I. INTRODUCTORY

Our method will be the critical study of the moral consciousness and of the main moral theories	2
Two main ways of regarding the moral life—as obedience to laws, or as a striving after goods. Our main task is therefore the study of the nature of, and the relations between, rightness and goodness	3
The main attempts at definitions of ethical terms may be classified as definitions by reference to a mental attitude (reaction theories), or	,
by reference to results (causal theories)	5
They may also be classified as naturalistic or non-naturalistic	6
It is not always clear, at first sight, to what type a well-known theory	
(e.g. Hedonism) belongs	8
II. NATURALISTIC DEFINITIONS OF 'RIGHT'	
(1) Evolutionary theories have no plausibility as <i>definitions</i> of 'right'.	12
nor as accounts of the ground of rightness.	13
It is sometimes thought that they have successfully explained rightness	
away. (a) The inquiry into the origin of moral ideas may be thought	
to have undermined their validity; but this cannot be made out .	15
(b) The discovery of differences between moral codes may be thought	
to have undermined them all; but such differences usually imply	
differences not on fundamental moral questions but on matters of	
fact which form the minor premisses of our ethical thinking	17
and in any case difference of opinion cannot prove that no opinion is	
true	19
(2) Reaction theories: classification of them	21
(a) Private reactions theory: objections to it	22
(b) Public reaction theory: objections	24
(c) The view that defines rightness by reference to the reaction of the	
agent: objections	25
(3) Causal theories. Hedonism is unplausible as an account of the mean-	
ing of 'right'	26
The various attempts at defining 'right' would be more plausible if recast as attempts (a) to state the ground of rightness (as such they will be	
examined in chs. 4, 5)	27
or (b) as attempts to explain rightness away; but few people are pre-	-/
pared to make this attempt; differences of opinion are usually as to	
what is right, not as to whether anything is right .	28
(4) The positivist theory. This is based on the view that all significant	
propositions are either (i) tautologous, or (ii) empirical hypotheses	30
Since 'judgements' with 'right' or 'good' as the predicate do not appear	-
to be either (i) or (ii), Mr. Carnap says they are not judgements but	
commands; objections to this	32

and Mr. Ayer says they are not judgements but mere expressions of dislike	34
The positivist theory examined by studying (a) its view that universal synthetic a priori propositions are really only statements about the use of language	35
(b) its account of judgements about the past	36
Examination of the positivist view about the relation between the mean-	
ing of judgements and their capacity of being tested by experience	36
Mr. Ayer's attempt to escape the objection that subjectivistic theories make difference of opinion about moral questions impossible	38
III. THE NATURE OF RIGHTNESS AND OBLIGATION	
The most important non-naturalistic definition of 'right' is the defini- tion of it as meaning 'productive of the greatest possible amount of good'. But it would be more plausible to put this forward as the	
ground, not as the very essence, of rightness	42
The difference between 'right' and 'obligatory'	43
Prof. Broad's discussion of the meaning of 'ought' and 'right'. His dis- tinction (a) of two senses and (b) of three applications of 'ought'. Discussion of these distinctions	10
His view that 'ought' is usually confined to cases where there are	45
motives against doing the right action. Discussion	48
His definition of 'right' as meaning 'suitable, in a unique and indefinable	
way, to a situation'	51
Is there any real affinity between moral and other suitability? Perhaps	
between it and aesthetic suitability	53
Emotions as well as acts may be right, but only acts can be obligatory;	55
and that is only a loose way of saying that men ought to behave in certain ways	56
IV. THEORIES ABOUT THE GROUND OF RIGHTNESS	
For every theory about the definition of rightness there is a possible corresponding theory about the ground of rightness, and these are in one respect more plausible, while in another respect some are less	
plausible, than the attempts at definition	57
(1) Evolutionary theories. Spencer starts by saying that actions are right because they are highly evolved, but in the end says they are right because conducive to pleasure; he adopts a psychological	
view, of the causal variety	58
(2) Reaction theories. (a) The private reaction theory: objections .	59
(b) The public reaction theory: objections	61
(c) The view that an act is right because the agent approves of it. This cannot be correct as it stands, but an action may perhaps be right in	
one sense by being thought right in another	62
(3) Causal theories. Hedonism will not be examined at length, (a) because it has been ably refuted by other writers.	64
(b) because it is only one species of a wider view which seems open to criticism, the view that actions are right only when and because	
they seem likely to produce the maximum good	65

viii

١

The wider theory, ideal or agathistic Utilitarianism, to be examined. It seems to have been accepted as axiomatic, but there are difficulties,	~
viz	67
(a) It seems right to produce a fairly high concentration of pleasure, or of good activity, rather than a thin distribution of it, even if the	
total amount to be produced were greater in the latter case	69
(b) We do not think it morally indifferent how happiness is to be distributed between the good and the bad	71
(c) or between the agent and other people	72
These facts may be explained (i) by saying that there are duties other than that of maximizing good, or (ii) by saying that there are goods of higher order (in the mathematical sense), as well as simple goods like virtuous action and pleasure	73
(d) We think the duty of not inflicting pain more stringent than the duty of producing a corresponding amount of pleasure	75
(e) The duties of compensation for wrongs we have done, of making return for benefits received, and of fulfilment of promise seem inde- pendent of the duty of maximizing good .	76
Prof. Broad's account of rightness as depending partly on utility, partly	/•
on suitability, accepted, with two minor differences .	79
Current objections to Intuitionism: (1) that it does not base duty on one single principle	82
(2) that the supposed intuitions would entail that the same act is both right and wrong. This to be met by treating the general principles	
as stating not absolute but prima facie obligations	83
Advantages and disadvantages of this phrase: alternative phrases .	84
V. THE OBLIGATION TO FULFIL PROMISES	
Mr. Pickard-Cambridge's criticism of this form of Intuitionism. His charge of 'inconsistency of principle'	87
His claim that the ideal utilitarian method is easier to apply	89
His explanation of the duty of promise-keeping by reference to the goods to be produced by keeping promises. He seems to confuse two questions: (a) Can the keeping of particular promises be justified on utilitarian grounds? (b) Can the general condemnation of promise- breaking by public opinion be justified on utilitarian grounds?	91
His discussion of cases in which non-fulfilment of promise would be generally approved	94
In general, he interprets promises without taking account of the unex- pressed conditions implicit in ordinary speech	98
His argument that if the duty of promise-keeping were independent of that of maximizing good, it ought to be always equally stringent. The degree of bindingness of promises is a product of two factors— the good to be produced and the explicitness of the promise	90 99
His distinction between the objective and the subjective good to be produced by keeping promises. This does not account for certain instances in which most of the usual good results are excluded by the nature of the case	102
	-04

ix

Mr. Katkov's attempt to bring promise-fulfilment under the maximiza- tion of good	105
The duty of promise-keeping requires careful statement if we are to avoid objectionable consequences. (<i>t</i>) It is a duty not to effect a certain result, but to try to do so.	108
(2) It is cancelled if the effecting of the result has become impossible (though not if it has become difficult)	109
or (3) if it is clear that the promisee no longer desires its fulfilment .	109
(4) if we think doing something else will benefit the promisee more than keeping the promise would, the latter duty is not cancelled, but may be overborne by the former .	111
VI. THE GENERAL NATURE OF WHAT IS RIGHT: SOME THEORIES	
Is the being under the influence of certain motives the whole, or a part, of our duty?	114
 If we have not one of these motives, it is not our duty to have it, for we cannot produce it by an act of choice. If we have one of them, it is not our duty to be under its influence, but to do the act to which it points 	115
(2) It can hardly be our duty to act from some other motive, but never from the best, viz. sense of duty; and it cannot be our duty to act from the sense of duty, since this, when properly expanded into the form 'it is my duty to do act A from the sense that it is my duty to do act A', involves a self-contradiction.	116
Prof. Reid's view is open to the objection that it counts the being under the influence of a certain motive, which is the precondition of the choice, as part of the object of choice.	118
To say that it is our duty to do certain acts, and not to act from certain motives, does not make the moral life discontinuous and external, because the cultivation of good motives is one of our main duties (though one best achieved, in general, by indirection)	121
(3) If I want to do my duty, my motive will be the same, whichever act I come to think to be my duty, and therefore cannot be what makes one act my duty rather than another	123
(4) What we in fact attend to, when we are trying to discover our duty, is not our motives but the nature and probable consequences of possible acts	123
Mr. Joseph's view that in certain cases the nature of the motive is what makes an action right	124
His analysis of a motived act into motive and physical movement .	126
Ambiguity of the phrase 'separating the act from the motive' .	127
His account of our thinking that we ought to produce pleasure for another rather than for ourselves .	128
His account of action done from sense of duty	130
Later he admits that where we act from a sense of duty alone, the action's being a duty cannot spring from its being done from a sense of duty	133

x

Prof. Field's view that the fundamental fact is the goodness of certain motives, and that our sense of <i>prima facie</i> obligations is due to the normal connexion of certain types of act with good, or with bad, motives	124
But it would be sheer confusion of thought to have any compunction about telling a lie from a good motive, merely because telling lies usually proceeds from bad motives	134 136
His view that if we can choose a certain act, we can choose what motive we shall act from .	137
Aristotle, Kant, and the utilitarians agree in excluding motive from that which makes right acts right	138
Mr. Joseph's theory that in certain cases the rightness of an act depends on the goodness of the system which it forms with its context	140
Criticism of this view	141
VII. THE GENERAL NATURE OF WHAT IS RIGHT: POSITIVE CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION	
If an act's rightness is its suitability to the situation, is it its suitability to the objective situation, or to the subjective, i.e. to the agent's opinion about the objective situation?	146
Considerations in favour of the objective view	147
Prof. Prichard's discussion of the question. He contends that our ordinary thought in part supports the objective view, but on the whole is more in agreement with the subjective	148
His contention that an obligation must be an obligation not to effect a certain result, but to set oneself to effect it	153
This contention supports the subjective view	154
His contention that rightness is not a character of actions, but that being obliged is a characteristic of a man, also supports the subjective	
	155
The act which it is reasonable for a man to do if he wants to do his duty, is not that which will produce certain results, nor that which wiser men would think likely to produce them, but that which he thinks	
likely to produce them	156
The view that we ought to produce certain results, and the view that we ought to act from certain motives, are (though mistaken) natural, because actions that produce certain results, and actions from	
certain motives, are in different respects suitable to the situation .	159
Three self-exertions that have some claim to be what the agent ought to do: all are in different senses right, but the one he ought to do is that which he thinks most suitable to the circumstances as he thinks	
them to be	161
This double dose of subjectivity not really objectionable	164
Relation of the morally good act to the right act	165
VIII THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS RIGHT	

The rightness of particular acts was originally apprehended directly, and the general principles reached by intuitive induction . . . 168

When the general principles have been grasped, is the rightness of particular acts deduced from them? Only when the general principle (1) is accepted on authority, or (2) is not self-evident but has itself	
been reached by reasoning	171
We often judge acts to be right or wrong, on the ground of only one of their probable consequences; the justification for this, when it is justified	173
When no act presents itself as obviously right, and (1) no principle of special obligation is involved, our problem is to estimate (a) the probable effects of different acts, and (b) the goodness of their effects	175
Difficulties of (a); it is done by analogical reasoning, with the aid of some a priori insight	175
Difficulties of (b) estimating the comparative goodness of different goods	179
Prof. Price's view that only ordinal and not cardinal numbers can be assigned to goods: this would not enable us to choose between actions of which one would produce one great good, and the other	
two lesser goods, which we seem sometimes able to do . But we can only assess the goodness of different goods as falling	180
within certain fairly wide limits	183
preliminaries	183
 Complication introduced by the principle of organic values . (2) Where duties of special obligation are involved, we have the additional task of balancing them against the duty of maximizing goods . 	185
Consideration of Prof. Reid's objection to intuitionist ethics .	188
In trying to discover our objective duty, we can usually discover our subjective duty	191
, ,	191
IX. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MORAL ACTION	
Moral action, except from sense of duty, agreed to be motived by desire. Aristotle's account of action as preceded by desire of an end, deli- beration about means, and choice of means	192
It might seem that we choose an end before we choose the means; but the two choices are (1) a choosing to take whatever means are best towards a desired end, and (2) a choosing to take certain means as being the best	195
Aristotle describes deliberation as moving in a straight line from end to means; really it is normally much more complex	196
Choice of the means deemed most expedient is followed by a different activity, that of setting oneself to bring about some change	198
Deliberation often proceeds in the opposite direction to that contem- plated by Aristotle, beginning with the suggestion of a possible act; most people are in fact suggestible, rather than planners, by nature	199
Decisions, no less than acts of self-exertion, can be good or bad, and can be right or wrong	•99 203

xii

Is action from a sense of duty motived by desire? Kant's view to the contrary is insufficiently grounded; dutiful action is motived by the desire to do one's duty	205
Dutiful action is the adoption of means to an end, not because the end is desired but because the adopting of means to the end is desired, as	206
being one's duty	200
X. INDETERMINACY AND INDETERMINISM	
Prof. Broad's view of the <i>a priori</i> argument for Determinism .	208
His view admits determination as regards the broad features of any situation and denies its necessity as regards the details. This view might be justified if the belief in determination rested on a posteriori evidence; universal causation cannot be proved a posteriori.	212
Belief in the law of causation cannot even be confirmed by experience, except in a Pickwickian sense	213
The situation which has given rise to the theory of indeterminacy; typical statements by physicists	214
'An electron has not at any moment both a determinate position and a determinate momentum': different interpretations of this .	216
Confusion in Heisenberg's denial of the law of causation, in which he is not followed by Einstein and Planck	217
Sir A. Eddington's denial of causation much more sweeping than Prof. Broad's; he wishes to substitute probability and statistical generali- zations for causal determination	219
His distinction of three sorts of inference from observed facts to causes	220
All these types of inference are equally valid, though inferences of the third type are incapable, as yet, of being confirmed by experience .	221
Empirical verification of the law of causation much more imperfect in the realm of moral action than in that of physical events, but the	
<i>a priori</i> necessity of its acceptance the same in both cases . Doubt of it rests (1) on the supposed intuition of freedom, (2) on the	222
thought that morality involves freedom. (I) Suggested that what intuition assures us of is that we sometimes refuse to act on the strongest desire of the moment; but it is a self determined by its	
past and by its system of interests that refuses	223
The case not different in principle when the sense of duty comes in .	226
Even if dutiful action is motived not by desire but by a unique emotion, it does not thereby escape from being determined	227
The uniqueness of choice consists not in being undetermined, but in being determined neither by the strongest single desire, nor by the whole array of desires; under the influence of the strongest group of co-	
operating desires we prevent the others from affecting our action .	228
Though complete indetermination is impossible, and if possible would have no moral value, we all naturally incline to believe in it, when not philosophizing	
The belief in indeterminism largely due to the consideration that we	230
can cause any one of two or more changes in the physical world. This is true, in the sense that the will can influence the body (within	
limits) as it wishes	231

xiii

But this, being a fact about the <i>result</i> of an act of self-exertion, throws no light on the question whether that act is itself <i>caused</i> .	233
The real question is not whether we could produce different bodily effects if we set ourselves to do so, but whether, being the beings we are, we could indifferently set ourselves to produce different bodily effects	234
This is impossible, yet the ordinary conditions for a judgement of possibility are present, viz. (1) that we do not know that we shall perform act A, nor that we shall perform act B, (2) that, motives for each act being present in us, there is an appreciable probability that we shall do act A, and an appreciable probability that we shall do	
act B The thought 'I can do my duty' is useful as well as, in the above sense, true	235
and it is not made useless by the presence of the thought 'I may not do my duty'.	238
When I say 'I can do this', I do not think all the conditions of my 'doing this' are present. The phrase really means 'I shall do this if I pre- dominantly desire to do it'	240
It does not mean either 'I can do this whether I want or not' or 'I can do this if I want, and I can produce the want'.	241
Thus in a certain sense it is true that we can do either of several actions; but what we do will be determined by the predominant mass of desire	242
While the metaphysical argument is in favour of determinism, the facts of the moral consciousness are not all against it; cf. our reliance on people's behaving according to their character, our reaction when they behave unexpectedly, the stress laid on the formation of habits,	
and our judgements about people's characters	243
law of causation, but in the unique nature of the activities involved— choice, self-exertion, and the thought of duty	246
(2) The thought of responsibility, as involved in the phenomena of remorse, blame, and punishment	246
with belief in the law of causation only by supposing the individual soul to have had no beginning in time	248
This gives the individual a part-responsibility for all his acts, but it will not satisfy the craving for escape from determination by one's own	
past The only account of responsibility that seems compatible with belief in the law of causation	249 250
XI. THE NATURE OF GOODNESS	_,-
Reasons why a student of ethics must study the nature of goodness. 'Good' applied to a great variety of things; it may be that (as Aris- totle suggests) the various meanings are derived from a single central	
meaning The only universal precondition of our using the word is a favourable attitude towards the object; but words <i>mean</i> something different	252
from the attitude they express, and 'good' is no exception .	254

xiv

(1) 'Goodness of its kind', as ascribed (a) to persons, (b) to things 255 (2) Predicative applications of good: (a) good as a means to something good in itself, (b) good in itself, (i) on the whole, or (ii) through and through. Our main questions-which can hardly be considered separately-are (1) what kind of thing 'goodness through and through' is and (2) what things are good in this sense ? 257 Is goodness a relation or relational property? i.e. is a thing's being good identical with its being the object of a certain kind of reaction on some one's part? 258 We often have not this explicitly in mind when we call a thing good; but further, such a definition does not express explicitly what was implicitly in our mind; 'good' expresses an attitude of the judger, but asserts a characteristic of the object 259 Instead of identifying what we mean by 'good' with being the object of a certain attitude, it would be more plausible to say that nothing has the characteristic we mean when we call a thing good. But the whole attitude of approval implies the conviction that some things 261 are good in themselves Prof. Campbell's view that while virtuous action is good in itself, scientific and artistic activity, and pleasure, are merely objects of a definite kind of liking, one that is independent, integral and rela-262 tively permanent . His view that these things are 'objects of liking to human nature' must either be an inductive generalization from observed human nature, in which case it does not express what we mean by 'good', or involve the thought of an ideal human nature and therefore of certain things' being worthy of liking, i.e. good in themselves 265 Prof. Campbell's two claims for his account: (1) that it yields a list of goods identical with the intrinsic goods believed in by others, (2) that it accounts better than the objective view for varieties of opinion as to what things are good. (1) admitted, (2) rejected 268 Knowledge and artistic activity owe their goodness not to our reaction to them, but to their own nature 270 In what sense is pleasure good? (1) For 'good' as applied to moral, intellectual, or artistic activity we can substitute 'admirable' or 'commendable', but not for 'good' as applied to pleasure. (2) While in virtue of performing good activities a man is himself good, no one is good in virtue of feeling pleasure. (3) While the goodness of other good things entails a duty to maximize them, there is no duty to maximize (a) pleasures that are the manifestation of a bad character, or (b) pleasures for oneself 27I Justification of the statements (a) that we have a duty to maximize pleasure for others, and (b) that we have no duty to maximize it for ourselves . 272 (4) We do not think the goodness of pleasure comparable with that of good activities 275 Therefore pleasure can be good only in a different sense from that in which good activities are so; for any man the pleasures of others (when not vicious) are good in the sense of being worthy objects of satisfaction 275

XV

It might be suggested that the production of pleasure for oneself is right but not obligatory, since there is no possiblity of a moral conflict about it; but the suggestion cannot be accepted 277 The goodness of good activities seems to be an intrinsic property of them; the goodness of the pleasures that are good is a relational property, consisting in the fact that it is right to feel satisfaction in the pleasure of others 278 This view about the goodness of pleasures is identical with that of the Brentano school about goodness in general; but we do not accept the view of that school that goodness in general is one of a class of irreal predicates 279 Summary of conclusions about goodness. Things that are good in the two different senses are not comparable in respect of goodness 282 For any man, his own pleasures are good only in a third sense, viz. that his reaction to them is a favourable one; in other words 'good' is used only as expressing an attitude, not as signifying a characteristic 284 Should the duties of special obligation be brought under the duty of maximizing good, by treating them as duties of producing 'situational' goods which, like the pleasure of others, are good in the sense of being worthy objects of satisfaction? 285 Or are the results of the discharge of these duties worthy objects of satisfaction only because there is first a duty to produce them? 286 This question considered with reference to the various duties of special obligation 287 XII. MORAL GOODNESS The class of things morally good includes (1) certain types of voluntary action, (2) certain desires, (3) certain emotions, 290 (4) certain permanent modifications of character 29 I Action is usually held to owe its goodness to its motive 293 An attempted classification of motives, starting from Butler's classification 293 The view that only future states of oneself can be desired 299 Each kind of motive can exist in varying degrees of generality 300 An attempted ordering of motives in respect of goodness 301 Kant appears to be mistaken (1) in his attitude towards combinations of motives, (2) in his attitude towards all motives but sense of duty . 305 Actions are good or bad not only in virtue of their motives, but also in 306 virtue of the indifferences, or lack of repulsions, which they exhibit In view of this, a completely good act must necessarily be a right act; yet moral goodness and rightness in some respects remain entirely

XIII. SUMMARY

independent

308

311