character* (649–56) and his high regard and praise for other imperialists and racists (e.g. Seeley and Bryce). Given Sidgwick's 'skeptical cast of mind and his distance from spiritual or political orthodoxy' (640) we might have hoped for better from him. However, if he is to be judged by the standards of his time he fares quite well, especially when compared to Bryce, Pearson and his brother-in-law Arthur Balfour.[28] He was sensitive, according to Schultz, to the rights and consent of those being colonized (635 and 636), he sees no debasement from racial mixing (637 and 639), he rejects the moral superiority of Anglo-Saxons (662), and he does not think that civilization is a monopoly of the white race (667).

One final point in closing. It is very interesting to find that Sidgwick's views on suicide and sexuality were influenced by Symonds (509–20). It is of no small value to learn that he was often quiet about (and urged others to be silent about) matters that he found too controversial (like homosexuality and pederasty) and that he succumbed to some

[28] Thanks to John Slater for reminding me of the importance of judging people by the standards of their time.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press

lamentable forms of Eurocentrism and racism. It is not clear, however, what this tells us about the philosophical viability or plausibility of Sidgwick's views in so far as they are directed at problems and issues that are of interest to contemporary philosophers. Does the fact that Sidgwick's intuitionism (discussed above) leads, in Schultz's view, 'inexorably . . . to an epistemology of the closet' (17–18) undermine it or simply call for certain changes that leave its main structure intact? Is the reliance on the 'consensus of experts' in the context of his intuitionism (192) and elsewhere impugned when we discover that he relied on the authority or expertise of a full-blown imperialist/colonizer (Seeley) and a number of racists (Bryce and Pearson)? Or, again, do we simply have to be mindful of our understanding of the notion of 'experts' while retaining the Sidgwickian system? It is not clear from reading Schultz how these revelations make a difference to the philosophical viability or plausibility of Sidgwick's views, however much they may change our views about the man.[29]

askelto4@uwo.ca

[29] I am grateful to Wayne Sumner and Tom Hurka for providing me with helpful comments on earlier versions of the argument presented in the first section of this article, to Stephen Darwall, John Slater, Roger Crisp and Anne Skelton for providing me with helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article, and to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding me while I worked on the article.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820806002378 Published online by Cambridge University Press