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0521829674 - Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe - An Intellectual Biography

Bart Schultz

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HENRY SIDGWICK: EYE OF THE UNIVERSE

Henry Sidgwick is one of the great intellectual figures of nineteenth-century Britain. He was first and foremost a great moral philosopher, whose master-work, *The Methods of Ethics*, is still widely studied today. But he was many other things besides, writing on religion, economics, politics, education, and literature. He was deeply involved in the founding of the first college for women at the University of Cambridge, and he was a leading figure in parapsychology. He was also much concerned with the sexual politics of his close friend John Addington Symonds, a pioneer of gay studies. Through his famous student G. E. Moore, a direct line can be traced from Sidgwick and his circle to the Bloomsbury group.

Bart Schultz has written a magisterial overview of this great Victorian sage – the first comprehensive study, offering provocative new critical perspectives on the life and the work. Sidgwick’s ethical work is situated in the context of his theological and political commitments and is revealed as a necessarily guarded statement of his deepest philosophical convictions and doubts. All other areas of his writings are covered and presented in the context of the late Victorian culture of imperialism.

This biography, or “Goethean reconstruction,” will be eagerly sought out by readers interested in philosophy, Victorian studies, political theory, the history of ideas, educational theory, the history of psychology, and gender and gay studies.

Bart Schultz is Fellow and Lecturer in the Division of the Humanities and Special Programs Coordinator in the Graham School of General Studies at the University of Chicago.

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FOR MARTY AND MADELEINE

“We learn only from people we love.”

— Goethe

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Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

“Remember,” by Christina Rossetti,
described by Henry Sidgwick as
“perhaps the most perfect thing
that any living poet has written”

I ask for life – for life Divine
Where man’s true self may move
In one harmonious cord to twine
The threads of *Knowledge* and of Love

Henry Sidgwick, circa 1859

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Acknowledgments

Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe reflects a very long, very strange trip. It is quite possible that my thinking about Henry Sidgwick (and John Addington Symonds) began longer ago than I can actually recall, at some point in the 1960s when I was reading various works in which their names figured – works that, befitting the times, had to do with religion, ethics, art, psychology, and cosmic consciousness. My sixties vision of a new age resonated happily, at least on some counts, with the visions of a new age that animated the late Victorians – visions that rebelled against the limitations of a perversely hypocritical commonsense morality. What curious forces led to my intense, continuing engagement with these figures and themes into and beyond 2001 can only make for much speculation. At any rate, circa 1967, I would not have been at all likely to prophesy that this scholarly tome was the form that my artwork would take.

I console myself with the thought that I have at least had a most unorthodox academic career and wound up marrying an art historian and adopting a beautiful little girl. It is to Marty and Madeleine that I owe everything that is good, in this book and in such life as has existed outside of it, and it is to them that I dedicate it.

My parents, Reynolds and Marian Schultz, now deceased, and my three sisters, their husbands and children, were and are a source of loving support, whatever qualms they might have about my stubborn waywardness, on display in the material that follows.

And who could forget dear Churchill, the world's largest miniature Schnauzer?

I would like to express my gratitude to the many friends who contributed to this project. Their support – and, of course, criticism – has been vital and generous. First thanks must again go to Marty, her critical reading having been so crucial to my efforts. Next thanks must go to Jerry

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Schneewind, the rightly acknowledged dean of Sidgwick studies, who has been a model and a marvel, showing just how open-minded a senior scholar can be, even while being absolutely unstinting in his (much-needed) critical input. Mark Singer, another friend from the Sidgwick Society, has also, for all our differences, provided much welcome help and stimulus, as has Russell Hardin, to whom I owe far more than I can convey. In more recent days, my long-distance collegial friendship and collaboration with Roger Crisp has been a source of great pleasure and intellectual value; my work with him on “Sidgwick 2000” (*Utilitas* 12, November 2000) did much to inspire me to complete *Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe*. Closer to home, I have benefited from Charles Larmore’s erudite company, our exchanges invariably proving most thought-provoking. Very importantly, both John Skorupski and Tom Hurka have been exceedingly generous with their time and input, providing me with a wealth of detailed critical commentary that is reflected in the following pages time and again. Finally, exchanges with Rob Shaver, Brad Hooker, David Weinstein, Sissela Bok, and Stephen Darwall, during the assemblage of “Sidgwick 2000,” also proved most fruitful. In fact, the journals *Ethics* and *Utilitas* ought to be included in this list, given how much they have meant to my work. Cambridge University Press and my editor, Terence Moore, belong here as well. The Press also supplied me with an excellent and congenial copy editor, Russell Hahn, whose efforts are reflected on nearly every page.

Some old teachers – some of whom are, alas, now gone – will always have my enduring gratitude; the late Alan Donagan, the late David Greenstone, Shirley Castelnovo, John Murphy, Jon Elster, Stephen Toulmin, and Brian Barry stand out in my memory. I owe them much, even if my interests and thinking have always remained rather apart. The late William Frankena, although never one of my formal teachers, went out of his way to help me, and my correspondence with him was a great source of inspiration. The late John Rawls was similarly generous, as was the late Edward Said.

Of course, alongside these names, I must mention my students in the College at the University of Chicago, from whom it has been my pleasure to learn for the past fifteen years. Insofar as I have been able to “remain a boy” – that is, like Sidgwick’s friend John Grote, excited but undecided about all the great questions, including the question of whether there are any great questions – it is thanks to them. I am also truly grateful

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to the talented scholar-administrators who make Chicago such an exciting community, including Dan Garber, Geof Stone, John Boyer, Richard Saller, Bernie Silberman, Bill Brown, Janel Mueller, Joel Snyder, Dan Shannon, and Jeff Rosen.

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Two further scholarly projects have turned out to be quite useful for my work on this book. Assembling *The Complete Works and Select Scholarly Correspondence of Henry Sidgwick* (Charlottesville, VA: InteLex Corporation, 1997; 2nd ed. 1999), the first such collection of Sidgwick's works, for the InteLex Corporation's Past Masters series of electronic databases was a time-consuming but valuable undertaking. My thanks to Mark Rooks and Brad Lamb, who invited me to take on the project and who also devoted a great deal of time to it. It is courtesy of them that so much Sidgwickian text has been transferred to this electronic format and made readily available for scholarly work.

Work on the InteLex project brought me into collaboration with the historian Jean Wilkins, who not only did a fine job of transcribing Sidgwick's journal, but was also instrumental in tracking down various obscure works in the Cambridge libraries and thus helped with the overall assembly of the database as well. And it was at an early stage of that project that I also recruited the aid of the historian Janet Oppenheim, who supplied valuable advice and material relating to Sidgwick's parapsychological research. Her premature death, from cancer, was a terrible loss to the scholarly community. A friend of Janet Oppenheim's from the British Society for Psychical Research, Eleanor O'Keeffe, was also extremely helpful, doing everything that she could to ensure that we had a complete record of Sidgwick's publications for the Society.

With the second edition of the *Complete Works*, I was brought into collaboration with Andrew Dakyns and Belinda Robinson. Andrew, the

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descendant of Sidgwick's dear friend Henry Graham Dakyns, turned out to be as enjoyable and erudite a companion as his ancestor was reputed to have been, and my work with him and Belinda – first on the Sidgwick–Dakyns correspondence included in the database, and then on the volume *Strange Audacious Life: The Construction of John Addington Symonds* – has been a delight. I was also led in this connection to make contact with Herbert Schueller and Bob Peters, the heroic editors of the pathbreaking, three-volume *Letters of John Addington Symonds* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967–69), a complementary copy of which Bob generously sent to me.

Andrew, Belinda, and I first got together at a conference, John Addington Symonds: The Public and Private Faces of Victorian Culture, sponsored by the Department of the History of Art and the Department of Historical Studies and held at Bristol University in the spring of 1998. My visit to Bristol was enchanting, thanks especially to John Pemble and Annie Burnside, the latter being the warden of Clifton Hill House, Symonds's old home, in which the conference was held, and where I also had the pleasure of meeting Vikky and Chris Furse, the latter one of Symonds's descendants. The conference papers were revised and published as *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, ed. John Pemble (London: Macmillan, 2000). My paper on that occasion, "Truth and Its Consequences: The Friendship of Symonds and Henry Sidgwick," was a distillation of much of my work following an earlier conference, Henry Sidgwick as Philosopher and Historian, organized by me and held at the University of Chicago in May of 1990 – work that later appeared in revised, extended form as my collection *Essays on Henry Sidgwick* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). A special thanks to the many reviewers of this last volume.

Much of the preparatory work for this project was conducted at Cambridge University, Sidgwick's home for most of his adult life. My visits there always involved trips to the beautiful Wren Library, Trinity College, to consult the Sidgwick Papers. Working in the shadow of Lord Byron proved inspirational, and it is a great pleasure to thank David McKitterick, the librarian; Ronald Milne, the former sublibrarian; Jonathan Smith, the archivist; and former archivist Diana Chardin for making these visits so enjoyable and productive. Without their help – and without the generous assistance of many other staff members as well, notably Andrew Lambert – my work could not have prospered. A special thanks goes to

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Diana Chardin for tracking down one of Sidgwick's (all-too-few) lecture manuscripts and to Jonathan Smith for vital aid with my references and the cover photo. My most grateful acknowledgment goes to the Master and Fellows of Trinity College for allowing the reproduction of various manuscript materials from the Sidgwick Papers.

The Modern Record Centre at King's College, Cambridge, also proved to be an invaluable resource. It contains a great quantity of important correspondence and manuscript material, including the correspondence with Oscar Browning and eight volumes of student notes taken from Sidgwick's lectures on the history of ethics. Jacqueline Cox, the archivist, has been extraordinarily helpful and efficient, along with her assistant, Elizabeth Stratton. I am very pleased to thank the Master and Fellows of King's College for allowing the reproduction of various letters.

My visits to Newnham College were also inspirational; Newnham simply lives and breathes the spirit of the Sidgwicks, what they stood for practically and philosophically. It was during my first visit to Cambridge, while meditating by the Sidgwick fountain at Newnham, that the resolution to write this book formed in my mind. My thanks go to the Newnham College Library and Archives, especially to Elisabeth van Houts, the former archivist; Anne Thompson, the current archivist; and Deborah Hodder, the librarian, who have been unfailingly pleasant and helpful. I happily acknowledge the Principal and Fellows of Newnham College for allowing reproduction of certain materials herein.

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his valuable assistance. Grateful acknowledgment goes to the Bodleian Library for supplying microfilm copies of the Bryce correspondence (especially valuable for analyzing Sidgwick's handwriting) and the correspondence between Symonds and Roden Noel and for allowing various reproductions of their materials.

Katharine Thompson, the modern manuscripts assistant at Balliol College Library, was quite helpful in fielding my inquiries about Sidgwick holdings. And I would like to thank the library at Harris Manchester College for supplying me with a missing Metaphysical Society paper and graciously allowing the reproduction of various parts of Sidgwick's papers for the Society. Ms. Pauline Adams, at the Amelia B. Edwards Archive, Somerville College, also supplied me with some most helpful information about their archival holdings.

The London Library, which holds the original manuscript of the Symonds memoirs, is a remarkable institution, and I am most grateful to the staff there for welcoming me and providing expert help with my research.

I am also delighted to thank the Department of Manuscripts at the University of St. Andrews, especially Norman Reid, who was a wonderful fund of helpful information and of crucial importance in allowing the reproduction of Sidgwick's letters to Wilfrid Ward in the InteLex database. Thanks also go to Paul Johnson for his help with the final check of the transcriptions of that correspondence. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the University of St. Andrews for allowing me to use this material.

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is a pleasure to thank the University of Bristol Library for permission to reproduce the letters from Sidgwick to Symonds.

And another sincerest thanks goes to Brian Dyson, the university archivist, in Archives and Special Collections at the Brynmoor Jones Library, University of Hull; his help, and that of his assistant, Angela Quinby, in dealing with the Roden Noel letters to Sidgwick was invaluable, as was his aid in contacting Desmond Heath, the author of *Roden Noel: A Wide Angle* and the husband of Sylvia Putterill, one of Noel's descendants. I am delighted to thank the library at the University of Hull for allowing me to use some of this material. And I am delighted to thank Desmond Heath for supplying me with a complementary copy of his book and valuable – very rare – additional correspondence from Sidgwick to Noel, not only granting me permission to use it, but gifting it to me. I eagerly look forward to continuing work with him to bring to light more Sidgwick–Noel correspondence.

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Naturally, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, UK National Register of Archives, was a most useful resource, and I have often availed myself of it; warm thanks go to the many staff members there who have aided my efforts, particularly Dr. A. P. Lewis, in the Curatorial Office, who

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Lord Rayleigh and the Rt. Honorable Guy Strutt were most gracious in allowing me to visit Terling Place, where the Sidgwicks spent so much of

their time (and are buried), and to do research on the estate. Their aid and hospitality was and is deeply appreciated, and I gratefully acknowledge their efforts and generosity. My feeling for the atmosphere in which the Sidgwicks lived gained much from this truly memorable visit.

A visit to the Sidgwicks' house in Cambridge, "Hillside," was also fascinating, and my thanks go to the students who now inhabit it for allowing me to look around, wandering and wondering in incomprehensible reverie.

Last, but very, very far from least, my research and travels have benefited immeasurably from the aid and sympathy generously given by Ms. Ann Baer, Sidgwick's great-niece, a descendant of Arthur Sidgwick, who supplied me with much useful information about the Sidgwick family tree. My profound thanks go to her and to the other members of the Sidgwick family – especially the philosopher Andrew Belsey – for being so supportive of my research and encouraging the publication of the fruits thereof. Ann Baer was also kind enough to put me in touch with Roberta Blanshard, who was eager to aid my search for various Sidgwick materials that had once been in the possession of her late husband, Brand Blanshard, a founder of the Sidgwick Society.

As this record should suggest, the voyage producing *Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe* has been a long one. And it could well go on forever, given how much research remains to be done. Sympathetic understanding, contemporary or historical, is hard work.

Abbreviations

References to and citations of Sidgwick’s major works are given parenthetically in the text using the following abbreviations. All works were published by Macmillan and Co., London, except for the pamphlet “The Ethics of Conformity and Subscription” (London: Williams and Norgate) and *Practical Ethics* (London: Swan Sonnenschein). A space separates abbreviation and page number. If the reference is to an edition other than the last, the number of the edition is placed immediately after the abbreviation and before the space. Thus, (ME1 7) refers to *The Methods of Ethics*, first edition, p. 7.

- ECS “The Ethics of Conformity and Subscription,” 1870.
- ME *The Methods of Ethics*, 1st ed., 1874; 2nd ed., 1877; 3rd ed., 1884; 4th ed., 1890; 5th ed., 1893; 6th ed., 1901; 7th ed., 1907; Japanese translation, 1898; German translation, 1909; Italian translation, 1995; French translation, 2003. Sidgwick also published *A Supplement to the First Edition of the Methods of Ethics* (1878) and *A Supplement to the Second Edition of the Methods of Ethics* (1884), containing the changes made to each of those editions.
- PPE *The Principles of Political Economy*, 1st ed., 1883; 2nd ed., 1887; 3rd ed., 1901.
- OHE *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers*, 1st ed., 1886; 2nd ed., 1888; 3rd ed., 1892; 4th ed., 1896; 5th ed., 1902; Italian translation, 1902.
- EP *The Elements of Politics*, 1st ed., 1891; 2nd ed., 1897; 3rd ed., 1908; 4th ed., 1919.
- PE *Practical Ethics: A Collection of Addresses and Essays*, 1st ed., 1898; 2nd ed., 1909.

Posthumous Books

- GSM *Lectures on the Ethics of T. H. Green, H. Spencer, and J. Martineau*, ed. E. E. Constance Jones, 1902.
- PSR *Philosophy, Its Scope and Relations: An Introductory Course of Lectures*, ed. James Ward, 1902.
- DEP *The Development of European Polity*, ed. Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick, 1903.
- MEA *Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses*, ed. Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick and Arthur Sidgwick, 1904.
- LPK *Lectures on the Philosophy of Kant and Other Philosophical Lectures and Essays*, ed. James Ward, 1905.
- M *Henry Sidgwick, A Memoir*, ed. Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick and Arthur Sidgwick, 1906.

For a complete bibliography, covering all of Sidgwick’s many essays, articles, and reviews, as well as the archival resources and reviews of his major works, see the entry on him by J. B. Schneewind and Bart Schultz in *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, Vol. 4, 1800–1900*, 3rd ed., ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The only complete collection of Sidgwick’s writings is *The Complete Works and Select Correspondence of Henry Sidgwick*, ed. Bart Schultz et al. (Charlottesville, VA: IntelLex Corporation, 1997; 2nd ed. 1999), an electronic database to which frequent reference is made in the text. This collection is referred to in the text by the abbreviation CWC; because of the electronic format, no page references to it are given, though the original print or archival references are often provided or simply used instead. However, much of the material in the database – such as the complete, matched Sidgwick–Dakyns correspondence – has been transcribed and reproduced for the first time, and the originals are from private collections without archival or other reference numbers. Please note that the translations of Greek terms and expressions are reserved for the notes, though, unless otherwise indicated, these are simply the translations given in the work being cited.