

# “Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley

## Table of Contents

Ideas of Interest from “Why Should I Be Moral?” .....	2
The Reading Selection from Ethical Studies .....	3
Related Ideas .....	9
Topics Worth Investigating .....	11
Index .....	15



*F. H. Bradley* (Wikipedia)

### **About the author...**

F. H. Bradley (1846-1924), an Oxford fellow at Merton College, published major works in ethics, logic, and metaphysics. His nineteenth-century idealist outlook focuses a sharp and uncompromising criticism of empiricism, positivism, and utilitarianism. Bradley writes, “If ‘facts’ and principles conflict, so much the worse for the facts . . .”<sup>1</sup> In consequence, much of the early twentieth-century British analytic philosophy of Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore is written in reaction to Bradley’s linking the real and the rational. Brand Blanshard, who studied philosophy at Oxford, writes that in part be-

1. Quoted in John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1966): 60.

“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley

cause of poor health, Bradley was a recluse for almost fifty years. Bradley never married, although three of his works were dedicated to an unknown woman.<sup>2</sup> The critical polemics of his early work mellowed in his later years, and he had hoped to rewrite *Ethical Studies*, the book from which our reading is taken, but he did not progress beyond some initial notes.

### About the work...

In his essay “Why Be Moral?” appearing near the beginning of *Ethical Studies*,<sup>3</sup> Bradley states the aim of ethics is the realization of self: willing and acting in accordance with an ideal toward a moral end. He recognizes the realization of an ideal self is necessarily conditioned by an unrealized self, and in this regard, his ethics does not provide a metaphysical basis for relating the thought of the ideal with the reality of the actual. The metaphysical scaffolding for the latter he attempts to achieve in his later works, *Principles of Logic* and *Appearance and Reality*. The first part of our reading raises the question “Why should I be moral?” but Bradley concludes the question is inaptly phrased. Instead, he thinks the question should be asked along the lines of “What I am to do or be?” or “What is the ideal I seek to realize?”

### From the reading...

“Why should I be moral? ... the question ... is simply unmeaning.”

## Ideas of Interest from “Why Should I Be Moral?”

1. Explain and give examples illustrating the differences Bradley points out between the goodness of ethical action for some result and the goodness of ethical action in-and-of-itself.
2. State and clarify the hidden presuppositions Bradley has for the question, “Why should I be moral?” Why does Bradley assert that to ask the

2. James W. Alland, “Bradley, F(rancis) H(erberty),” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 85.

3. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1876): 58-84 passim.

question, “Why should I be moral?” is itself immoral, and what is his point in doing so?

3. Explain Bradley’s argument concluding that if good is a means to something else, then good cannot be an end-in-itself. Why cannot virtue be a means to a good end-in-itself?
4. Why does Bradley believe the pleasures of virtue are no reason for being moral?
5. On what basis does Bradley conclude that the question of why I should be moral rests upon a mistake? If the question of why one should be moral makes no sense, then what question, according to Bradley, should we be asking?
6. Explain Bradley’s reasoning for the conclusion that it is contradictory for anyone to claim immoral action is advantageous in life.
7. How does Bradley’s reply to the skeptic who believes that morality is not important in life?
8. What are the reasons for Bradley’s conclusion that morality is an end-in-itself? What does he say is the practical end-in-itself?
9. Clarify with examples what Bradley means when he claims self-realization occurs when the whole self is present in its states.
10. Why does Bradley claim the purpose of acting morally is the self-realization of the individual? Attempt to clarify what Bradley means when he writes that realizing yourself means to “be an infinite whole.”

## **The Reading Selection from Ethical Studies**

### **[Morality Is Not a Means]**

Why should I be moral? The question is natural, and yet seems strange. It appears to be one we ought to ask, and yet we feel, when we ask it, that we are wholly removed from the moral point of view.

To ask the question Why? is rational; for reason teaches us to do nothing blindly, nothing without end or aim. She teaches us that what is good must be good for something, and that what is good for nothing is not good at all. And so we take it as certain that there is an end on one side, means on the other; and that only if the end is good, and the means conduce to it, have we

*“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley*

a right to say the means are good. It is rational, then, always to inquire, Why should I do it?

But here the question seems strange. For morality (and she too is reason) teaches us that, if we look on her only as good for something else, we never in that case have seen her at all. She says that she is an end to be desired for her own sake, and not as a means to something beyond. Degrade her, and she disappears; and, to keep her, we must love and not merely use her. And so at the question Why? we are in trouble, for that does assume, and does take for granted, that virtue in this sense is unreal, and what we believe is false. Both virtue and the asking Why? seem rational, and yet incompatible one with the other; and the better course will be, not forthwith to reject virtue in favour of the question, but rather to inquire concerning the nature of the Why?

**From the reading...**

“[T]he better course will be ... to inquire concerning the nature of the Why?”

Why should I be virtuous? Why should I? Could anything be more modest? Could anything be less assuming? It is not a dogma; it is only a question. And yet a question may contain (perhaps must contain) an assumption more or less hidden; or, in other words, a dogma. Let us see what is assumed in the asking of our question.

In ‘Why should I be moral?’ the ‘Why should I?’ was another way of saying, What good is virtue? or rather, For what is it good? and we saw that in asking, Is virtue good as a means, and how so? we do assume that virtue is not good, except as a means. The dogma at the root of the question is hence clearly either (1) the general statement that only means are good, or (2) the particular assertion of this in the case of virtue.

To explain; the question For what? Where to? is either universally applicable, or not so. It holds everywhere, or we mean it to hold only here. Let us suppose, in the first place, that it is meant to hold everywhere.

Then (1) we are taking for granted that nothing is good in itself; that only the means to something else are good; that ‘good’ in a word, = ‘good for’, and good for something else. Such is the general canon by which virtue would have to be measured.

No one perhaps would explicitly put forward such a canon, and yet it may not be waste of time to examine it.

## [Could Good Only Be a Means?]

The good is a means: a means is a means to something else, and this is an end. Is the end good? No; if we hold to our general canon, it is not good as an end: the good was always good for something else, and was a means. To be good, the end must be a means, and so on for ever in a process which has no limit. If we ask now What is good? we must answer, There is nothing which is not good, for there is nothing which may not be regarded as conducing to something outside itself. Everything is relative to something else. And the essence of the good is to exist by virtue of something else and something else for ever. Everything is something else, is the result which at last we are brought to, if we insist on pressing our canon as universally applicable. . . .

It is quite true that to ask Why should I be moral? is *ipso facto* to take one view of morality, is to assume that virtue is a means to something not itself. But it is a mistake to suppose that the general asking of Why? affords any presumption in favour of, or against, any one theory. If any theory could stand upon the What for? as a rational formula, which must always hold good and be satisfied, then, to that extent, no doubt it would have an advantage. But we have seen that all doctrines alike must reject the What for? and agree in this rejection, if they agree in nothing else; since they all must have an end which is not a mere means. And if so, is it not foolish to suppose that its giving a reason for virtue is any argument in favour of Hedonism, when for its own end it can give no reason at all? Is it not clear that, if you have any Ethics, you must have an end which is above the Why? in the sense of What for?; and that, if this is so, the question is now, as it was two thousand years ago, Granted that there is an end, *what* is this end? And the asking that question, as reason and history both tell us, is not in itself the presupposing of a Hedonistic answer, or any other answer. . . .

## [Virtue is an End-in-Itself]

But what is clear at first sight is, that to take virtue as a mere means to an ulterior end is in direct antagonism to the voice of the moral consciousness.

**From the reading...**

“Against ... ‘what is the use’ of goodness, or beauty, or truth ... We do not know, and we do not care.”

That consciousness, when unwarped by selfishness and not blinded by sophistry, is convinced that to ask for the Why? is simple immorality; to do good for its own sake is virtue, to do it for some ulterior end or object, not

“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley

itself good, is never virtue; and never to act but for the sake of an end, other than doing well and right, is the mark of vice. And the theory which sees in virtue, as in money-getting, a means which is mistaken for an end, contradicts the voice which proclaims that virtue not only does seem to be, but is, an end in itself.

Taking our stand then, as we hope, on this common consciousness, what answer can we give when the question Why should I be moral?, in the sense of What will it advantage me?, is put to us? Here we shall do well, I think, to avoid all praises of the pleasantness of virtue. We may believe that it transcends all possible delights of vice, but it would be well to remember that we desert a moral point of view, that we degrade and prostitute virtue, when to those who do not love her for herself we bring ourselves to recommend her for the sake of her pleasures. Against the base mechanical βαναυδία<sup>4</sup> which meets us on all sides, with its ‘what is the use’ of goodness, or beauty, or truth, there is but one fitting answer from the friends of science, or art, or religion and virtue, ‘We do not know, and we do not care.’ . . .

What more are we to say? If a man asserts total scepticism, you cannot argue with him. You can show that he contradicts himself; but if he says, “I do not care” there is an end of it. So, too, if a man says, “I shall do what I like, because I happen to like it; and as for ends, I recognize none” you may indeed show him that his conduct is in fact otherwise; and if he will assert anything as an end, if he will but say “I have no end but myself”, then you may argue with him, and try to prove that he is making a mistake as to the nature of the end he alleges. But if he says, “I care not whether I am moral or rational, nor how much I contradict myself”, then argument ceases. We, who have the power, believe that what is rational (if it is not yet) at least is to be real, and decline to recognize anything else. For standing on reason we can give, of course, no further reason; but we push our reason against what seems to oppose it, and soon force all to see that moral obligations do not vanish where they cease to be felt or are denied.

**From the reading . . .**

“Has the question, Why should I be moral? no sense then . . . ? No, the question has no sense at all.”

Has the question, Why should I be moral? no sense then, and is no positive answer possible? No, the question has no sense at all; it is simply unmeaning, unless it is equivalent to, *Is morality an end in itself; and, if so, how and in what way is it an end? . . .*

4. Handicraft or mere mechanical art. This passage is suggestive of Bradley’s response to William James’ pragmatic humanism. *Eds.*

What remains is to point out the most general expression for the end in itself, the ultimate practical 'why'; and that we find in the word *self-realization*. . . . How can it be proved that self-realization is the end? . . . All that we can do is partially to explain it, and try to render it plausible. . . .

Morality implies an end in itself: we take that for granted. Something is to be done, a good is to be realized. But that result is, by itself, no morality: morality differs from art, in that it can not make the act a *mere* means to the result. Yet there is a means. There is not only something to be done, but something to be done by me—I must do the act, must realize the end. Morality implies both the something to be done, and the doing of it by me; and if you consider them as end and means, you can not separate the ends and the means . . . for the truth is that means and end are not applicable here. The act for me means my act, and there is no end beyond the act. This we see in the belief that failure may be equivalent morally to success—in the saying, that there is nothing good except a good will. In short, for morality the end implies the act, and the act implies self-realization. . . .

But passing by [that] which we can not here expound and which we lay no stress on, we think that the reader will probably go with us so far as this, that in desire what we want, so far as we want it, is ourselves in some form, or is some state of ourselves; and that our wanting anything else would be psychologically inexplicable.

Let us take this for granted then; but is this what we mean by self-realization? Is the conclusion that, in trying to realize we try to realize some state of ourself, all that we are driving at? No, the self we try to realize is for us a whole, it is not a mere collections of states.

If we may presuppose in the reader a belief in the doctrine that what is wanted is a state of self, we wish, standing upon that, to urge further that the whole self is present in its states, and that therefore the whole self is the object aimed at; and this is what we mean by self-realization. . . . And must we not say that to realize self is always to realize a whole, and that the question in morals is to find the true whole, realizing which will practically realize the true self. . . .

**From the reading . . .**

“And most men have more or less of an ideal of life—a notion of perfect happiness, which is never quite attained in real life . . .”

And, if we turn to life, we see that no man has disconnected particular ends; he looks beyond the moment, beyond this or that circumstance or position; his ends are subordinated to wider ends; each situation is seen (consciously or unconsciously) as part of a broader situation, and in this or that act he is

aiming at and realizing some larger whole, which is not real in any particular act as such, and yet is realized in the body of acts which carry it out. We need not stop here, because the existence of larger ends, which embrace smaller ends, can not be doubted; and so far we may say that the self we realize is identified with wholes, so that the ideas of the states of self we realize are associated with ideas that stand for wholes.

But is it also true that these larger wholes are included in one whole? I think that it is. . . . What I am saying is, that if the life of the normal man be inspected, and the ends he has in view (as exhibited in his acts) be considered, they will, roughly speaking be embraced in one main end or whole of ends. . . . And most men have more or less of an ideal of life—a notion of perfect happiness, which is never quite attained in real life . . .

Self-realization means more than the mere assertion of the self as a whole. . . . Our true being is not the extreme of unity, nor of diversity, but the perfect identity of both. And ‘Realize yourself’ does not mean merely ‘Be a whole,’ but ‘Be an *infinite* whole.’

‘Realize yourself as an infinite whole’ means, ‘Realize yourself as the self-conscious member of an infinite whole, by realizing that whole in yourself’. When that whole is truly infinite, and when your personal will is wholly made one with it, then you also have reached the extreme of homogeneity and specification in one, and have attained a perfect self-realization.

## [Why I Am to be Moral?]

We have attempted to show (1) That the formula of ‘what for?’ must be rejected by every ethical doctrine as not universally valid; and the hence no one theory can gain the smallest advantage (except over the foolish) by putting it forward: that now for us (as it was for Hellas<sup>5</sup> the main question is: There being some end, what is that end? And (2), with which second part, if it fall, the first need not fall, we have endeavoured briefly to point out that the final end, with which morality is identified, or under which it is included, can be expressed not otherwise than by self-realization.

To conclude—If I am asked why I am to be moral, I can say no more than this, that what I can not doubt is my own being now, and that, since in that being is involved a self, which is to be here and now, and yet in this here and now is not, I therefore can not doubt that there is an end which I am to make real; and morality, if not equivalent to, is at all events included in this making real of myself.

If it is absurd to ask for the further reason of my knowing and willing my own existence, then it is equally absurd to ask for the further reason of what

---

5. Ancient Greece. *Eds.*

is involved therein. The only rational question here is not Why? but What? What is the self that I know and will? What is its true nature, and what is implied therein? What is the self that I am to make actual, and how is the principle present, living, and incarnate in its particular modes of realization?



*Merton and Christ Church College, Oxford, England* Bradley was elected as a Fellow to Merton College, a position that would be terminable on marriage. (Adapted from Library of Congress)

## Related Ideas

1. David Weinstein, “Bradley’s Rejection of Utilitarianism”<sup>6</sup>

David Weinstein of Wake Forest University urges a re-reading of Bradley’s critique of utilitarianism to reveal Bradley’s debt to utilitarianism as shown by his consequentialist tendencies.

2. Brand Blanshard, “A Critical Review of Richard Wollheim’s *F. H. Bradley*”<sup>7</sup>

Brand Blanshard reviews Richard Wollheim’s book<sup>8</sup> on Bradley’s thought. The review was first published in the journal *Philosophy* (October, 1961) 36, no. 138, 372-374.

3. F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*<sup>9</sup>

6. <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~phil/docs/weinstein-paper.pdf>

7. <http://www.anthonyflood.com/blanshardwollheimbradley.htm>

8. Richard Wollheim, *F. H. Bradley* (New York: Penguin Books, 1959).

9. <http://www.books.google.com/books>

“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley

An online reprint of the complete text of Bradley’s *Ethical Studies* (2nd. edition) is available from *Google Books*.

4. Philip MacEwen, *Ethics, Metaphysics and Religion in the Thought of F. H. Bradley*<sup>10</sup>

Several chapters from *Studies in the History of Philosophy*, vol. 32, are available from this book edited by Philip MacEwen including ““The Unity of Moral Principle,”” ““Metaphysics and Ethics in Bradley’s Idealism,”” ““The Self and the Social Order,”” ““Bradley’s Critique of Mill’s Utilitarianism,”” and ““Feeling in Bradley’s Ethical Studies.””

5. Brand Blanshare “Francis Herbert Bradley: A Tribute”<sup>11</sup>

Brand Blanshard’s obituary of Bradley published in the *Journal of Philosophy* XXII, no. 1 (January, 1925): 5-15, is provided by Anthony Flood.

6. David Crossley, *Francis Herbert Bradley’s Moral and Political Philosophy*<sup>12</sup>

David Crossley discusses Bradley’s naturalistic ethics of self-realization as shaped by his metaphysics. This entry from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* includes a bibliography of secondary literature.

7. F. H. Bradley, “An Unpublished Note on Christian Morality”<sup>13</sup>

Gordon Kendal, an Oxford chaplain, edited Bradley’s unpublished defense of the charge that his writing on punishment and self-sacrifice were anti-Christian. Anthony Flood introduces and presents the article.

8. William Sweet, “F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet”<sup>14</sup>

William Sweet of St Francis Xavier University discusses Bradley’s influence on Bosanquet as originally published in James Bradley (ed.), *Philosophy after F. H. Bradley* (Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Press, 1996).

9. Stewart Candish, *Francis Herbert Bradley*<sup>15</sup>

Stewart Candish discusses Bradley’s philosophy of history, ethics, logic and metaphysics. This authoritative entry from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* includes a summary of his life and reputation, as well as a thorough bibliography.

10. <http://books.google.com/books/>

11. <http://www.anthonyflood.com/blanshardbradleyobit.htm>

12. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bradley-moral-political/>

13. <http://www.anthonyflood.com/bradleyxnmorality.htm>

14. <http://people.stfx.ca/wsweet/BOSANQUET&BRADLEY.htm>

15. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bradley/>

**From the reading...**

“[W]hat is clear at first sight is, that to take virtue as a mere means to an ulterior end is in direct antagonism to the voice of the moral consciousness.”



Surrey Zoological Gardens, London, England Clapham, Surrey England is Bradley’s Birthplace. (Adapted from Library of Congress)

## Topics Worth Investigating

1. Characterize the fallacy of complex question. Suppose Bradley’s conclusion that the question “Why should I be moral” is nonsensical is correct. What is being presupposed by this question? Does Bradley’s position imply that any ethical theory, such as that by espoused by Samuel Alexander in topic 5 and that espoused by Lawrence Kohlberg in topic 10 below, which answers this question is based upon a fallacy?
2. In this essay, Bradley assumes that “virtue” and “good” are interchangeable terms and that neither is a means for something else. But if virtue and good can be distinguished, can’t we argue *contra* Bradley, virtue can be a means for a good end? For example, the hedonist believes that pleasure, and only pleasure, is an intrinsic good. Doesn’t the hedonist seek pleasure by the means of enjoyable experiences? If so, why, then, cannot

the moral person seek the good by the means of virtuous actions?

3. What kind of why-question is “Why should I be moral?” For example, Wesley Salmon distinguishes a number of different types of why-questions:

There are many kinds of why-questions. Some why-questions are requests for scientific explanation as in “Why do methyl groups on cytosine in the promoter region of a gene switch it off?” or requests for metaphysical explanations as in “Why does God permit tsunamis and other natural disasters indiscriminately to take the lives of hundreds of thousands of persons?” Some why-questions are requests for decisional justifications as in “Why did the United Nations Security Council unanimously pass Resolution 1441 offering Iraq a final opportunity to disarm?” Other why-questions solicit evidence as in “Why are astronomers so certain of the existence of invisible dark matter with no radiation?”<sup>16</sup>

In what manner is the kind of why-question Bradley asks best answered? Linguistic analysis? scientific inquiry? deductive argument? Is a teleological why-question to be answered differently from a causal one? If so, how?

4. Explain how Bradley’s reasoning supports his conclusion that any person who claims immoral action is advantageous contradicts himself. Similarly, in the Socratic Paradox, Socrates argues doing the right thing is always acting in a person’s own interest, as is “tending one’s own soul”:

[My] attempt to prove that all things are knowledge, including justice, and temperance, and courage ... tends to show that virtue can certainly be taught; ... if virtue is entirely knowledge, ... then I cannot but suppose that virtue is capable of being taught.<sup>17</sup>

In all situations, Socrates believes acting immorally is harmful to oneself and is equivalent to the exact opposite of acting with knowledge, i.e., acting in ignorance. How does the Socratic Paradox relate to Bradley’s reasoning?

5. Bradley writes,

And so we take it as certain that there is an end on one side, means on the other; and that only if the end is good, and the means conduce to it, have we a right to say the means are good.

But isn’t it just possible in examining the relation of means to ends relation of means to ends that some ends do not justify their means? Eval-

16. Wesley C. Salmon, “Scientific Explanation” in Merrilee H. Salmon, et al., *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1999): 8-9.

17. Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. Benjamin Jowett in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969): 362.

uate the ethical implications of Bradley’s position on the relationship of means to ends.

6. Explain what Bradley means when he writes,

[T]o do good . . . for some ulterior end or object, not itself good, is never virtue, and never to act but for the sake of an end, other than doing well and right, is the mark of vice.

Is Bradley correct in his assertion that a virtuous means to a bad end is a contradiction of virtue as an end-in-itself? What are some examples that would illustrate this point?

7. Samuel Alexander writes,

. . . [T]he question, ‘why should I be moral?’ means most naturally and usually, what inducements are there to me to do right? . . . To the wicked the pains and penalties of wrong-doing may be a sufficient deterrent, and the sanctions have their value in this connection. But to a good man they will make no appeal. The only sanction which will induce him to be moral is to reflect upon the unhappiness produced by the wrong act, an unhappiness which means the thwarting of good character and the violations of rights. This intrinsic unhappiness will be reproduced in the disapprobation of his own conscience. It is right to shrink from the pains of conscience, and these are the only personal pains from which a good man will shrink.<sup>18</sup>

To what extent can you argue Bradley would agree that we should be moral because the realization of an ideal self implies a good character? Similarly, Socrates’ answer to Glaucon in Plato’s *Republic* is that the moral life leads to a harmonious soul. Or would Bradley conclude we should be moral as an end-in-itself without regard for any future end?

8. Evaluate the following passage from the Bradley reading with respect to the evolutionary benefits of altruism:

But passing by [that] which we can not here expound and which we lay no stress on, we think that the reader will probably go with us so far as this, that in desire what we want, so far as we want it, is ourselves in some form, or is some state of ourselves; and that our wanting anything else would be psychologically inexplicable.

For example, Charles Darwin writes,

[A]lthough a high standard of morality gives but a slight or no advantage to each individual man . . . an increase in the number of well-endowed men and advancement in the standard of morality will certainly give an immense advantage to the group. A tribe including many members who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to

---

18. Samuel Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress* 3rd. ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Ltd., 1996): 326.

“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley

sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection.<sup>19</sup>

Darwin’s explanation is that a group of altruistic individuals will be better adapted and out-survive a group of selfish individuals. Can Darwin’s hypothesis be related to Bradley’s belief that you should “[r]ealize yourself as the self-conscious member of an infinite whole”?

9. T. S. Eliot’s literary method is greatly influenced by his early study of Bradley’s metaphysics, and in his Harvard Ph.D. thesis,<sup>20</sup> Eliot explores Bradley’s relating of individual experience with absolute objectivity. In that work, Eliot states, “All significant truths are private truths.”<sup>21</sup> Later, Eliot explains the interrelation among philosophy, experience, and poetry as follows:

What poetry proves about any philosophy is merely its possibility for being lived—for life includes both philosophy and art . . . For poetry . . . is not the assertion that something is true, but the making that truth more fully real to us; it is the creation of a sensuous embodiment. It is the making of the word Flesh. . . . we may find a poet giving greater validity to an inferior philosophy, by realizing it more fully and masterfully in literary art, and another employing a better philosophy and realizing it less satisfactorily. Yet we can hardly doubt that the “truest” philosophy is the best material for the greatest poet; so that the poet must be rated in the end both by the philosophy he realizes in poetry and by the fulness and adequacy of the realization.<sup>22</sup>

Explain how Eliot’s assessment of poetry and philosophy reflects Bradley’s inquiry into the ideal self and the real self as stated here:

What is the self that I know and will? What is its true nature, and what is implied therein? What is the self that I am to make actual, and how is the principle present, living, and incarnate in its particular modes of realization?

Is the universal ideal being realized in the particular individual or is the particular individual being realized in the universal ideal?

10. Lawrence Kohlberg suggests an addition to his developmental stages of moral reasoning as follows:

Even after attainment of Stage 6’s clear awareness of universal principles, a fundamental ethical question still remains, namely, “Why should I be

---

19. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*. 2nd. ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1909): 134-135.

20. T. S. Eliot, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, rpt. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

21. Quoted in Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot’s Early Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): 51.

22. T. S. Eliot, ““Poetry and Propaganda”” in *Bookman*LXX (February 1930): 601.

moral? Why be just in a universe that appears unjust?” This question asks whether there is any support in reality or nature for acting according to universal moral principles. . . . this question entails the further question, “Why live?”; thus, ultimate moral maturity requires a mature solution to the question of the meaning of life. This in turn, is hardy a moral question *per se*.<sup>23</sup>

By turning the question of why be moral into a nonmoral question, in what ways is Kohlberg’s proposed Stage 7 interpretation consistent with Bradley’s transformation of the question in our reading as “Is morality is an end in itself; and, if so, how and in what way?”

## Revision History

Revision 0.4 04.28.12 Revised by: Eds. lca, es

Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License (<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/fdl.txt>), Version 1.2 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation. This work is also licensed under a Creative Commons License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>). Version 3.0 or later. Please send corrections or inquiries to “Editors” at <[philhelp@gmail.com](mailto:philhelp@gmail.com)>

## Index

- altruism
  - evolutionary benefit, 13
- amorality, 6
- Appearance and Reality
  - F. H. Bradley, 2
- Blanshard, Brand, 1
- Bradley, F. H., 3
- complex question
  - fallacy of, 11
- Darwin, Charles, 13
- desire, 7, 13
- dogma

---

23. Lawrence Kohlberg and R. A. Ryncarz, “Beyond Justice Reasoning: Moral Development and Considerations of a Seventh Stage” in *Higher Stages of Human Development*, eds. C. N. Alexander et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 192.

*“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley*

- definition, 4
- egoism, 7
  - selfishness, 5
- Eliot, T. S., 14
- ends (and means)
  - morality, 7
- Ethical Studies
  - F. H. Bradley, 2
- ethics
  - purpose of, 2
- good
  - as a means, 5
  - as an end, 5
- good will, 7
- good-in-itself, 4
- happiness
  - end of life, 8
- hedonism, 5
- Idealism, 1
- Kohlberg, Lawrence, 14
- meaning of life, 15
- means ends relation, 3, 12
  - as goods, 5
- Moore, G. E., 1
- morality, 8
  - (see also ethics)
  - as an end, 4
  - as and end-in-itself, 7
  - as reason, 4
  - developmental stages, 14
  - differ from means in art, 7
  - moral consciousness, 5
- natural selection, 14
- poetry
  - and philosophy, 14
- real is the rational, 1
- Russell, Bertrand, 1
- self
  - idea., 13
  - nature of, 9
  - states of, 8
- self-realization, 2, 7
  - and character, 13
- skepticism
  - moral, 6

*“Why Should I Be Moral?” by F. H. Bradley*

Socratic Paradox, 12  
virtue, 4, 5  
    not a means, 4  
why be moral, 2  
    conscience, 13  
why-questions, 4, 12