Contents

Foreword xii
Acknowledgements xvi
List of abbreviations xviii

From the normative question to Bentham 1

The ontology of fiction

The theory of real and fictitious entities and its relation with the normative question 11

1 The distinction between reality and fiction 21

1.1 Real entities 21
The map of entities 21
Perceptible entities 24
Inferential entities 27
The belief in the existence of real entities 31
1.2 Fictitious entities 36
Empirical ontology and linguistic ontology 36
The area of reality and the area of fiction 40
Unreal or fabulous entities 45
1.3 Language and imagination 47
Verbal reality 47
The linguistic process of substantiation 50
The operations of the human mind 51

2 The representation of the physical world 59

2.1 The epistemology of physics 59
The fictitious framework of reality 59
The Ten Predicaments 61
The notions of relation and causality 64
The image of the physical world 66

2.2 The double meaning of existence 67
An empirical account of existence 67
A linguistic account of existence 69
The reconciliation between realism and constructivism 75
2.3 The connection between reality and fiction 76
Empirical realism and constructivism 76
Sense-perception and the human mind 77
The ontological function of language 80

The normativity of fiction
The evolution of the theory of real and fictitious entities 85

3 Ethical fictitious entities 91

3.1 The problem of definition 91
The import and truth of real entities and fictitious entities 91
The method of paraphrasis 95
The definition of obligation 98
The notions of right and power 105
3.2 Moral qualities 110
Good versus bad or evil 110
Right and wrong 113
The theory of virtue 117
3.3 Pleasure and pain 125
Pathematic perceptions 125
The causation of action 128
Making a promise 131

4 Normativity and motivation 135

4.1 The foundations of ethics 135
The principle of utility 135
The criticism of asceticism and sympathy 145
The attack on the schools of thought adverse to utility 150
Empirical constructivism 155
Constructivism and fictionalism 158
4.2 The theory of action 163
Law and human behaviour 163
Practical reason 167
The understanding and the will 171
Exciting or moderating cause 173
Act 173
Circumstances 174

Motives 176
Intentionality 180
Consciousness, disposition and consequences 182
An example of practical reasoning 182
4.3 Instrumental rationality 187
Desire-belief and means-end model 187
Sanction and obligation 199
The law as a real entity 210
Conflicting motives in practical reasoning 212
Duty and interest junction principle 216

From Bentham to the normative question 219

Bibliography 225
Index 234