studia z HISTORII FILOZOFII
ISSN 2083-1978
3(8)/2017 e-ISSN 2391-775X
http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/szhf.2017.029

Sarah Hutton
University of York, Great Britain
e-mail: sarah.hutton@york.ac.uk

Henry More's Moral Philosophy: Self-Determination and its Limits[1]

In this paper I discuss the moral philosophy of Henry More, who was one of the leading philosophers of the group of seventeenth-century English philosophers now known as the Cambridge Platonists. Although ethical themes are discussed by all of them, only More published a book on ethics: his *Enchiridion ethicum* (1668) (*librum parvum portatilem*).[2] In point of fact, it was More's friend and colleague, Ralph Cudworth, who wrote most extensively on ethics. But Cudworth never published his main writings on moral phi-

[1] This paper was presented at a conference at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń in October 2016. Other versions of the paper were given at a workshop at the University of Fribourg in 2014 and at Bucharest in 2015. I thank the organizers (respectively Adam Grzeliński, Christian Maurer and Dana Jalobeanu), for inviting me to speak, and participants at all three for their comments.

[2] The first mention of More's *Enchiridion ethicum* – though not by that title – occurs in a letter from More's friend, the Master of his college, Ralph Cudworth to their mutual friend John Worthington. Dating from January 1664, the letter reports Cudworth's dismay at learning that More had embarked on a work on ethics, just when his own work of 'Natural Ethics' was nearing readiness to be sent for publication. More delayed publication, but eventually decided to go ahead anyway. Twenty-four years later, Cudworth still had not published his 'Natural Ethicks'. Their quarrel is alluded to in the preface of *Enchiridion Ethicum*, dated 1667.

losophy, most of which remain in manuscript to this day.[3] Thanks to the work of John Passmore and Michael Gill, [4] we are more or less familiar with the moral psychology contained in Ralph Cudworth's unpublished writings, but it is a matter of debate as to whether these manuscripts circulated among his contemporaries. By contrast, is relatively unknown today despite the fact that it enjoyed fairly wide circulation in his own time. As one of the few ethical works to emanate from early modern Cambridge, More's *Enchiridion ethicum* (1668) deserves attention from historians of philosophy. A better knowledge of this work can give us not just a fuller picture of More's philosophy but also a better understanding of the relationship between the Cambridge group and both contemporary and later developments in moral philosophy. As a first step towards correcting the neglect of More's moral philosophy, this essay offers a brief introduction to More's *Enchiridion ethicum*, placing it in relation to the Cambridge Platonists, and the development of his own views. After highlighting the distinctive features of the text, in particular More's conception of free will, I conclude with a brief assessment of its relevance to the ethical debates of the early Enlightenment.

More and the Cambridge Platonists

In broad terms, More's ethical views are consonant with those of the rest of the Cambridge group. More's *Enchiridion ethicum* is a good illustration of the fact that the Cambridge Platonists as a philosophical grouping exhibit broad similarities as well as considerable variation between different members of the group. Like them, he held the real existence of immutable principles of morality, and that 'Moral Good is Intellectual and Divine'.[5] He believed that we can arrive at knowledge of the good by right reason and that the principles

[3] Three treatises on 'On Liberty and Necessity', London, British Library, Additional MSS 4978-82. One of these, *A Treatise of Freewill* was edited by me and printed with another *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[4] J. Passmore, *J.A. Ralph Cudworth. An Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951; M. Gill, 'Rationalism, Sentimentalism, and Ralph Cudworth', *Hume Studies*, no. 30 (2004), pp. 149–81.

[5] H. More, *An Account of Virtue*, London 1690, p. 28. This is a translation of *Enchiridion ethicum* which was first published in London in 1668.

of morality may be demonstrated rationally. And like his Cambridge Platonist colleagues, More insists that virtue cannot be taught by mere theory or precepts ('definitions or divisions'). Like them, he rejected the 'command ethics' proposed in contemporary natural law theory.[6] For the Cambridge Platonists goodness is intrinsic to nature and therefore is antecedent to all law. Right and wrong cannot be legislated. As More himself said, 'What is unjust in its own nature, cannot by any external Consideration be made just'.[7]

A key area of common ground between More the other Cambridge Platonists is their emphasis on *practical* morality. Being virtuous entails more than just knowledge of the good, but it entails active pursuit of the good life. We are not passively good. To live virtuously requires both an inclination to act virtuously and the power to act. To this end, to all of the Cambridge all hold to the freedom of will as the ground of moral responsibility. In many ways their conception of fee will as an *internal* principle of *self-determination* could be considered their 'signature' doctrine. Of particular interest in this regard are the parallels between More and Ralph Cudworth. For both of them virtue itself is 'an intellectual Power of the Soul'.[8] Like Cudworth, More conceives free will as a principle of self-control, or power over oneself. Cudworth expresses this as 'the having a Power to Act within ourselves', or *eph hemin* ('self-power'), achieved by the *hegemonikon* of the soul. In Cudworth, this forms part of an extensively developed moral psychology in which consciousness has a central role in free actions of the self-determining person.[9] For More, too, consciousness and capacity for self-direction are key to his conception of freedom of action. And, like Cudworth, More uses the Greek term *autexousion*, a term derived from Plotinus.[10] But there is more to More's ethics than parallels with Cudworth.

---

[6] Culverwell was the only one of the Cambridge Platonists to discuss morality in terms of natural law, but the other Cambridge Platonists do touch on it.

[7] *Account of Virtue*, p. 116. Cf. Cudworth, who denies that moral good and evil are 'Theticall or Positive things' which exist 'by Law or Command' or '*νομω"* , but they are intrinsic to the nature of things, and they exist '*φυσει"*, 'by Nature'.

[8] H. More, *Account of Virtue*, p. 176 and p. 8.

[9] John Sellars has argued that the likely source for Cudworth's conception of freewill as that which is in our power (*'eph hemin'*) is Alexander of Aphrodisias. Sellars, 'Stoics against Stoics in Cudworth's "A Treatise of Freewill"', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, no. 20.5 (2012), pp. 935–952.

[10] Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* V.1.1.1– 9, where he associates the *autexousion* with the first outgoing from the One, the first step towards otherness, difference from the One which individuates souls. In his adoption of the term, More may be deliberately referencing John Calvin who uses

There are significant *differences* between More's moral philosophy and that of his Cambridge Platonist colleagues. First of all, as I shall show later, his idea of the 'boniform faculty' is unique to him, and he puts greater emphasis on the passions. A major difference in More's ethical formation is his Origenism, his adoption of some of the doctrines of the early Christian father, Origenes Adamantius. In particular, he believed in the pre-existence of the soul before its life in the body. This was a controversial theory particularly associated with Origen, which was repudiated by both Cudworth and Culverwell. More's reasons for holding it have a bearing on his ethics in two important respects. First of all, the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls is a means to vindicate God's goodness because it accounts for suffering and punishment of the apparently innocent by explaining it as punishment for the sins of souls in their pre-existent state. Secondly, pre-existence maximises God's goodness because, by creating all souls at the beginning of the world, God ensures that the maximum possible number of good things is created, and thereby the optimum conditions for exercise of goodness. Maximum virtue only ever exists in possibility since souls from their first creation were free to choose to follow the path of virtue or not.[11] I mention this as part of the background to More's ethics, but, in point of fact, More's Origenism, is not, it seems to me, in evidence in *Enchiridion ethicum*.

The Development of More's Moral Philosophy

More's ethical views are first expressed – rather loosely, it must be said – in his *Philosophical Poems* (1642), where he writes of soul's having power to move itself – its being 'auto-kineticall' – without which there would be no morality. His views are further developed in the section of his *Conjectura cabbalistica* (1653) entitled *The Moral Cabbala* to which he added an *Appendix* when it was published in his *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*

---

the term '*autexousion*' disparagingly in his *Institutes* 'For the name of freewill still remained amonge the Latines, as if mann had still abiden in uncorrupted state. And the Grecians were not ashamed to use the worde muche more arrogantly: for they called *Autexousion*, that is to say, of her owne power, as if man had the power of himself'.

[11] *Of the Immortality of the Soul*, chapters 12–14, in More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*, London 1662 (Hereafter referred to as *CSPW*. The individual works in this collection are separately paginated).

in 1662. *Conjectura cabbalistica* offers a three-fold interpretation of the first book of Genesis, in which *The Moral Cabbala* interprets it as an allegory of morality. Here we can discern in embryo some of More's later thinking on ethics: he already writes of the power of man to control his moral destiny and of the experience of virtue in terms of sensation 'savoury'.

More also makes a link between virtue and the passions citing the Pythagoreans 'That Vertue is not an extirpation, but regulation, of the Passions' underlining their importance for achieving moral life:

> But if you take away all the *Passions* from the Soul, the Minde of man will be as a General without and Army, or an Army without an Enemy… quite to *take away* all the *Passions* of the Minde, in stead of *composing* them to the right rule of Reason and the divine Light, is as if a man should cutaway all the strings of an Instrument, in stead of tuning it.[12]

In his *Of the Immortality of the Soul* (1659) More develops his conception of free will as an inner power of the soul in an argument against Hobbes. It is here that he first uses of the term *autexousion*. This argument occurs not in a discussion of moral philosophy but in the course his defence of the *immateriality* of the soul in explicit opposition to Hobbesian materialism. This discussion is part of a wider defence of the *immortality* of the soul. More's argument in *Immortality of the Soul* is then not ethical but metaphysical, forming part of a multi-faceted case for existence of immaterial substance ('the Freedome of our Will evinces that there is a Substance in us distinct from Matter').[13] Although More's argument here is not primarily ethical, it anticipates the psychology which he will develop in *Enchiridion ethicum*, where he draws out the ethical implications of this faculty of *liberum arbitrium* or *autexousion*. In the support of his case for the existence of a 'Faculty which we may call *Internal Sense* or *Common Notion*, found in all men', More adduces evidence that the mind has control of its own activities, supporting his claims from a combination of the evidence of experience and deductive reasoning on the basis of the *noemata*, or axioms, which are a feature of the first two books of this work.

In this passage, which More cross-references in *Enchiridion ethicum*, More offers a refutation of Hobbes's claim in *Of Liberty and Necessity* that the exercise of will is essentially a passive response to external impulse. More ar-

[12] More, *Moral Cabbala*, pp. 22, 157, in *CSPW*.

[13] *Immortality* Book 2, ch.2, section 11, p. 65 in *CSPW*.

gues against Hobbes that mind has control over its activities and that men, therefore, are able to direct themselves towards the good by the exercise of free will or their 'having a Power to Act with in ourselves' which he calls the *autoexousion*.[14] The evidence for this is that we are able to 'excite' or call up the images which the mind retains of external objects, and the soul can 'change and transpose them at her own will' shows that they are not the result 'external impresses', but are produced by internal operations of the soul: 'the displaying of certain notions and perceptions she raises in her self, that be purely intellectual'. Mental activity is thus an 'an arbitrarious act', an exercise of will or choice.[15] This '*Liberty* and freedom in ourselves' is most apparent in situations of moral conflict (*akrasia*), especially when 'we refuse the good, and chuse the evil, when we might have done other wise'.[16] More's argument presupposes consciousness since the mind is aware of its ability to choose or refuse to act and is aware subsequently that it might have acted differently: 'we are conscious to our selves of that Faculty which the Greeks call *autexousion*, or a *power in our selves*'. This is a power which, '*notwithstanding any outward assaults or importunate temptations*', makes us

> cleave to that which is virtuous and honest, or to yield to pleasures or other vile advantages. That we have this *Liberty* and freedom in our selves, and that we refuse the good, and chuse the evil, when we might have done otherwise, that natural Sense or *Remorse of Conscience* is an evident and undeniable witness thereof. For when a man has done amiss, the pain, grief, or indignation that he raises in himself, or at least feels raised in him, is another kind from what we find from misfortunes or affronts we could not avoid. And that which pinches us and vexes us so severely, is the sense that we have brought such an evil upon ourselves, when it was in our power to have avoided it. Now if there be no *Sense* nor *Perception* in us but what arises from the *Re-action of Matter* one part against another, whatever Representation of things, whatever Deliberation or Determination we fall upon, it will … be *purely necessary*, there being upon this Hypothesis no more *freedome* while we deliberate or conclude than there is in a pair of scales, which rests as *necessarily* at last as it moved before.[17]

[14] *Immortality*, p. 69 in *CSPW*.
[15] *Immortality*, pp. 73–74.
[16] *Immortality*, pp. 69–70, in *CSPW.*
[17] Ibid.

Other points which emerge from this discussion are first that free will has limited application – it is, he says, 'seldom put in use' and 'the use of it is properly in Moral conflict'.[18] He also concedes that we do not always act freely:

> The sum therefore of all this is, That mens Actions are sometimes *free* and sometimes *not free* but in that they are at any time *free*, is a Demonstration that there is a Faculty in us that is incompetible to mere *Matter*.[19]

The points about moral failure and twinges of conscience recur in *Enchiridion ethicum*, in particular the psychology in which he draws out the ethical implications of this faculty of *liberum arbitrium* or *autexousion*.

Enchiridion ethicum

Turning now to the *Enchiridion ethicum* itself: as one would expect from a text styled a 'handbook' (*enchiridion*), the book is devoted to the *practical* aspect of living virtuously – the enabling aspects of ethical theory. The text is presented as a *manual* of ethics, or handbook of virtuous living. More defines ethics as 'the art of living well and happily' and happiness as 'that pleasure which the mind takes from a Sense of Virtue'. Book 3, in particular, addresses the *acquisition* of virtue ('the way to attain it'). Here we find that for all his emphasis on rationality of ethics and moral action, the affections play a central role.

In some respects, the book may be characterized as a synthesis of identifiably Stoic, Platonic, Cartesian, and even Aristotelian elements. More adapts the Epicurean idea that the exercise of virtue is pleasurable and that the attainment of good is the greatest pleasure, and redirects these to Christian ends. *Enchiridion ethicum* is also imbued with a Platonic sense of the beauty of virtue, the idea that a beautiful soul correlates to a beautiful body, and that vice is manifest in ugliness – he argues this not by appeal to Plato, but analogy

[18] *Immortality*, p. 76.

[19] *Immortality*, p. 77. There are other passages in *Immortality of the Soul* which have more to say about consciousness, and personal identity and which have a bearing on the ethical issues – but I pass those over for now.

with physical health: 'as bodily Health is thus gotten and sustaind by Virtue, so does Virtue confer Comliness and *Decorum* to all the Parts'.[20]

There are four features of More's ethical theory which I shall highlight: the importance of reason, the role of the passions, the freedom of the will, and More's conception of the 'boniform faculty'. First, More holds to the seventeenth-century aspiration that ethics might be demonstrated mathematically (*more mathematico*), and he accords right reason an essential role in how we recognize the good. Accordingly, *Enchiridion ethicum* commences with a set of twenty-five propositions or what he calls '*noemata* of morality' which provide a summary of all the principles of ethics – (e.g. 'The Good is that which is grateful, pleasant, and congruous to any Being which hath Life and Perception'). These form the basis of a rational how we can arrive at knowledge of the good by rational demonstration. For More, right reason is directly linked to the divine. He conceives of it as 'a sort of Copy or Transcript of that Reason or Law eternal which is registred in the Mind Divine', and the height of virtue is 'constantly to pursue that which to Right Reason seems best'.

Nevertheless, for all his emphasis on rationality of ethics and moral action, the affections play a central role in More's ethical theory. Book 2 of *Enchiridion ethicum*, is taken up with an account of the passions of the soul. More's according a role to the passions reflects the influence of Descartes. His list of the primary or 'primitive' passions from which other passions are derived is in fact strongly Cartesian: Admiration, Love and hatred, cupidity, joy and grief. His assigning an ethical role to feeling is not inconsistent with his Platonism – he cites Plato's *Phaedrus* that the 'affections are the wings of the soul'. More conceives of the passions as physical effects which affect the soul either adversely or beneficially. They have the capacity to destabilise the soul (a 'corporeal Impression , which hath force enough to blind the Mind'[21]). But the passions also serve to purge or aerate the spirits and to inspire affection in the soul towards its object. For More, the practice of virtue involves harnessing rather than subduing or neutralising the passions. And this requires the guidance of 'an inward power of the soul' – hence the importance of free will.

As already indicated, a further important component of the *Enchiridion* is More's discussion of free will. It is a fundamental principle of More's anthropology that human beings are voluntary agents with an internal principle

[20] *Account*, p. 235.

[21] More, *Account of Virtue*, p. 33.

of action. More defines free will (*liberum abitrium*), or the afore-mentioned *autexousion,* as a principle of action within oneself, 'having a Power to Act or not Act with in ourselves'('Quod autem in seipso sit principium agendi'.[22] The things which are in our power

> are the subjects of Deliberation, whereof every one is Master to do them, or to leave them undone: And these are those very Things which…[are] within our Power.[23]

As it turns out, More's discussion of freewill, in fact, has more to say about the *limitations* of free will. And More's discussion bears directly on the question of *akrasia,* or weakness of will, i.e. situations where 'we refuse the good, and chuse the evil, when we might have done other wise' – I shall return to this below.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of More's ethical theory is his concept of what he calls the 'boniform faculty'. More considers 'boniform faculty' to be the seat of happiness, 'the most elevated and most divine Faculty of the Soul'—and he calls it a 'celestial particle'.

> it is plain, that supreme Happiness is not barely to be placed in the Intellect; but her proper Seat must be called the *Boniform Faculty of the Soul:* namely, a Faculty of that divine Composition, and supernatural Texture, as enables us to distinguish not only what is simply and absolutely the best, but to relish it, and to have pleasure in that alone. Which Faculty much resembles that part of the Will.[24]

The 'boniform faculty' performs its function not by reason but by a kind of sensation. We recognize virtue by tasting it – More writes of the 'relish' of the good and the pleasure of the experience of goodness:

> the Desires of the Soul fly not to their Object, as it is intelligible, but as it is good or congruous, or grateful, or at least tending to these ends; and so filling the mind with all the Joys and Pleasure it can comprehend.[25]

---

[22] Ibid., p. 176.
[23] Ibid., p. 177.
[24] *Account*, p. 7.
[25] Ibid.

The 'boniform faculty' is a concept which is unique to More, but the notion of 'boniformity' is found among the Platonising philosophers of the period[26] – it derives from Plato's 'αγαθοιδεσ, *Boniform things*,' in *Republic* Book VI, 509a.[27] By means of the 'boniform faculty' More retains the affective aspect of moral motivation. However, it is potentially in tension with his notion of free will since it appears to operate without any input from reason so apparently rendering virtue passive by virtue of the fact that the good person appears to be determined towards the good by the magnetic pull, as it were, of the boniform faculty. This perhaps explains why More adds some important qualifications to his conception of the free-will.

The Limits of Freewill

In Book 3, Chapter 1, of the *Enchiridion ethicum*, More adds some important qualifications to his conception of the *autexousion*. The most important is his distinction between being a voluntary agent and actually exercising free will. Voluntariness, or spontaneity, entails that the '*Principle in Acting is wholly in the Agent*'. Both voluntariness and free-will entail that agent has an internal principle of action, and s/he is *aware* of their own actions, i.e. conscious of them. The difference rests with whether or not the agent has the *power* to act or not to act. To exercise free will, the agent must be in a position to exercise choice, to act or not act. Free will is therefore a special case of voluntariness, exercised in situations where the agent is in a position to exercise a *choice* of whether or not to act (i.e. is free to exercise a choice). Where it is in the agent's power (*eph hemin*) to act, the agent exercises free will.

---

[26] Cf. Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London, 1678), p. 204 and John Norris, 'A Discourse concerning Heavenly-Mindedness' in *Practical discourses* (1691), pp. 186–188.

[27] This is a passage where, according to Cudworth, Plato is 'discoursing about Moral virtue… the *summum bonum* or chiefest good'. He translates it: 'For as Light, and Sight or the Seeing Faculty, may both of them rightly be said to be Soliform things, or of Kin to the Sun, but neither of them to be the Sun it self; so Knowledge and Truth, may likewise both of them be said to be αγαθοιδεσ *Boniform things*, and of Kin to the Chief Good, but neither of them to be that Chief Good it self; but this is still to be look'd upon as a thing more August and Honourable'. Cudworth, *True Intellectual System*, p. 204.

> *Freedom of the Will*… is only that sort of Spontaneity or Voluntariness in us which is so free and undetermin'd that it is in our Power to Will or Act this way or the other way as we please… it supposeth a free Election or Choice in our selves: and accordingly *Andronicus* defines it to be, *A deliberate wishing or Appetition of those Things which are in our Power*.[28]

Nevertheless, even when s/he does not have power to act, an agent may still be a voluntary agent because s/he still retains an inner 'principle of action'. Something that both free will and voluntariness have in common is that the agent has both an internal principle of action and *is aware of* his/her own actions, i.e. conscious of them. Where it is in the agent's power (*eph hemin*) to act, the agent exercises free will.

In essentials, the distinction which More makes between the free-willed agent and the voluntary agent relies on the Cartesian idea of liberty of spontaneity which Descartes distinguishes from liberty indifference. According to Descartes, spontaneity is the freedom to act in accordance with one's will, where such action is determined internally by the nature of the will. We act spontaneously when 'the will of a thinking thing is drawn voluntarily and freely… but inevitably, towards a clearly known good.'[29] As Gary Hatfield glosses it: 'To be drawn inevitably means we cannot but so choose. So … we are free even if determined, so long as we are determined internally by the nature of our will'. [30] More's version of this differs from Descartes since the distinction for him is between spontaneity and will in general (voluntariness). And the boniform faculty is another kind of internal determination which seems to constitute a kind of substitute will such that we are determined to goodness internally, but not by intellect.

What seems to interest More is the fact that the agent does not always have power to act. With free will, we are not *necessitated* or forced or obliged to act in any particular way – we may abstain ('forbear') or not abstain from a course of action at our own choosing. However, the voluntary agent may be under a necessity of acting in a particular way because s/he does not have power to act differently. This is why More qualifies Andronicus's claim that

---

[28] *Account*, p. 176 ('*Appetitionem deliberativam eorum quae in potestate sunt nostra.* … Atque haec ipsa illa sunt quae vocat vocat *τα 'εφ 'εμιν* [ta eph hemin]'. *Enchiridion*, p. 154).

[29] Descartes, *Second Set of Replies* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, vol. 2, p. 117. Cf. *Fourth Meditation*, CSM 2, p. 40.

[30] G. Hatfield, *Routledge Guide to Descartes' Meditations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p. 201.

having an internal principle of action makes us 'master' of our actions. More agrees that the voluntary agent is

> someone whose principle of action is in himself, and who understands and takes cognizance of his own Actions and the Circumstances that relate to them.[31]

But he insists that, 'it may not be in his Power, every time he Acts, to Act otherwise than he does'.[32] This obviously has special relevance in cases of moral failure or moral incontinence (*akrasia*). But the instance of it on which More's argument turns is actually the case of the morally good person who is *so good* that s/he cannot act otherwise than virtuously. Such a person does not have the will power to commit an evil act (e.g. murder). In some sense, we could call this person 'helplessly good'. Such a person 'may Act out of his own meer Motion; that is to say, from such inbred Principles of Virtue, and by so strong and efficacious a sense of Honesty, as not to be able to act otherwise, or draw his Will to any different Thing'. Such a person is

> not…so much Master of his Forbearance, as that it is in his power not to forbear. I grant (indeed), if he would, he were able to commit so wicked a thing [as murder]; [but] that he is able to Will it, or bring his Will into it, is what I utterly deny.[33]

Virtuous action of this kind is necessary rather than free – it is, nevertheless, voluntary action. In this respect, the voluntary and the necessary are compatible. The necessary goodness of the willingly good agent bears comparison with the necessity of divine goodness which cannot be otherwise than it is. The necessary character of good will is consistent with More's view that virtue itself is a power ('Virtue is a Power or Energy, not a Habit'). By contrast, free will is perfective because it is ameliorative.

---

[31] *Account*, p. 178.
[32] Ibid., p. 176.
[33] Ibid., p. 175. (cf. *Enchiridion*, p. 153: 'nec se ad tam turpe facinus accingit, a se solo est; nec tamen hujus abstinentiae ita dominus est, ut possit non abstinere. Concedo sane, si vellet, posset tam foedum et immane facinus commitere; quae vero non possit velle, id est quot vehementer contendo'.

Influence

Apart from the fact that it is the only work specifically on ethics to have been published by a member of the Cambridge group, More's *Enchiricion ethicum* has very specific relations to the main stream of the seventeenth-century moral philosophy. It shows that More's moral philosophy is fully engaged with seventeenth century ethical theory: his development of his conception of free will is a response to Hobbes, and his account of the passions is indebted to Descartes, while his conception of the 'boniform faculty' appears to anticipate Shaftesbury's notion of 'moral sense'. In the seventeenth century, More's *Enchiridion ethicum* was reasonably widely known. It was reprinted several times both in England and Amsterdam, and it was translated into English in 1690 as *An Account of Virtue*. It was used as a textbook in English and Scottish universities, and More's moral axioms were later appended by James Tyrell to his popular abridgement of Richard Cumberland's *De legibus naturae* published as *A Brief Disquisition of the Laws of Nature* in 1690.[34] By juxtaposing More and Cumberland, Tyrell's *Brief Disquisition* in effect places More within the broader tradition of moral rationalism distinct from the natural law tradition. Arguably, therefore, More's *Enchiridion ethicum* was more important than Cudworth's writings on moral philosophy in the ethical debates of early Enlightenment Britain. However, its contribution to seventeenth and eighteenth-century moral philosophy in Britain has yet to be explored.

Bibliography

Primary sources:

Cudworth, Ralph. *Three treatises on 'On Liberty and Necessity'*. London: British Library, Additional MSS 4978-82.

Cudworth, Ralph. *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Cudworth, Ralph. *True Intellectual System of the Universe*. London, 1678.

[34] Tyrell's abridgement was reprinted several times: in London (1693, 1701, 1727) and in Lubeck (1683, 1693 and 1694).

Descartes, René. *Second Set of Replies in The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
More, Henry. *An Account of Virtue*. London, 1690.
More, Henry. *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*. London, 1662.
More, Henry. *Enchiridion ethicum*. London, 1667.
Norris John. *Practical Discourses*. London, 1691.

Secondary sources:

Gill, Michael. "Rationalism, Sentimentalism, and Ralph Cudworth". *Hume Studies* no. 30 (2004), pp. 149–181.
Hatfield, Gary. *Routledge Guide to Descartes' Meditations*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2014.
Passmore, John. J.A. *Ralph Cudworth. An Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951.
Sellars, John. "Stoics against Stoics in Cudworth's A Treatise of Freewill". *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* no. 20.5 (2012), pp. 935–952.

Summary

Cambridge Platonist, Henry More (1614–1687), his *Enchiridion ethicum* (1667), which was translated as An Account of Virtue. Although this book was widely known in More's time, it is one of his most neglected works today. After outlining the development of More's moral philosophy, I focus on four aspects of Enchiridion ethicum which give it its distinctive character: More's emphasis on the role of both reason and the passions; his conception of a 'boniform faculty' by which the good may be sensed and enjoyed; and his account of free will as an internal principle of self determination. I highlight More's distinction between two types of voluntary actions: free actions where the agent is able to exercise choice and necessary actions where the will of the agent is so determined that s/he has no choice.

Keywords: Henry More, Cambridge Platonists, ethics, free will, boniform faculty