

MORALITY AND METAPHYSICS

In this book, Charles Larmore develops an account of morality, freedom, and reason that rejects the naturalistic metaphysics shaping much of modern thought. Reason, Larmore argues, is responsiveness to reasons, and reasons themselves are essentially normative in character, consisting in the way that physical and psychological facts – facts about the world of nature – count in favor of possibilities of thought and action that we can take up. Moral judgments are true or false in virtue of the moral reasons there are. We need therefore a more comprehensive metaphysics that recognizes a normative dimension to reality as well. Though taking its point of departure in the analysis of moral judgment, this book branches widely into related topics such as freedom and the causal order of the world, textual interpretation, the nature of the self, self-knowledge, and the concept of duties to ourselves.

CHARLES LARMORE is W. Duncan MacMillan Family Professor in the Humanities at Brown University. He is the author of thirteen books, including *The Morals of Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), *Les pratiques du moi* (2004), *The Autonomy of Morality* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), *Das Selbst in seinem Verhältnis zu sich und zu anderen* (2017), and *What Is Political Philosophy?* (2020).

MORALITY AND METAPHYSICS

CHARLES LARMORE

Brown University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-108-45927-3 — Morality and Metaphysics
Charles Larmore
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108459273

DOI: 10.1017/9781108691321

© Charles Larmore 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2021
First paperback edition 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-108-47234-0 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-108-45927-3 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> vi
Introduction	i
PART I THE STRUCTURE AND SCOPE OF THE MORAL POINT OF VIEW	
1 Reflection and Morality	17
2 The Idea of Duties to Oneself	52
3 The Ethics of Reading	72
4 The Holes in Holism	92
PART II SELF AND WORLD	
5 Kant and the Meanings of Autonomy	111
6 Moral Philosophy and Metaphysical Evasion	134
7 The Conditions of Human Freedom	172
8 Self-Knowledge and Commitment	211
<i>Index</i>	236

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my editor at Cambridge University Press, Hilary Gaskin, for her advice and support during the preparation of this volume. I also thank my acute copyeditor, Alex Kats, who saved me from a number of serious mistakes. Two anonymous readers for the Press gave me invaluable comments and suggestions. I am indebted as well to the many colleagues and audiences who have commented on various versions of these essays over the years.

All previously published essays in this volume have been substantially revised and expanded. They have also been modified so as to form a coherent book. I am grateful to the original publications and publishers for their permission to reuse the material here.

Chapter 1, originally published in *Social Philosophy & Policy* 27(2), 2010, 1–28. © 2010 Cambridge University Press. Also published in E. F. Paul et al. (eds.), *Moral Obligation*, Cambridge University Press, 2010. © 2010 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 2, originally published as “Réflexions sur l’idée de devoirs moraux envers soi-même” in Claude Romano (ed.), *Du moi à l’authenticité. La Philosophie de Charles Larmore*, Éditions Mimésis, 2017, 13–34. Translated by the author. © 2017 Éditions Mimésis. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 3, originally published as “Zur Ethik des Lesens” in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 63(3), 2015, 427–447. Translated by the author. © 2015 De Gruyter. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 4, originally published in *European Journal of Political Theory* 12(2), 2013, 205–216. © 2013 Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 5, originally published in *International Yearbook of German Idealism* IX, 2011, 3–21. © 2011 De Gruyter. Reprinted with permission.

Acknowledgments

vii

Chapter 6, Sections 6.1–6.4 originally published as “Morals and Metaphysics” in *European Journal of Philosophy* 21(4), 2013, 665–675. © 2013 John Wiley & Sons. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 7, originally published as “Die Bedingungen menschlicher Freiheit” in *Konzepte 1: Praktische Identität*, 2015, 109–148. Translated by the author. © 2015 Klostermann Verlag. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter 8, originally published as “Selbstwissen und Selbstfestlegung” in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 63(4), 2015, 686–704. Translated by the author. © 2015 De Gruyter. Reprinted with permission.