CBS COPENHAGEN BUSINESS SCHOOL
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

The Value of Value

In Ethics and Morality

Sørensen, Asger

Document Version
Final published version

Publication date:
2005

License
CC BY-NC-ND

Citation for published version (APA):
Sørensen, A. (2005). *The Value of Value: In Ethics and Morality*. Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, CBS. MPP Working Paper No. 7/2005

Link to publication in CBS Research Portal

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us (research.lib@cbs.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 20. Apr. 2024

The Value of Value - in Ethics and Morality

Asger Sørensen
WP 7/2005

MPP Working Paper No. 7/2005 ©
June 2005
ISBN: 87-91181-93-3
ISSN: 1396-2817

Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy
Copenhagen Business School
Blaagaardsgade 23 B
DK-2200 Copenhagen N
Phone: +45 38 15 36 30
Fax: +45 38 15 36 35
www.mpp.cbs.dk

Asger Sørensen:

The Value of Value - in Ethics and Morality

As a social scientist of ethics and morality, Luhmann has noticed the ethical wave that has recently swept across the western world, and states that this particular kind of wave seems to have a wavelength of about one hundred years (*cf.* Luhmann 1989: 9 ff.). Even though the frequency and the regularity of such a phenomenon is both hard to verify and, if true, difficult to explain, it seems fair to say that since the Enlightenment, an approaching *fin-de-siecle* has brought an increased interest in matters concerning morality and ethics.[1] The present peak has in public-political discourse and some parts of business ethics given prominence to especially one term, namely 'value'. The question that interests me is the following: What does the articulation of ethics and morality in terms of values mean for ethics and morality as such. Or, to put the question in a more fashionably way: What is the value of value for morality and ethics?

To make things a bit more precise, we can make use of the common distinction between ethics and morality, *i.e.* that morality is the immediate, collective and unconscious employment of morals, whereas ethics is the systematic, individual and conscious reflections of morals and morality.[2] The main question is then, what the use of 'value' as the key-term in moral discourses means to morality as such. Accepting ethics as a part of morality - since one cannot be moral without sometimes reflecting on the validity of the morality employed and

[1] It may be that this is only true from the perspective of our present ethical discussions, or within their horizon, but that does not really matter, since in ethics what is of intererest is precisely the present situation, *i.e.* the situation within which we have to think practically about our actions and their relations to what is good or right in general.

[2] This way of distinguishing between ethics and morality is almost the exact opposite of Habermas' distinction between *Ethik* and *Moralität*. Using the latter distinction would imply that what we know as 'discursive ethics' rather should be called 'discursive morality'. Habermas himself, however, implicitly acknowledges the former distinction by choosing to continue speaking about discursive ethics (*cf.* Habermas 1991: 7).

experienced - I have attempted to answer this question by investigating what the use of the term ‘value’ leads to in ethical discourses, *i.e.*, what moral implications it has for ethics to focus on the concept of value.

Approaching this problem by looking into the current ethical conceptions and discussions of value, however, does not appear very promissing, since in relation to the widespread use of the term ‘value’ in public discourses, ‘value’ appears at first hand only to be of secondary importance as a concept in philosophical ethics. In the otherwise very impressive *Dictionaire d’éthique et de philosophie morale* from 1996 the entry on ‘value’ simply refers to another entry, namely ‘norms and values’ (*cf.* Canto-Sperber 1996: 1110, 1665), a conjunction, which mostly used in sociology and not in ethics. This second entry is ten pages long, but this in a dictionary of more than 1800 pages. Even less importance is given to ‘value’ in the ten volume Routledge general philosophical *Encyclopedia* from 1998, where the entry is only four pages long (*cf.* Craig 1998, 9: 580 ff). The *Historischer Wörterbuch* is of no use in this context, since it still has not reached ‘*Wert*’, but what is interresting in this context is that Eislers three-volume *Wörterbuch* from 1930 - which is the dictionary which *Historischer Wörterbuch* is supposed to be updating - has a very long entry on *Wert*, namely 23 pages (*cf.* Eisler 1930: III, 514 ff.).

It seems then that the value attributed to the term value in philosophy is both different in different national contexts, and has changed over the years. In general one can say that 100 years ago, at the last peak of the ethical wave, philosophy all over Europe and in the United States was characterized by a very intense interest in the concept of value, which manifested itself in philosophical discussions that began in the late 1880'ies and only died out around the outbreak of the Second world war. I suggest that by studying these discussions one can get some indications of the possible implications of the current employment of value in discourses about morality, whether in public moral discussions, in business-ethics or in ethics proper.

This is a big project, and one which remains to be accomplished at many points. It is, so to speak, a work in very slow progress. What I will present here is some of the preliminary results of my investigations and reflections on these matters. My presentation leaves a lot of

questions open, and I have not thought all of the implications through in depth. My results are suggestive enough, however, to allow me to draw a rather radical conclusion: I think that the attribution of a significant role to the concept of value in ethics will in itself tend to draw the legitimacy of the obligatory aspect of morality and ethics into question and thereby undermine the normative force of morality.

In the first part the concept of value will be introduced, first through a reflection on semantical and grammatical aspects, and then through some historical considerations (I.). This leads to an analysis of the strategies that can be employed when defining value, the first, reductive, the other, reificatory (II.). And finally a reflection on the subject on this colloquium, *Modernity, the moral domain and the task of the moral philosopher*, in which I make a case for the moral philosopher as a critical moral activist, who should not, as Luhmann would have it, warn against the conflict provoking nature of morality (*cf.* Luhmann 1996: 34), but against the use of value as the key term in ethics and morality (III).

I. Approaching value

Before discussing the more substantial matters about value, first some words about what could be considered methodological issues (A.), and some remarks from a historical perspectives, which will give good reasons to focus on the above mentioned period, when the aim is to know something about value (B.).

A. Word and concept

First then, a few words about the way I treat this subject, *i.e.* about the focus on values as such (i), the relation between the word value and the concept (ii), about the noun and the verb (iii), and about the significance of reconstructing conceptual structures and implications in ethics (iv).

i) Reflection and definition

In these reflections about value it is not just a question of getting ourselves into a position to use the term value systematically as part of the ethical vocabulary, as can be seen in for instance Habermas' discourse ethics, where values are local preferences which can only become universally valid by being submitted to the test of the principles U and D (*cf.* Habermas 1983: 76, 117 ff. & 1995: 115). Like many others Habermas simply chooses a definition and stipulate a meaning of value to be used in the reflections afterwards. What I propose is to study the concept of value as such, its meaning and nature - if it has one - in relation to other parts, aspects or qualities of human reality, without making presumptions about its social, individual, epistemological or ontological status.

ii) Form and content

Value is a very widely used term and I have tried to remain open to the various uses, I have encountered. By doing this, I have assumed that there is some intrinsic connection between the actual word and the concept, meaning that it is no coincidence that value as a word can be employed both in economical, ethical, sociological, religious, aesthetic and linguistic discourses. So as a methodological principle I have presupposed a conceptual unity, a content or a meaning, which is coextensive with the extension, the scope of the reference of the particular word, having its own particular form. In other words: I assume that there is an intrinsic connection between the form and content of the word, between the *signifiant* of the sign 'value', whether written or spoken, and the *signifié*.

Assuming this intrinsic connection might appear controversial, since it has been a trivial assumption since, *e.g.*, Saussure that when it comes to linguistic signs the relation between *signifiant* and *signifié, i.e.*, what signifies materially and the meaning that is signified, is arbitrary (*cf. e.g.* Ducrot 1968: 63 f.). However, I do not assume that some theory of the genesis of the material aspect of the sign 'value' can explain its conceptual content; I accept that the meaning of the conceptual core is determined by its relations to other terms, and only assume that the meaning attributed to the sign 'value' has achieved some constancy, no matter how and when it was initially introduced as a term in the language system.

iii) Noun, adjective and verb

It is only when this is assumed that it becomes relevant to notice that the word 'value' is found in most European languages of Germanic and Roman origin.[3] In all these languages 'value' as a noun is closely connected to terms, which describe an action: In French *valoir* is close to *valeur*, in German *Wert* is the root of *werten* just as in Spanish *valor* is of *valorar*, and in English 'value' can simply be both a noun and a verb.[4] This means that discussions about value often are intertwined with discussions of evaluation in general. This circumstance can be construed as confusing things - as Durkheim does initially in his discussions of values (*cf.* Durkheim 1911b: 118) - but this confusion seems almost constitutive to other discussions of value, especially in Weber's discussions of the distinction between fact and value (*cf.* Weber 1904: 146 ff.). A general feature of some Anglo-American philosophical discussions adds to this point, namely the habit of referring to both nouns, adjectives and sometimes even verbs as concepts, as it is done in analyses of, for instance, the concept of 'red' or 'good'. In the first approach to the concept of value it must then be understood very broadly without any premature reduction, *i.e.*, not just as an entity referred to, but a referential phenomenon comprising valuing something (*to* value), the quality that is being grasped or expressed in this act (*of* value) and something in it self, an object in its own right (*a* value).

[3] Whether there are direct equivalents in languages like Greek, Finnish, Hungarian, Basque, Welsh, Gælic or other older languages I do not know.

[4] The English distinction between 'value' and 'worth' could maybe be made to mean something in this connection, but as far as I know it is not that easy to render meaningful in other languages.

iv) The significance of conceptual inferences and structure in ethics

Of course, by focusing in this way on one ethical concept and its possible implications I presuppose that conceptual implications actually matter in ethics to the extent that they really mean something for moral judgements and acts. Pressed to the limit I will claim that even the best intentions are powerless if the conceptual tools do not allow you to think clearly about how to realise these intentions. The good will, feelings, motives etc. will only be frustrated, if the conceptual skills, vocabulary etc. are insufficient to reach a reasonable conclusion and thereby to act. I might be possible to *re*-act, but not *to* act, if action is distinguished from behaviour in the normal way, *i.e.* by stressing that action is always conscious and meaningful in relation to a principle or a goal. Behind every action there is some process of thought and the medium of thought is concepts articulated as words; without sufficient vocabulary, it is not possible to appreciate a situation correctly, and therefore not possible to act in a proper way. This is even more the case when we are dealing with the moral appreciation of a situation, and still more when ethics is involved, since ethics asks for reasons, which can make actions morally acceptable.

I emphasise this because of experiences both with the public and with philosophical colleges. I been often been met with strongly stated objections to the importance for ethics and morality of demonstrating unconscious conceptual structures and inferences, often brought forward in phrases like "...but that's not what I mean" or "this goes against my explicit intention". I think the reason for these objections is that the moral imperative inherent in philosophical ethics, *i.e.*, the practical character of ethics, is often so deeply felt or taken so seriously that mere theoretical reflections are considered inappropriate. The goal of morality and ethics is good or right actions, and this kind of reflections can be considered an obstacle for action and therefore not just amoral, but actually immoral.

Moral action is normally thought of to presuppose freedom, but this does not mean that there are no conditions to be met. We surely cannot make sense of morality or ethics, if we are completely determined in all our acts; but that does not mean that philosophical ethics can ignore the restrictions put on our actions, both by causality and reason. Even though we clearly are free in some sense, we are neither unconditioned nor unrestricted in our actions.

The antitheoretical force in morality, the focus on "getting things done" seems to allow even philosophers to ignore simple metaphysical reflexions, and a lot of moralphilosophers remain epistemologically rather primitive empiricists or naive realists, not recognizing even the most basic Kantian or hermeneutic insights.

B. Historical perspectives

With these comments about the way that I approach the concept of value, two historical perspectives can add to the point that the connection between ethics and value is particular strong around the previous shift of the century, namely the history of ethics (i) and the history of the theoretical employment of term value, its genesis (ii), its rise (iii) and decline (iv). I just present these perspectives without developing either of them very much; some of what is presented here is based on my general knowledge of philosophy and various secondary sources, among them dictionaries; the general picture may be very different, when first all the details have been looked into more closely.

i) History of ethics

With the approach outlined above the mere frequency of the use of the word 'value' becomes a sign of the intensity of the conceptual focus on values, and this is the reason I claim that the concept of value occupies a central place in the philosophical thinking at the time of the last peak of the ethical wave, whereas this is not the case in ethics of the current peak, where value is mainly used in public discussions and not so much in ethics. If the focus of attention is moved back to the previous peak, around the French revolution, where the ethical theories we consider most basic today were formed, *i.e.* the ethics of Kant and Bentham, value then seems to play an even more subordinate role in ethics and probably also in the public debates.[5] The preoccupation with value then becomes the distinguishing mark of ethical

[5] In Luhmann's description of the semantical development of ethics up to the Enlightenment, value is not considered to be an important term (*cf.* Luhmann 1993).

thinking in philosophy at the close of the 19th and the start of the 20th century.

ii) Genesis of value

Shifting the focus from the history of ethics to the history of the word value adds to the force of this point. It seems that the first systematic discussion about value took place in the political philosophy of John Locke, where value was connected very strongly to work (*cf.* Locke 1698: II, §§40-43), and later in the political economy of Adam Smith, where value also was connected to marketexchange in the now classical manner (*cf.* Smith 1776: I., Chpt. 4-5; Sørensen 2002c). After Ricardo's utilitarian systematization of the laws of the free market (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Halévy 1901-04: 318 ff.), however, mainstream economics gradually gave up the focus on value as such, and simply understood use-value as utility relative to whatever goal, and later utility simply as preference (*cf.* Robinson 1962: 52). The concept of preference made it possible to reunite use-value and exchange-value, and in the end to reduce political economy to the problem of connecting mechanically and mathematically the preference-satisfaction of individuals with the general preference-satisfaction of society (*cf. e.g.* Hargreaves Heap 1992: 205 ff.), thus leaving qualitative discussions of the relations between use-value, exchange-value and surplus-value to the Marxist tradition; apart from being non-operational, the classical conception of value as determined by the effort spend implied the idea of a fair market price (*cf.* Robinson 1962: 49), and this makes ordinary capitalist exploitation illegitimate. But already in the first half of the 20th century the concept of value with all of its philosophical implications had become marginal in mainstream economic discussions (*cf. e.g.* Glansdorff 1966: 7 ff.).

When it comes to ethics, Kant was apparently one of the few Enlightenment philosophers to stress the moral sense of the word value in contrast to the sense employed in political economy, stating that the only thing of intrinsic value is humanity and morality (*Sittlichkeit*), while value as thought of by economists is only something relative, in reality just a market price (*cf. e.g.* Kant 1785: AB 77 ff. & 1788: A 126). It was, however, not this contrast, which was the immediate reason for the later ethical interest in value, when the wave of ethics peaked again. The interest in value arose in Germany as an idealist opposition to the mechanical world view of natural science, where Christian philosophers like Herman Lotze wanted to state, that reality consisted of more than just plain matter and causality. It was the

ideological presuppositions in this moral and ideal sense of value that Nietzsche uncovered by questioning the value of truth and calling for an *Umwertung aller Werte*. Moral values should again be created out of strength, by noble aristocrats and free sprits, correcting what was corrupted by anxious Christian slaves subdued by Oriental mysticism (*cf.* Nietzsche 1886: 567, 610, 661, 730).

iii) 20th century rise

This gave rise to a general philosophical discussion of the nature of values in the above mentioned very broad sense of the word between naturalist philosophers inspired by the progress of empirical science (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Brentano 1889; Meinong 1894 & 1897; Ehrenfels 1893 & 1898), neo-Kantians (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Rickert 1911-12 & 1913), and various idealist (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Münsterberg 1907), and this discussion lead to further discussions among phenomenologist (*cf.* Husserl 1908-14 & Scheler 1926), early analytical philosophers in England (*cf.* Moore 1903), British idealist (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Laird 1929), american pragmatists (*cf.* Dewey 1925 & Perry 1926) and also in the movement for unified science (*cf.* Kraft 1937 & Dewey 1939). The investigation into and the discussion about the concept of value was even thought of as a particular discipline within philosophy on par with epistemology and was as such baptized ‘axiology’ by Will Urban (*cf.* Urban 1908: 48 & Hart 1997: 2).

The discussion about value can be considered an integral part of the birth af 20th century philosophy and modern ethics in particular, since it played an important part in those discussions of naturalism, which took place in all areas of philosophy at that time. In ethics Moore articulated his famous critique of naturalism, the tendency to infer from is-sentences to ought-sentences (*cf.*, *e.g*, Engels 1993:92 ff.), and in logic Husserl criticized psychologism, *i.e.* the idea that logic was to be based on an empirical description of the psychological habits of thought (*cf.* George 2003: 95-99). The newly formed discipline of epistemology (*Erkenntnisstheorie*) stressed the distinction between the causal explanation of knowledge and the reasons to claim its validity (*cf.* Rorty 1980: 134 ff.), which in philosophy of science became the distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification,

It was the general conceptions of value inherent in these discussions, which were the basis of the ethical understanding of value around the shift of the century and in the following

decades. In the same period new empirical sciences like sociology and linguistics were established, and to them the concept of value was also crucial in criticizing naturalism. The sociology of Weber stressed the difference between, on the one hand, the *Wertbeziehung*, *i.e.*, the importance of the cultural values of the society of the social scientist for the evaluations of the problems and solutions of the social science, and, on the other, the values, which every person holds, but which should be kept out of social science (*cf. e.g.* Weber 1904: 176; Sørensen 2002a), *i.e.*, the famous fact-value distinction which, however, in the end led him to an endorsement of pessimism and nihilism (*cf.* Strauss 1953: 42). And Saussure used in his linguistics the concept of value as a key concept in the argument against the etymological conception of language, stating that the identity of a word, *i.e.*, its value (*cf.* Ducrot 1968: 44), should be determined mainly syncronically by the relations to other elements in the system of language, and not diacronically by the historical genesis of the individual word.

iv) - and decline

Just from the mere use of the term value in such diverse context, one can get an idea of the importance the concept of value was ascribed in the first third of the 20th century. This unanimity, however, disappeared by the end of the 1930'ies and after The Second World War the concept of value was mainly used, *i.e.*, not discussed, in American sociology and in ethics. In sociology it was understood as something collective, like norms, which were sometimes even called value-norms, whereas in ethics it was mainly used a non-technical normative term for what should be preferred in matters of morality, and this is more or less

the situation today.[6]

A few dedicated philosophers have kept the tradition of axiology alive in the anglophone world (*cf. e.g.* Findlay 1961 & Rescher 1969), but today the concept of value is only of marginal importance, especially when compared to the situation 100 years ago. The *Journal of Value Inquiry* started in 1967 as a journal dedicated to axiological research, but appears now to be a journal for ethics in general, and the *Value Inquiry Book Series* published by Rodopi since 1992 with the same mission does not appear very focussed either.

Summing up, in ethics discussions about value are characteristic for the period when the ethical wave peaked 100 years ago. Looking further back for uses of the word value, first during the Enlightenment, it was crucial for classical political economics, then it went out of economics, but was given prominence around the birth of 20th century philosophy, and discussed in metaphysics, ethics and epistemology, and in new sciences like sociology and linguistics. Finally, for the last five or six decades value has been a minor concept in philosophy, economics and sociology.

C. Suggestions about value

[6] The *Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. 10 is titled *Philosophy of Meaning, Knowledge and Value in the Twentieth Century*; but whereas the index contains entries on ‘meaning’ and ‘knowledge’, there is none on ‘value’ or ‘axiology’, and ‘value’ is only discussed briefly in the chapter “Ethics (1900-45" (*cf.* Canfield 1997: 145-45, 462-66).

The historical perspective reveals the focus on value to be something specific for a special period of philosophical thinking. In order to benefit from these philosophical reflections about value, one has to understand more broadly, what was at stake in the establishment of modern philosophy in general and ethics in particular. Modern philosophy has called itself scientific, but this label seems to cover two opposing tendencies, namely one that lets philosophy work within the limitations of empirically based scientific knowledge, examples being Durkheim and Dewey, the other attempting to liberate thought from the contraints of this kind of scientific knowledge by employing a general scepticism and inventing analytical distinctions, like Moore, Husserl, Popper and others - and it seems to me that the dominating parts of 20th century philosophy has mainly been scientific in this second way, accepting the rationalist image of science inferred from logic, geometry, mathematics and theoretical physics. And for those who wanted to keep the concept of science close to traditional speculative philosophy, the idea of values as something generic was well suited as a antidote to excessive naturalism.

The historical perspective, however, is also suggestive in another way. Pratical philosophy was for centuries - in the so-called 'Dark Ages' - considered as comprising not just of ethics and politics, but also of economics, and reactualizing this traditional conception makes the word value a promising candidate to conceptually link and thereby reunite the disciplines of pratical philosophy. Such a conceptual linkage would also make it possible to let sociological reflections contribute to practical philosophy, especially when we remember the great difficulties, social science experienced in its attempt to distinguish it self from social policy (*cf. e.g.* Weber 1904: 212 ff.) and the efforts made by sociology, *in casu* Durkheim, to separate itself from its roots in moral philosophy (*cf.* Durkheim 1893b; Sørensen 1998).

I will not here explore further this suggestion as to how the positive use of the concept of value can contribute to establish a comprehensive account of practical philosophy. The historical sketches were meant only to give a rough map, which can help us to navigate between the various contributions made to the determination of the concept of value in order to reach some substantial, though preliminary conclusions. As mentioned, I think the concept of value has some negative implications for ethics and morality, *i.e.* that value undermines the obligatory aspect of morality, and the question I wish to address therefore is as mentioned

above, what it means for ethics to be articulated mainly in terms of value. The question is therefore, what can be understood by value in general, *i.e.* what can be understood by value as such, how its extension can be delimited and determined in relation to what it is not, and which conceptual implication can be inferred from it.

II. Defining value

As one of Durkheim's pupils, Celestin Bouglé has pointed out (*cf.* Bouglé 1922: 92 ff.), any attempt to define value has to decide whether to aim at a unified definition of value, or to accept the different spheres of common uses, *i.e.* economics, ethics, religion etc., as distinct spheres for the definition of value. The question then is whether all values should be considered of the same kind or there is a fundamental difference between, say, economic and moral values. One could insist, as Kant did, that there the only real value is moral, whereas economic value is only relative to the market; but it has for centuries made good sense to millions of people to apply value to both economic and non-economic issues, and taking seriously the connection between the word and the concept I mentioned earlier implies that values should be thought of as basicly of the same nature, and I have therefore chosen the unificatory approach.

Any definition has a reductive element, meaning that the thing in question has to be related to something else, and that it thereby is reduced to something in relation to something else. This is even more the case, when aim is to unify things that might be thought of as different. Still, one can distinguish between strategies for defining, which explicitly reduce (A) and strategies which explicitly or implicitly reify (B).

A. Reductive strategies

As a first formal and rather empty definition one could say, that "Value is something valued as being of value". Still, it can tell us that there are things, qualities, relations etc. not

considered of value, not valued as valuable. Another interesting thing is that there is no way to get any idea of ethics or morality into this definition. The definition is meaningful in that it states something, but there is is no explicit or implicit moral content in the statement. Even this minimal definition indicates that there might be a problem in making value the key term in ethics.

The formal definition can be given a little more content when the formal aspect is considered as a condition. This way of thinking is reflected in a formal conception of value that reduces it to a demand of any decision, a condition to be fulfilled for something to be a decision at all. A decision has to decide about something, take a stand, and that means choosing something and not something else. Why this something is chosen, depends on the value in this sense, upon what is considered to be worth choosing. Sometimes this is connected with rational choice theory, which conflates decisions about values with any other decision. But even if this is not the case, there is no moral content in this understanding of value, and being very formal, there is also no criterium to specify the content of the value, no way to distinguish between, say, moral, economic, or aesthetic value.

Such a formal way of defining value is employed by one of my colleagues, the Danish philosopher, Ole Thyssen (*cf.* Thyssen 2002: 127-34), and is inspired by his studies of Luhmann. Luhmann is in turn inspired by the great American sociologist Talcot Parsons, but Parsons conception is not quite the same. With his focus on the structure of social action, and inspired by Weber and Durkheim, Parsons apparently uses value as the common denominator of normativity (*cf.* Parsons 1968: 260), *i.e.*, of morality, religion, economics, and aesthetics. The order of society depends on “common value attitudes” (Parsons 1968: 670), and value is an essential element in “all concrete action” (Parsons 1968: 681). Thinking of value in this way can be called functional because it focus on the function of values in relation to social order and action. This approach naturally leads us to think of value in terms of specific values and value systems, in the plural (*cf. e.g.* Parsons 1968: 168), and this plurality in itself relativizes moral values in relation to other values and value systems. Initially no special quality or feature is attributed to morality as a value system; it is only in the second step that morality must be distinguished from other value systems, but this still leaves open whether these systems are on par or some of them may be more important,

significant, correct etc. than others for decision making. Both the conditional and the functional approach to defining value leaves open what is specific about morality as such, and thinking of value in this formal and descriptive way does not contribute positively to the moral strength of ethical arguments.

Instead of giving a formal or functional account of value, which somehow presumes that one already knows what value is, one can also try to reduce values to something else, either identifying analytically the phenomenon of value with a combination of elements presumed to be more fundamental, or by giving a causal explanation of the existence of the phenomenon. In both cases it seems to be necessary to keep in mind the distinction between verb, adjective and noun, *i.e.*, action, quality and thing/phenomenon.

The conception of value in political economy can be taken to reduce the meaning of value to the causal explanation of what creates value, namely work, exchange and exploitation. Whether value is considered something substantial in itself or is only a quality seems to vary within the framework of the discussion, where Locke apparently considers value to be a quality that can attributed to various things like land, food and money, whereas Marx seems to consider value, when first created, as something which can be accumulated in itself and change its form (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Marx 1867-94: I, Chpt. 22), although probably only when being based on and measured by a material medium like money. But this medium can become immatialized and become shere numbers, written on paper or represented electronically as is the case today. The point is here, however, that value in political economy is explained causally.

Utilitarians like Bentham do not take values as such up for consideration; like hedonists, they think of happiness as good, *i.e.*, as of value, and since happiness is the greatest sum of pleasure for the greatest number of people, pleasure is also of value, and since, again, what is useful is of value, then utility itself can be thought of as the alternative core value. This is not a causal explanation of quality, but a empiricist reduction of the complex and ideological meaning of the noun ‘value’ to something considered more simple and factual; being, as he was, critical of all kinds of illusions and ideology, Bentham would probably consider value to be a ‘fiction’ and reduce it hedonistically like virtues, rights and obligations (*cf.* Bentham

1983: 128, 171). A similar empiricist reduction can employ Locke's idea of colours as secondary sense qualities and then discuss morality as a "property" the same level as colours (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Hare 1985: 45 f.).

It is the same line of thought which nowadays is labelled non-cognitivism or anti-realism, and which is used by modern consequentialism to leave it open what is of value, and then refer this discussion to a special domain called value theory.[7] Value theory in these contexts, however, is not about what value is as such, but about which other acts, qualities, things etc. are valuable. Value is a quality, not a thing and not primarily an act. Since value is a quality, discussions can be raised about how to get to know this quality, and how it as a quality is, first, related to things and, second, to other qualities, either other values or other qualities like colours. Thinking of value as a quality in this way makes the connection between a human being and his or her values relatively weak, and reflecting ethically about moral matters in terms of value in this sense makes morality equally weak.

Turning instead to the act of valuing, one can say that valuing simply is an expression of desire, that valuing something as valuable is just desiring something desirable. This may be interpreted individualistically as each persons contingent preferences, which reduce value to just what is preferred by any individual. Values are then just another class of commodities that obey the laws of the market. Their general importance can, accordingly, be measured by the demand for them. In ethics, this way of thinking is often employed by modern non-cognitive consequentialist, but this kind of value theory also makes it difficult to understand why moral values can be more in demand than non-moral pleasures. It also makes it hard to see how values could claim legitimacy. We only have the statistics of factual and contingent individual preferences, and even without insisting on the importance of the naturalistic fallacy, there does not seem to be much ground for claims about the general validity of values.

[7] Bentham's utilitarianism and modern consequentialism are analyzed at length in Sørensen 2002a, 2003a and 2003b.

Valuing understood as the act of desiring may, however, also be interpreted as relative to some nature, be that human, social or universal, and this makes values more general than simply a sum of contingent individual preferences. Assuming that there is such a nature and that we can achieve knowledge of it, values can be claimed to be not just desired, but to be desirable and even worthy of desire when in accordance with this nature. This makes it possible to claim general validity for values, implying that someone who does not value in the right way is simply wrong. Of course this line of thinking, which might be called naturalism, can be met with charges of committing the famous fallacy, and this line of reasoning is actually characteristic of the philosophy of the 20th century mentioned above. But it is actually besides the point, since claims to validity do not have to be claims to logical validity; in other words, a claim to validity of value is not a necessary deductive inference, but precisely a claim, *i.e.* something that can be discussed. This way of thinking has its roots in Aristotelian practical philosophy, and has been employed by moral philosophers ever since. In relation to the concept of value, it simply reduces value to be part of or identical with what is good, which in turn is what is desirable or worthy of desire.

B. Reificatory strategies

Many moral philosophers have chosen one of these reductive strategies, both in the heyday of value and today, with the somehow paradoxical result that what presents itself as a discussion of value or an anlysis of it very quickly dissolves into discussions about happiness, utility, preferences or desires, that is, not about value as such, since value is actually something else. Another strategy is to consider the concept of value in itself, and try to specify the meaning and nature of it, and what I am doing in this paper could be considered a modern version of this strategy, although my conclusions do not just rely on my own particular insights and reasonings, but mainly on my exploration of how value is thought of in different theoretical contexts.

A common point of departure for this conception of value is the recognition of value as something more than what is preferred, desired or useful, whether this is understood

individually, socially or universally. There is a qualitative difference between playing with pushpin and enjoying poetry, which can be brought forward by distinguishing, as already mentioned, between desired, desirable and worthy of desire, where the latter expression needs to employ the concept of value in order to get the right meaning through. Neither is value just to be understood as what is useful; what is useful is valuable, *i.e.*, of value; but is cannot be considered a value as such. And the same goes for the reduction of value to a condition or a function within a more comprehensive theory of society, action, motivation, decision or choice; value is something more. The problem is only what this 'more' is.

In this case the point of departure is not the verb, but either the noun or the adjective. Value is something more, since it is recognized and understood as such. Recognizing something as a value is to recognize it of a different, more valuable or worthy nature than what is simply desired or preferred. If one thinks of Kant's abovementioned remarks about intrinsic value, or the idea of value brought forward in critiques of the so-called materialist reduction of reality in the natural sciences or in capitalist market economy, one gets an idea of how value is to be understood in this context.

Focussing at value as such typically means focussing on an entity and not a process, *i.e.*, a quality or a substance, not an action or an activity. As such, value is part of reality and has a nature, one which cannot be reduced to biological, psychological, or social nature. Value is perceived and desired in a special way and has a special nature, a special way of being. But this way of conceiving value typically creates metaphysical and epistemological problems, and trying to cope with these problems philosophers have often been lead to construct strange metaphysical systems or postulate special kinds of cognition like intuition, or faculties like a moral sense. These conceptual constructions, however, are not only *ad hoc* solutions, brought forward by wrong presuppositions and conceptual logic; they are serious attempts to get a conceptual hold of the important phenomenonal feature of value, namely that it is considered worth pursuing by individual human beings even though this pursuit can neither be considered pleasant or useful, at least in a short time perspective.

This special feature of value has been called the ideal character of value (*cf. e.g.* Durkheim 1911b: 128 f.). Value is ideal in the sense, that when percieved as such it motivates by giving

a reason to act in a special way, a kind of construction we know from Kant's categorical imperative, which tells us to will the maxime to be a universal law, thus connecting reason and motive (*cf.* Kant 1785: AB 94 ff.). Schelers phenomenological ethics of value apparently rest on the same premises, but gives more weight to the motivational aspect. It is not reason, which is thought to be part of the motive, but love. It is love that makes it possible to percieve values. What is a bit surprising, however, is that even though moral values are valued highly as ideals, Scheler does not think they are directly pursued through action. It is non-moral values, which are the object of our desires, and moral value is, so to speak, an offspring of the actions that follows from these desires. Values are given to us through love in an pre-theoretical experience, as qualities, but they depend on our willing non-moral values. The non-moral value can be higher or lover, and the higher non-moral values are bearers of moral value. Moral value is given through the mere willing some higher non-moral value, regardless of the consequences of this will. So to the catholic Scheler, moral value is not the object of our striving, but is given to us as in an act of mercy (*cf.* Blosser 2002).

Here, too, talking about value means talking about values in plural, and even though value is considered to be of one kind, this leaves entirely open what makes a value moral, religious etc., that is, it does not help to decide what morality is apart from its being a quality of certain values. Again the focus on value apparently does not strengthen morality conceptually. And what is more, the whole idea of conceiving value as something ideal beyond mere naturalistic reductions seems to be in conflict with the fact of historical, cultural and social relativity. It has been argued, and rightly, that if value is a quality, it cannot be inherent in the things themselves, since it seems contingent on what is actually considered of value (*cf. e.g.* Durkheim 1911b: 120 f.), and this argument holds as well for value understood as a thing in itself. In other words, since value are thought of as beyond the nature of human beings, how can we cope with factual variation in human values? One answer is simply that of postulating some kind of harmony stemming from God or a system, a logic behind our backs. Another is the construction of a hierarchy of values, as Scheler does. And still another is to accept of conflicts among values as a fundamental aspect of the human condition, namely, precisely that which forces us to decide and thereby take personal responsibility. But neither of these solutions strengthens the idea of morality as binding in some special sense.

Value is something real, but to be real is one thing; to get a practical significance value must also be percieved in some way, and what is percieved is not the thing in itself, but its form, or as one would say today, its concept, and what is understood of a concept is its meaning. What is real about value is that it is understood as valuable, as worthy of a special kind of attitude and attention, and this is - I think - what Kant tried to grasp by strongly linking will, motive and reason. Good will is to want to have reasonable motives, motives which hold universally and not just for one self, motives which have a validity for more than just the one who has them in the given situation.

Value, then, can be considered, neither a thing in it self, nor an intrinsic quality of something else, but something relational, as relations between qualities or things. This means that the act of valuing does not primarily imply getting knowledge and specifying the metaphysical status of such an entity or quality; the act of valuing can be said to constitute a relation between the one, who values, and what is valued. As a relation in this sense, value can be thought of as a standard of valuations, which is more than just a demand or a logical condition for a decision. As a standard value is an entity, not primarily something with an ontological status, but something meaningful, which can be explained and understood in other meaningful terms and phrases, and which, when understood, affects the explicit or implicit reasoning behind every action. In other words: Value can in this context, as a *genus*, be considered constitutive of what today often metaphorically is called the “space of reason” (Lovibond 2002: 21), and as such it is constitutive of normativity to the extent that normativity is reasonable; but this still leaves the special feature of moral normativity, *i.e.*, moral value, short of a *differentia specifica*.

Value is real, but in a special way. This implies either leaving traditional metaphysics in brackets, as Husserl would have it, and as when Moore determines the quality good as a primitive notion, not something substantial in itself, but something said of something else, a quality that is irreducable (*cf.* Aranguren 1958: 242), or, alternatively, as I would prefer it, acknowledging a metaphysical understanding of reality, which transcends physicalism and traditional empiricism, *i.e.*, an understanding of reality, which leaves room for the acknowledgement of meaning, beauty, reason, tradition, justice, taste and other human phenomena as both real and meaningful, and without giving up the idea of true knowledge of

that reality, *i.e.*, something close to what is expressed in Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics, which makes it possible dialectically to think of reality in terms of both an epistemology of meaningful experience and an ontology which makes us part of reality (*cf.* Gadamer 1960: 464 ff.). But such a dialectical and Aristotelian conception of reality would not, at least for Gadamar, attribute any special prominence to value, at the most considering it just an expression of one aspect of normativity (*cf.* Gadamer 1960: 46, 63, 225). And a moral philosophy expressing morality mainly in terms of value in this sense would mean a very limited understanding of morality, which cannot be thought to strengthen the obligatory aspect of morality.

C. Remark about naturalism, rationalism and value

The scope of the discussion so far can be illustrated by the following scheme:

Reduction				Reification			
Formal		Content specific		Entity		Quality	
Condition	Function	Cause	Meaning	Thing	Meaning	Inherent	Relational

Fig. 1: Strategies for defining value

As has probably been noticed, the crucial distinction mentioned after the historical introduction between being scientific in a rationalist way and being it in a naturalistic way, between thinking in terms of reasons and in terms of causes, runs through the discussion and thus this final scheme in a rather odd way, showing itself only at the lowest level, where meaning can either play a reductive part or a reificatory part, being either something reducable to something more fundamental or something irreducable.

This is primarily due the fact that the historical approach to the discussion of value gives weight to what was taken for granted in the past, *i.e.*, the scientific naturalism of the 18th and the 19th century, and not what is presupposed in the present, the focus on meaning and validity in the 20th century. It can, however, also be seen as a result of an undue weight given to the approach of a naturalist like Durkheim, since the way I have structured the discussion of the strategies of defining value resembles the structure found in Durkheims treatment of value, where he distinguishes between a naturalistic and an idealistic conception of value (*cf.* Durkheim 1911b; Sørensen 2002c).

However, according to Durkheim there is a duality to be found in all kinds of morality and religion. This is the co-existence of constraint and desire, meaning that morality is at the same considered worth - and worthy of - striving towards and still experienced as something, which forces itself upon one from outside (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Durkheim 1906b; Sørensen 1998). These two aspects are joined in Durkheim's final consideration of value. The first distinction is dissolved by thinking af value as real and ideal, but when it comes to the second distinction, value is clearly on the one side, namely something worth desiring. Considering morality in terms of value gives man more freedom in relation to morality than when morality is primarily thought of in terms of duty and obligation, and prominence given to value in morality and ethics is seen as a sign of change, a crisis, a period of creative destruction in morality.

Apparently, then, I could reach my basic conclusion about the relation between value and morality simply by restating Durkhiem's proposals about value. I have tried, however, to get a more thorough understanding of the concept of value, in order to see what in the general concept of value precludes experiencing morality as binding. My treatment is framed by another scheme of thought that, I think, can be defended in its own right. To define something like value one has to cope with value as it is commonly known, attempting to reduce inconsistencies and get some conceptual unity. Still, one can distinguish between a reductive and a reificatory strategy for definition, and making this distinction does make a difference on how value will be understood in the end. And within this logic Durkheim actually employs a reductive strategy in one of the above mentioned senses by explaining values in the plural causally by the intensity of social interaction in certain formative periods in history, like the renaissance, the reformation and the french revolution, whereas I opt for the reificatory strategy, and in the end argue for the necessity

of understanding value in terms of reason, validity and meaning. So the conclusion looks at first pass just like Durkheim's, but both the premisses and the content of the conclusion are actually different.

III. The moral domain and task of the moral philosopher

Now it is time to address the subjects which are the occasion of this colloquium, the moral domain and the task of the moral philosopher. What can be said about the these question after these preliminary reflections of the concept of value? Well, I have argued that it is problematic to be moral by appealing to values, or even to think of morality in terms of values. Some of the considerations leading to this conclusion are rather theoretical or technical, and moral philosophy sometimes appears excessive in this way; but as I argued in the introduction, ethics cannot ignore conceptual reflections. Ethics, or moral philosophy as it was translated by Cicero (*cf.* Jüssen 1984: 149), has been called practical philosophy since Aristotles, that is, it is concerned with human action in relation to other humans, human actions where the goal is inherent in the action (*cf.* Aristoteles *Eth.Nic.*: 1140a). And this concern is normative, meaning that it presupposes the moral view; but it is also theoretical, being directed towards getting knowledge about what is good and right, giving good reasons to perform good acts, even though it is only in order to make this knowledge and these reasons effective in human life. Moral philosophy has, as the Spanish philosopher José Aranguren reminds us, since antiquity and through the Middle ages explicitly been called a "speculative practical science" (Aranguren 1958: 214), and this basic understanding of ethics is still valid.

Ethics is as philosophy speculative, and all the theory and the tecnicalities inherent in moral philosophy only becomes meaningful, if one wants to do good. Good will, and the right attitude is a necessary condition for doing moral philosophy; when Luhmann wants make ethics give up the solidarity with "the good side" of the difference between good and bad (*cf.* Luhmann 1989: 42 f.), he reveals that he does not understand what ethics is about. I usually say that the bottom line in moral philosophy is the question "Why be moral?". Accepting this question as meaningful makes moral philosophy meaningless. All the conceptual work done by moral philosophers presupposes that we want to be moral. No matter how theoretical moral philosophy may appear,

it is allways normative in this sense, attempting to decide what is right and wrong (*cf. e.g.* Hare 1985: 51 ff.). This is sometimes said to imply that ethics has it limits, since we do not always want to be moral, and that there are cases where it is alright, the so-called morally neutral zones of life, where one can perform morality free actions. I think this is simply a mistaken point of view; where there are human beings, there is morality (A.). Being a moral philosopher, then, means engaging in morality, criticizing what is wrong in ethics, *e.g.* excessive rationalism and dogmatism, and using all intellectual skills to encourage human beings to accept and appreciate morality as the most important feature of human life (B).

A. The moral domain

The idea accepted by many social scientist and especially economists is that there are situations where it makes no sense - or is not relevant - to be moral. If I pay somebody, for instance, to have something repaired, then what is relevant is only the skill of the repairman, not questions of morality. But, as far as I can see, this is not correct. The successful transaction depends just as much upon his honesty as his skill. He might be very clever, but not very interested in doing his job, believing it, quite correctly, to produce surplus value to someone else. Or he might even be engaged in direct deceit or fraud, telling me that everything is o.k. while knowing that in reality it is not. The same is true when it comes to science. The whole system of science depends on the veracity of the persons involved, and actually one can - following the idea of Anthony Giddens (*cf.* Giddens 1990: 75 ff.) - say that society in general is a system, which is based on faith or trust. Whenever we do something, we presuppose an infinity of honest people, whose job has made what I do now possible. This also holds for even the most anarchic kind of capitalism, short of direct theft; as Bouglé has noticed, the *homo economicus* of capitalism should, if he was not moral, be steeling, since steeling means maximizing profits while minimizing cost (*cf.* Bouglé 1922: 103), at least over the short term.

The idea of functional differentiation of social systems, among them the moral value system, which has been developed in American sociology since Parsons and later by Luhmann, seems to me to offer only confusion about the moral domain. And in fact, according to Luhmann himself morality cannot be thought of as a functional system on par with others like science, economy

and politics (*cf.* Luhmann 1978: 89). As far as I can see, as soon as there is more than one person involved in some action, then that action is within the moral domain. Even doing your own things actually involves other persons, just in the negative sense that one has withdrawn from their company. And the human dignity, that each person wants for himself, cannot be understood except in relation to some standards or values, which are collectively held. In almost every aspect of human life a social relation is involved, and every social relation has aspects, which falls within the moral domain. The type of social science, which often employs the word 'value' to describe morality, cannot contribute to moral philosophy positively, since it has a mistaken idea of morality and the moral domain as such. Conceiving morality as a specific system of values is turning things up side down; when morality is the concern as it is in moral philosophy, it does not help to think of morality as subordinate to a general conception of a value system.

So Durkheim is basically right. What is moral is social and what is social is, at least in part, moral; what has been criticized as confusing terms or gliding from one term to the other (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Luhman 1977: 32 f.) is simply correct. Society cannot function without morality, it is literally nothing without morality, and morality is therefore constitutive of society; if this is true, then it should be in order sometimes to slip and identify morality with society. And this does not mean, as Bauman thinks, that society is a totalitarian unit making legitimate dissent impossible (*cf.* Bauman 1989: 235); first, what holds for society also holds for groups in general, and, as Durkheim knows, and Bauman should know, within a national society there are several groups, which are defined by their variation of morality (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Durkheim 1950a: 44 f.); second, no existing morality is or has ever been consistent to a such a degree that it could recommend, condemn and praise unambiguously; if this was the case, moral philosophy would have been out of business long time ago.

B. Moral philosophy

How then to cope with this moral reality as a moral philosopher? We may think of describing it in terms of value, as most sociologists do, but when moral philosophy considers values, they mean something more than just existent values, and as argued, the mere description of morality in terms of value may function as an ideology, which weakens morality as such. The value

approaches to moral philosophy, reductionist and reificatory alike, understand value either as an action or as some kind of entity; but by their mere focus on value they make themselves blind to the importance for morality of upbringing, education and social relations. So as moral philosophers we should drop all the talk about value, in fact, we should criticize those who talk about values, since they contribute to the ideological subversion of morality. There are several other key terms besides value, which might be more effective in providing moral strength and courage.

Still, we have to deal with existing morality, but a moral philosopher can always ask theoretically, as Moore taught us, whether or not existing morality is good (i). But this is not enough. Even when - or if - this question can be answered, how should moral philosophy practically relate to the fact that existing morality is good and, respectively, bad? Moral philosophy is said to be normative, but how is this special moral normativity to be understood (ii)?

i) Is it good?

To take the first question first, is morality good? This question can be approached in different ways. If one is religious in a traditional way, then God is good, has created the world and everything is then good, although we might not be able to understand it. Moral philosophy then has the task of understanding the logic that makes everything good, also what might at first appear to be not good at all. This is the classical theodicy-problem (*cf. e.g.* Sørensen 2003c). In this perspective morality is good as such, because it is part of creation, and if we do not see it immediately, we can get help from oracles, theology or philosophy, including ethics and moral philosophy. So moral philosophy becomes either a systematisation of what God considers good, known through intuition or tradition, or it may become a hermeneutical effort of interpreting Gods meaning as revealed in scriptures and his material work, reality itself.

If we are not religious in this way, things become a bit more complicated. If we do not consider morality to be universally valid in a religious way, we may trust that morality is part of human nature, but it seems that this nature is elastic enough to allow both variation in morality and moral conflicts. And if we accept morality as social or individual in a more fundamental way, then the same thing holds, and all three approaches allow for serious and legitimate doubts about

the right thing to do. In other words: They are able to generate moral dilemmas, which are not so easily solved as in the religious approach. Or to be more precise: The religious approach implies that there is always a solution, even though we may not know it, whereas the approaches just noted can be taken to imply that sometimes there is no solution to a dilemma.

Modern normative ethics has often chosen the religious model, but in a secularized form. To both utilitarians and Kantians there are always solutions to dilemmas (*cf. e.g.* Sørensen 1995), because rationality or reason allows only one solution, when the situation in all its relevant aspects is understood properly. Morality is good in a unambiguous way and the only problem is lack of relevant knowledge or lack of reason in specific human beings.

I prefer, however, to take variation and conflict as constitutive elements of morality, meaning that although morality is good as such, it is a human creation and can thus be different, to use the famous Aristotelian phrase (*cf.* Aristoteles *Eth.Nic.*: 1139b). This does not mean that morality is totally arbitrary, since there is some regularity in human life; in all cultures and to all times there are some specific human conditions and ways of living socially, which gives them some stability in the perception of what is right and what is wrong. It is always reasonable to ask whether a given practice is good, but it is not always reasonable to continue being sceptical, since morality does not allow the kind of universal validity, which sceptical questioning presupposes (*cf.* Hume 1748: Sect. XII, Part II). As far as I know the different modern approaches to moral philosophy, including those that employ the concept of value, they often pendulate between universality and relativity, aiming at universal validity, but precisely therefore being extremely vulnerable to sceptical critique. Having grown used to strict rationality the difficult thing is to know when it is reasonable to stop asking for more reasons, that is, to be able to recognize and accept a reason as a sufficiently good moral reason. So morality is good, but it can sometimes be hard to specify exactly why.

ii) Moral philosophy as critique and encouragement

If this is the case then the task of the moral philosopher contains a certain asymmetry, which may not be so easily accepted. The negative, critical task is not so controversial. It must be to engage in an immanent critique of dogmatic and rationalistic conceptions of morality, armed with all our philosophical skills, trying to reveal as ideologically and illegitimately authoritarian the kind of

ethics, which claims to be able to decide unambiguously what is right in every case. This establishes a radicalized enlightenment perspective, which reveals a mystification of the human condition, and shows the human life to be a political life, which could be different. The negative task of the moral philosopher is based on a political obligation to use his or her education to criticize traditional and mystifying, undemocratic and suppressive conceptions of morality.

The positive task, however, is quite different. The positive articulation of ethics cannot submit itself to those standards, which are used in the critique. The critical task is immanent, using those standards that the mystifying conceptions accept themselves; in the positive task the point is to raise the level of faith in one self and one's fellow human beings, the sense of dignity and moral courage, and the sense of what is reasonable and just. What is presupposed is the strength of morality in human beings and in social life, the strength of conscience, when raised and treated properly. When children are raised, they are instinctively objects of love and care, and this positive input can, under the right economical, social and cultural conditions, be further strengthened by the right moral upbringing and education. When asked what is right and what is good, one has to appeal to what is actually considered right and good, after discussing the matters among those recognized as morally trustworthy, that is, not just the majority and not those in power. Morality is already in human reality, it is just a matter of trusting it enough and giving it the right conditions to flourish, and there is no reason to wait almost a century for the next peak of the ethical wave to make that happen.

The negative task of the moral philosopher must be to criticize, rationally and rhetorically, conceptions of morality which breed insecurity, economic inequality and submission to illegitimate authorities. This is what I have been trying to do in relation to value ethics, and the hope is that by doing this one can help liberating the morality that is already inherent in human reality, not just as a potential, but as something that everybody knows under the right conditions. Ethics must as practical philosophy remind us that morality is not weak at all. Morality is incredibly strong, it has survived all kinds of pressures, abuses and mistreatment, popping up as meaningful and valid every day in the consciousness of every human being. The positive task is therefore not primarily a matter of arguing rationally; it is much more a matter of moralizing by rhetorical exposition, pursuasion and storytelling about established moral idols, such as Martin Luther King, Ghandi, or, to remind of the inherent temporality of these matters, Pol Pot. The

positive task is to show how morality is always already given, although mostly in a distorted way, in the meetings between people (Sartre), in the way we recognize a human face (Levinas), in the moral upbringing and in political democracy (Aristostle) and even in technological, bureaucratic and economic systems (Giddens). Only by employing this dual strategy, only by being moral in this way, *i.e.*, only by taking part and taking a moral stand, only by being aristocratic in a Nietzschean sense, can the moral philosopher get the practical significance, he or she is supposed to have. As Marx said, taking part for the people is the highest degree of impartiality; impartiality must never mean that oppressor and oppressed is treated equally (*cf.* Marx 1845-46: 199 f).

References

Aranguren, José Luis L.:
- *Ética* (1958) in Aranguren: *Obras Completas 2*, Madrid: Trotta, 1994

Aristoteles:
- *Nikomachische Ethik*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, ^{9}1991 (*Eth.Nic.*)

Bauman, Zygmunt:
- *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), Cambridge: Polity, ^{2}1991

Bentham, Jeremy:
- *Deontology - together with A table of the springs of action and the article on Utilitarianism* (ed. by Amnon Goldworth) in *The collected works of Jeremy Bentham*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983

Blosser, Philip:
- "Max Scheler: A Sketch of His Moral Philosophy" in Drummond & Embree 2002, pp. 391-413

Bouglé, Celestin:
- *Leçon de sociologie sur l'évolution des valeurs*, Paris: Arman Collin, 1922

Brentano, Frantz:
- *Vom Ursprung der Sittlicher Erkenntnis*, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889

Canfield, John V.:
- *Philosophy of Meaning, Knowledge and value in the Twentieth Century* (*Routledge History of Philosophy, Volume 10*) (1997), London: Routledge, ^{2}2003

Canto-Sperber, Monique:
- *Dictionaire d'éthique et de philosophie morale* (1996), Paris: P.U.F., 2001

Craig, Edward (Ed.):
- *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1-10, London: Routledge, 1998

Dewey, John:
- "The Meaning of Value", *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. xxii, 1925
- *Theory of Valuation* (*International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, vol. II, no. 4), University of Chicago, 1939

Drummond, John J. & Lester Embree (Ed.):
- *Phenomenological Approcahes to Moral Philosophy*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002

Ducrot, Oswald:

- "Le structuralisme en linguistique" in François Wahl (ed.): *Qu'est-ce que la structuralisme?*, Paris: Seuil, 1968, pp. 13-96

Durkheim, Émile:
- *De la division du travail social*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1893 (1893b)
- "Déterminations de fait moral" & "Réponses aux objections" (1906) in Durkheim 1924a, pp. 49-116 (1906b)
- "Jugement de valeur et jugement de fait" (1911) in Durkheim 1924a, pp. 117-41 (1911b)
- *Sociologie et philosophie* (1924), Paris: PUF, 1996 (1924a)
- *Leçons de sociologie* (1950a), Paris: Presses Universitaires de Frances, 1997

Ehrenfels, Christian von:
- *Werttheorie und Ethik*, Leipzig: Reisland, 1893
- *System der Werttheorie* Leipzig: Reisland, 1898

Eisler, Rodulf:
- *Wörterbuch der philosophichen Begriffe*, Band I-III, Berlin: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1930

Engels, Eva-Marie:
- "George Edward Moores Argument der "naturalistic fallacy" in seiner relevanz für das Verhältnis von philosophisher Ethik und empirichen Wissenschaften" in Lutz H. Eckensberger & Ulrich Gähde (Hrsg.): *Ethische Norm und empirische Hypothese*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993, pp. 92-132

Findlay, J.N.:
- *Values and intentions : a study in value-theory and philosophy of mind*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1961

Gadamer, Hans-Georg:
- *Wharheit und Methode* (1960) in Gadamer: *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 1, Tübingen: Mohr, 1986

George, Rolf:
- "Bolzano and the Problem of Psychologism" in Dale Fisette (Ed.): *Husserl's Lociacal Investigations Reconsidered*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003, pp. 95-108

Giddens, Anthony:
- *Modernitetens konsekvenser* (1990), København: Hans Reitzel, 1994

Glansdorff, Maxime:
- *Les determinants de la théorie générale de la valeaur*, Université Libre de Bruxelles, l'institut de sociologie, 1966

Habermas, Jürgen:
- *Moralbewußtsein und kommunikatives Handeln*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983
- *Erläuterungen zur Diskursethik*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991
- "Reconciliation Through the Public use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's *Political Liberalism*", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 92, No. 3, 1995, pp. 109-131

Halévy, Elie:
- *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (1901-04), Boston: Beacon Press, 1955

Hare, R.M.:
- "Onthology in Ethics" in T. Honderich (Ed.): *Morality and Objectivity*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985, pp. 39-53

Hargreaves Heap, Shaun *et.al*:
- *The Theory of Choice. A critical guide*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992

Hart, James G.:
- "Value-Theory and Phenomenology" in Hart & Embree 1997, pp. 1-9

Hart, James G. & Lester Embree (Ed.):

- *Phenomenology of Values and Valuing*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997

Hume, David:

- *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748) in Hume: *Enquiries* (1902), Oxford: Clarendon, ^{2}1972, pp. 5-165

Husserl, Edmund:

- *Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre (1908-14), Husserliana XXVIII*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988

Jüssen, G.:

- "Moral, moralisch, Moralphilosophie" in Joachim Ritter (Hrsg.): *Historiches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Bd. 6, Darmstadt: Wissenchaftlische Buchgesellschaft, 1984, pp. 149-53

Kant, Immanuel:

- *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785) in Kant 1956, pp. 7-102
- *Kritik er praktischen Vernunft* (1788) in Kant 1956, pp. 103-302
- *Werke* (1956), Bd. IV, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlische Buchgesellschaft, ^{5}1998

Kraft, Victor:

- *Die Grundlagen einer wissenschaftlischen Wertlehre*, Wien: Julius Springer, 1937

Laird, John:

- *The idea of Value*, Cambridge University Press, 1929

Locke, John:

- *Two Treatises of Government* (1698), Cambridge University Press, 1988

Lovibond, Sabina:

- *Ethical Formation*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002

Luhmann, Niklas:

- "Arbeitsteilung und Moral. Durkheims Theorie" in Durkheim: *Über die Teilung der sozialen Arbeit*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1977, pp. 17-35
- "Soziologie der Moral" in N. Luhmann & Stephan H. Pfürtner (hrsg.): *Theorietechnik und Moral*, Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1978, pp. 8-116
- "Paradigm lost" in Luhmann & Robert Spaemann: *Paradigm lost: Über die ethische Reflexion der Moral*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989, pp. 7-48
- "Ethik als Reflexionstheorie der Moral" in Luhmann: *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, bd. 3, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993, pp. 358-447

- "The Sociology of Moral and Ethics", *International Sociology*, No. 1, Vol. 11, 1996, pp. 27-36

Marx, Karl:

- *Die deutsche Ideologie* (1845-46) in Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *Werke*, Bd. 3, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1962, pp. 9-530
- *Kapitalen* (1867-94), København: Rhodos, 1970-72

Meinong, Alexius von:

- *Psychologisch-ethische Untersuchungen zur Werth-theorie*, Graz: Leuschner & Lubensky, 1894
- *Zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Werttheorie* (1897), Graz: Leuschner & Lubensky, 1923

Moore, G.E.:

- *Principia Ethica* (1903), Cambridge University Press, 1993

Münsterberg, Hugo:

- *Philosophie der Werte* (1907), Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1922

Nietzsche, Friedrich:

- *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886) in Nietzsche: *Werke II* (1955), Darmstadt: Wissenschaflisches Buchgesellschaft, 1997, pp. 563-759

Parsons, Talcot:
- *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), vol. I-II, New York: Free Press, [3]1968

Perry, R.B.:
- *General Theory of Value*, 1926

Rescher, Nicholas:
- *Introduction to value theory*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969

Rickert, Heinrich:
- "Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte", *Logos*, II, 1911-12
- "Von System der Werte", *Logos*, IV, 1913

Robinson, Joan:
- *Økonomisk filosofi* (1962), København: Jørgen Paludan, 1974

Rorty, Richard:
- *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980), Oxford: Blackwell, 1994

Scheler, Max:
- *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (1926), Bern: Francke, 1980

Smith, Adam:
- *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), New York: Random House, 1937

Strauss, Leo:
- *Natural Right and History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953

Sørensen, Asger:
- "Dilemmaer, Etik og Moral", *Social Kritik*, nr. 39, 1995, pp. 76-85
- "Durkheims ansats til en etik for det moderne samfund - og en metodologisk kritik af den filosofiske etik" i A. Greve (red.): *Sociologien om velfærd - gensyn med Émile Durkheim*, Frederiksberg: Roskilde Universitetsforlag, 1998, pp. 62-83
- *Værdifri eller værdifuld? Socialkonstruktivisme mellem filosofi og sociologi*, Workingpaper 1, Dep. of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School, 2002 (2002a)
- "Den etiske bølge af umenneskelighed - om bio-etik, utilitarisme og liberalisme", *Handikaphistorisk tidsskrift*, nr. 7, 2002, pp. 13-37 (2002b)
- "Value, Business and Globalisation - Sketching a critical conceptual framework", *Journal of Business Ethics* (Kluwer), Vol. 39, 2002, pp. 161-67 (2002c)
- *Forskning, etik, konsekvens. Et filosofisk stridsskrift*, København: Politisk Revy, 2003 (2003a)
- *Deontology*, Workingpaper 13, Dep. of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School, 2003 (2003b)
- "Det onde mellem ontologi og indre erfaring - Georges Bataille", *Psyke & Logos*, nr. 1, årg. 24, 2003, pp. 361-89 (2003c)

Thyssen, Ole:
- *Værdiledelse - om organisationer og etik* (1997), København: Gyldendal, [3]2002

Weber, Max:
- "Die "Objektivität" sozialwissenschaftlischer und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis" (1904) in Weber: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (1922), Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, [7]1988, pp. 146-214

The Value of Value - in Ethics and Morality 3
I. Approaching value 5
A. Word and concept 5
i) Reflection and definition 6
ii) Form and content 6
iii) Noun, adjective and verb 6
iv) The significance of conceptual inferences and structure 8
B. Historical perspectives 9
i) History of ethics 9
ii) Genesis of value 10
iii) 20th century rise 11
iv) - and decline 12
C. Suggestions about value 13
II. Defining value 15
A. Reductive strategies 15
B. Reificatory strategies 19
C. Remark about naturalism, rationalism and value 23
III. The moral domain and task of the moral philosopher 25
A. The moral domain 26
B. Moral philosophy 27
i) Is it good? 28
ii) Moral philosophy as critique and encouragement 29
References 31