
PART I: CAMBRIDGE ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

1 G. E. Moore—The Project for a New Philosophy

1. MOORE'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMBIENCE OF CAMBRIDGE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY

(I) FIRST STEPS IN PHILOSOPHY. Moore made his philosophical discoveries, well known from *Principia Ethica* and *Philosophical Studies*, step by step. In the summer of 1895 he spent five weeks in Tübingen, Germany, attending Otto Crusius's lectures on Plato, and Christoph Sigwart's lectures on Kant.¹ The effect of this visit was that Kant became Moore's philosophical 'indoctrinator in default'. This is clearly to be seen in his two *Dissertations* (1897, 1898a), which investigated Kant's ethics. Roughly, Moore borrowed from Kant some elements of philosophical logic which he revised radically.

Independently from his interest in Kant, Moore evolved a peculiar 'hermeneutic stance'. This was done in a series of papers he delivered to the esoteric group of the Apostles.

(II) MOORE'S 'LOGICAL REFORMATION'. An important point in Moore's early intellectual biography is his philosophical dominance of the esoteric group the Cambridge Apostles. This became especially clear after March 1898. Now, exactly when Moore was beginning to enjoy more and more authority among the young dons in Cambridge (the second half of 1897), he was publicly criticised by Russell—in the latter's Apostolic paper 'Seems, Madam? Nay, It Is', read on 11 December 1897.

According to Lytton Strachey, the reason for the criticism was that 'Russell resented the greater influence exerted' by Moore over the other Apostles (Holroyd 1971, p. 128). This point is supported by the fact that in 1899

the greatest feature of his [Moore's] sentimental life was the growing dislike for Russell (Moore records a 'quarrel with Russell at the beginning of Lent Term'), and it was this relationship that came closest to engaging his passions. (Levy 1979, p. 211)

¹ Moore was introduced to Crusius through a letter from James Ward. It is characteristic of the difference between the initial philosophical intuitions of Russell and Moore that despite Alys's (Russell's wife's) insistence on Tübingen (see Russell 1992a, p. 58), in the same summer of 1895 Russell studied in Berlin: Economics between January and March (it is from that time that his 'Tiergarten Project', and also his project for 'philosophy of geometry' came out), and between November and December German Social Democracy.

The message of Russell's paper was clear: in philosophy there is no place for faith. In order to prove this, he differentiated between the truth of philosophy and its emotional value (a discrimination developed further in 'Mysticism and Logic'). Of course, 'we may use metaphysics, like poetry and music, as a means of producing a mood, of giving us a certain view of the universe, a certain attitude towards life' (Russell 1897a, p. 109). This is 'that mystic sense, which philosophy sometimes gives, of a world transformed by the beatific vision' (p. 110). It gives 'the satisfaction of forgetting the real world and its evils' (p. 109). For Russell, however, 'metaphysics, like science, is [only] justified by intellectual curiosity. . . . The desire to find comfort in metaphysics has, we must all admit, produced a great deal of fallacious reasoning and intellectual dishonesty' (p. 111).

The result of this criticism was twofold. On the one hand, Moore was definitely—after an initial interest in it, a result of investigating Kant—won over to philosophical logic. He was convinced that the employment of philosophical logic in philosophy was the only guarantee for the scientific character of the latter. Moore was also persuaded to do philosophical logic together with the person who had converted him to it—Russell. In 1898 Russell and Moore had a series of discussions (in March, June and September) which marked the beginning of what today is meant by 'analytic philosophy'.

On the other hand, there was a break in their personal relationship. An indication of this was that, beginning with the Easter vacation in 1898, Moore started 'reading parties', which continued until 1905, to which Russell was never invited. Apparently, in this group Moore hoped to develop his own philosophy, using technical means gained from the logico-philosophical discussions with Russell.

The next step in the break between Moore and Russell was made after the latter read the paper 'Was the World Good before the Sixth Day?' Ostensibly, it criticised Moore's Apostolic paper 'Do we Love Ourselves Best?' (1899a), but actually took issue with his 1898 *Dissertation*. Russell argued that Moore had no reason to believe that beauty is by nature intrinsically good: 'There is no reason to suppose all people capable of this emotion or of the perception of beauty' (Russell 1899b, p. 115). This was the second 'logical reprimand' to Moore, made with the hope that he would finally become a pure philosophical logician.

Moore's first reaction to Russell's paper came in his Apostolic essay 'Vanity of Vanities' (1899b), in which he posed ethics' most radical question: 'What, on earth, people live for?', adding that this is the 'only thing which occurs to interest' him (1979, p. 207). His answer was appalling indeed: 'There is nothing worth living for.'

According to Tom Regan,

'Vanity of Vanities' testifies to a deep, genuine spiritual crisis in his [Moore's] life. At this time beliefs about the goodness of ends were for him logically the same as belief in God: a matter of faith. In the confessional revelations of 'Vanity of Vanities' we find a man who has lost all faith, not only in God but in the value of everything. (Regan 1986b, p. 142)

This crisis of Moore's was nothing but the result of his conversion to philosophical logic. Now he needed a new hope in order to start anew. As we shall see in a moment, Moore found it in the new, successful technique of *minima philosophia* (see § 2, (vii)).

In spite of his victory, Russell came away from the ideological encounter with Moore with heavy bruises. Papers like 'A Free Man's Worship' and 'The Pilgrimage

of Life' are the clearest symptoms of these sufferings. Although blurred, traces of the influence of Moore's contemplationism are also to be found in Russell's theoretical philosophy. As we shall see in the next chapter, in Russell's philosophy of logic there remained a definite place for intuition. This is evident in that Russell's epistemology is based on the relation of acquaintance—a point which makes him radically different from Frege.

(III) MOORE'S FAILURE AS PACE-MAKER IN PHILOSOPHICAL LOGIC. Virginia Woolf recorded the following remark of Russell's about Moore in her Diary:

Suddenly, something went wrong with him; something happened to him and his work. *Principia Ethica* was nothing like so good as his Essay on Judgement. . . . I don't know what happened—it ruined him. He took to putting out his tongue after that. (Woolf 1977, ii. p. 294)

Despite the innocent air which Russell assumed in this talk with Virginia Woolf, it can be convincingly demonstrated that what weakened Moore's confidence as a philosophical logician was the progress Russell made in this realm, on the basis of his considerations in symbolic logic. Especially shocking to Moore were: (a) the fruitful use (after August 1900) of the new technique of quantification of Peano and its philosophical implications; (b) the publication of *The Principles of Mathematics* [1903]; (c) the publication of 'On Denoting' [1905].

The true reasons for Moore's 'analytical depression' were clearly pointed out by Moore himself, who later remembered: 'I really have attended no less than three complete courses of lectures given by [Russell]'² (1942, pp. 14–15). And Moore continued:

I owe even more to his published works. I have certainly spent more time in studying what he has written than in studying the works of any other single philosopher. . . . I worked very hard indeed for a very long time in trying to understand his *Principles of Mathematics*. (p. 15)

In short, in the years 1900–5 Moore gradually became convinced that his ignorance in the area of symbolic logic made him a loser in the philosophical–logical rivalry with Russell. As a consequence, he could never again act as Russell's logical pace-maker. Later Russell found a new, better philosophical logician, whom he hoped to use for this purpose—Wittgenstein.

As to the date of Moore's failure as a philosophical logician, it can be noted that as late as 2 July 1899 Russell wrote to Couturat: 'My friend G. E. Moore (Trinity College, Cambridge) is, in my opinion, the most subtle in pure logic' (Russell 1992a, p. 194). Russell changed his judgement immediately after *Principia Ethica* was published (October 1903). Now (on 11 February 1904) he wrote to Bradley:

I hope some day, when the second volume of my present work is finished, to attempt something on the more purely philosophical side of Logic. Hitherto I have been hoping Moore would do this better than I could but I believe he contemplates going into more purely metaphysical questions. (p. 274)

(IV) MCTAGGART'S INFLUENCE. First and foremost, McTaggart introduced Moore to the already mentioned hermeneutic method. In 'An Autobiography' Moore remembered:

² The first apparently were Russell's lectures on philosophy of mathematics delivered in 1901.



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