The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics
G.E. Moore and the Origins of Analytic Philosophy

Consuelo Preti
History of Analytic Philosophy

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During the first half of the twentieth century, analytic philosophy gradually established itself as the dominant tradition in the English-speaking world, and over the last few decades it has taken firm root in many other parts of the world. There has been increasing debate over just what ‘analytic philosophy’ means, as the movement has ramified into the complex tradition that we know today, but the influence of the concerns, ideas and methods of early analytic philosophy on contemporary thought is indisputable. All this has led to greater self-consciousness among analytic philosophers about the nature and origins of their tradition, and scholarly interest in its historical development and philosophical foundations has blossomed in recent years, with the result that history of analytic philosophy is now recognized as a major field of philosophy in its own right.

The main aim of the series in which the present book appears, the first series of its kind, is to create a venue for work on the history of analytic philosophy, consolidating the area as a major field of philosophy and promoting further research and debate. The ‘history of analytic philosophy’ is understood broadly, as covering the period from the last three decades of the nineteenth century to the start of the twenty-first century, beginning with the work of Frege, Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein, who are generally regarded as its main founders, and the influences upon
them, and going right up to the most recent developments. In allowing the ‘history’ to extend to the present, the aim is to encourage engagement with contemporary debates in philosophy, for example, in showing how the concerns of early analytic philosophy relate to current concerns. In focusing on analytic philosophy, the aim is not to exclude comparisons with other—earlier or contemporary—traditions, or consideration of figures or themes that some might regard as marginal to the analytic tradition but which also throw light on analytic philosophy. Indeed, a further aim of the series is to deepen our understanding of the broader context in which analytic philosophy developed, by looking, for example, at the roots of analytic philosophy in neo-Kantianism or British idealism, or the connections between analytic philosophy and phenomenology, or discussing the work of philosophers who were important in the development of analytic philosophy but who are now often forgotten.

G. E. Moore (1873–1958) is credited, alongside Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), with the rebellion against British idealism that is seen as one of the key events that inaugurated analytic philosophy around the turn of the twentieth century. But there has been far less written on Moore than on any of the other acknowledged main founders of analytic philosophy—Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein. In one respect, this is not surprising, since Moore—unlike Frege and Russell—played no role in the development of modern logic which was to become the most significant legacy of the analytic revolution. Nor did he—unlike Wittgenstein—have a major influence on logical positivism, which was to form one of the main branches of analytic philosophy in the 1930s, especially influential in the United States when many of the logical positivists emigrated there with the rise of Nazi Germany. On the other hand, Moore was a central figure in the Cambridge School of Analysis and from 1921 to 1947 was editor of Mind, the leading journal of philosophy in Britain, during the time that analytic philosophy established itself as the major tradition in the English-speaking world. A volume of papers on Moore was published in 1942, in the Library of Living Philosophers, and several books and collections appeared in the decade or so immediately following his death,
but it was only with the publication of Thomas Baldwin’s book on Moore in 1990, as history of analytic philosophy itself emerged as a field of philosophy, that scholarly interest in his philosophy started to grow.

Consuelo Preti collaborated with Baldwin on an edition of Moore’s two fellowship dissertations, which were published as *G. E. Moore: Early Philosophical Writings* by Cambridge University Press in 2011, and she has been delving deeper into Moore’s papers, housed in Cambridge University Library, in the decade since. The present volume is the fruits of that research. What we have been lacking in (the field of) history of analytic philosophy is a detailed account of Moore’s early work and the influences upon him, and I am delighted that the book we have long needed is now appearing in this series. Preti focuses on Moore’s formative period from 1894, when he began studying philosophy at Cambridge (after two years studying classics), to 1899, when he published ‘The Nature of Judgment’, the paper that marks the rejection of the ideas of F. H. Bradley (1846–1924), the leading figure in British idealism.

In the first chapter Preti sets the scene by describing the development of what was called the ‘moral sciences’ at Cambridge in the second half of the nineteenth century, which came to include ‘mental science’ as interest in psychology grew, influenced by the work that was then being done in Germany, by Hermann Lotze (1817–81) and Franz Brentano (1838–1917), among others. This gave rise to the intense debates about psychologism that form such a central feature in the landscape of early analytic philosophy. In the second chapter she turns to the more direct influences of Moore’s teachers, and especially James Ward (1843–1925) and G. F. Stout (1860–1944), who introduced mental science to Cambridge. In the third chapter she examines the influence of Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) on Moore’s ethics and his attitude to both Kant and Bradley; and in the final chapter she discusses Moore’s work on the ‘metaphysical basis of ethics’, focusing on the two dissertations that he submitted to Cambridge for a Prize Fellowship at Trinity College, the second of which was successful and established Moore’s career in philosophy. Throughout her book, Preti draws expertly on the full range of
Moore’s unpublished writings in this period, as well as on other material, and the result is an extraordinarily rich and insightful account of his early development. It is not just the book on Moore that scholars of the history of analytic philosophy have long wanted, to complement the extensive research that has been done on the early Russell, but it raises the bar considerably for all future work on Moore’s philosophy. The history of Moore’s analytic philosophy has finally come of age.

Berlin, Germany
October 2021

Michael Beaney
Many people assisted me over the years while I was researching and writing this book, which involved repeated visits to the Cambridge University Library. The Dean’s office at the College of New Jersey consistently supported my research trip requests. Michael Esposito, Bruno and Polly Kenway, Liz and Jeremy Stubbins, Frankie Stubbins, Christina Stubbins, and Hugh Stubbins did everything they could to make my visits to Cambridge stress-free, and I could not have completed this work without them. The librarians in the Manuscripts Reading Room at the Cambridge University Library were unflappably accommodating as I surfaced year after year with repeated Moorean material requests, allowing me to photograph the documents and even wear a scarf (it was always freezing in there). The UL levels of security (four of them, to get to the Manuscripts Reading Room), the internecine fetching rules, and the Tea Room became welcome routines after a few years.

It is impossible to thank Tom Baldwin enough for having supplied hours of advice, talk, and walks over the years, without which I never would have embarked on my work on Moore, let alone produced any of it. Tom was in particular very encouraging when I asked him why Moore’s Fellowship dissertations had never been published. Timothy Moore had refused to allow Tom to do it 20 years before, but the new executor (Moore’s grandson, Peregrine Moore) permitted it. Tom and
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I worked together on that project and published the dissertations in 2011, which was the catalyst for the work in this book. I am most grateful to Tom and to Peregrine Moore for their permission to quote from the unpublished Moore papers. I am also extremely grateful to Mike Beaney (for his patience), Nick Griffin (he knows how enjoyable it is to be immersed in the late nineteenth century all day), Peter Hylton (who assured me that getting it right needed taking time over), and Gary Ostertag (for his generous, ruthless, and unerringly critical eye). Many thanks to Ken Blackwell at the Russell archive at McMaster University for always genially answering my questions over the years. I must also thank Adam Cristofich, and especially Pete Babb, for their copy-editing. Throughout the text I abbreviate some of the most frequently referred to main primary sources (see the references for Bradley, Moore, Sidgwick, and Russell). References to The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell volumes are abbreviated as CPBR and the volume number. References to the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Bertrand Russell (ed. K. Klement) are abbreviated as OHBR.
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This book is an account of the development of G. E. Moore’s early philosophy, with a specific focus on the progress of his thought from 1894 to 1899. During this period, Moore evolved from Classics undergraduate to philosophical innovator, one whose work touched off the start of analytic philosophy in the twentieth century. *Principia Ethica* (PE), published in 1903, is bound inextricably to Moore’s reputation and the study and influence of his philosophy. It may be his *chef d’oeuvre*. But it is not the first sustained work of philosophy that he produced. In what follows, I examine the influences on and the development of Moore’s early views, building as detailed a picture as possible using unpublished archival material as well as more familiar primary and secondary sources.

After Moore’s death in 1958, his personal papers and correspondence remained at his home (86 Chesterton Road, Cambridge).¹ This material included important early philosophical work—his Apostles Society papers, for instance, and his 1898–1899 lectures for the London School

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¹The majority of the Moore papers are in the Manuscripts Reading Room at the Cambridge University Library. Moore’s Trinity College Prize Fellowship dissertations are at the Wren Library at Trinity College, along with his copy of what was known as Wittgenstein’s Typescript 230iii. For details on the former, see Baldwin and Preti (BP, 2011). For details on the latter, see Von Wright (1969). A number of Moore’s diaries were destroyed or lost. It is not possible to determine whether Moore edited his own papers or whether they were culled after his death by his family (but see Levy (1979, 13)). He did annotate his correspondence and (surviving) diaries, adding dates and marginalia.
of Ethics. Other material—drafts of philosophical papers, lecture notes, and so on—had been in the care of Casimir Lewy, who in due course published some of the material in his possession. In the late 1960s, with the permission of Moore’s widow Dorothy and their son Timothy (literary executors of the estate), Paul Levy began to catalogue and sort the papers that Moore had left at home, using some of the material for Levy (1979). Dorothy Moore died in 1977, and the papers were then offered for sale through Sotheby’s in December 1979 and were purchased by the Cambridge University Library (with additional financial help from Trinity College). After Lewy’s death in 1991, the material that had been in his possession was given by Timothy Moore to the Cambridge University Library.

One obstacle to the pursuit of detailed historical scholarship on Moore’s early philosophy, therefore, was that a good deal of the relevant material was not available until fairly recently. Moore himself mostly refused to publish early material or even reprint his early published papers. The general neglect led to some inevitable distortions in the usual accounts of Moore’s philosophical development. With little or no access to prior work, many commentators have tended to treat PE as if it were the first thing Moore ever wrote. Moreover, given Moore’s long presence at Cambridge, it was all but inevitable that his later published work throughout the 1920s and 1930s eclipsed notice of his early papers,

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2 See Regan (1991) and Chap. 4.
3 Casimir Lewy (1919–1991) was a student of Moore’s and eventually, Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge. In the preface to Lewy (1962), he notes “G.E. Moore expressed a wish that after his death I should go through his philosophical papers and consider the possibility of preparing a selection of them for publication.” What Lewy prepared for publication (with approval from Dorothy Moore and Timothy Moore) was (1) selections from a set of notebooks in which Moore used to jot down notes and other philosophical musings (Lewy 1962) and selections from Moore’s lectures (Lewy 1966). The notebook jottings date from 1919 to 1953, and Lewy titled the selections “Commonplace Book,” after Moore’s own title for a number of the notebooks. A large number of Moore’s lectures at Cambridge are preserved in the archive, dating from 1911 (his first year as a Lecturer). The lectures Lewy chose to publish date from 1928 to 1929; 1925 to 1926; and 1933 to 1934.

4 The highest bid was £48,000 (£216,960/$340,117 at current exchange rates). See editor’s notes, Russell, nos. 35–6 (Autumn-Winter 1979–1980).
5 See Baldwin (1990, 1993), Griffin (1991), and Hylton (1990), who included material from the Moore papers in their discussions of the early work of Moore and of Russell.
6 One exception was Moore (1953).
which were scattered throughout the professional journals and in any case not reprinted until almost 30 years after his death (Regan 1986a). Moore’s most essential pre-Principia work was not published until 2011, and there is philosophical material still unpublished.

The archival material has been divided into three collections: Moore’s personal papers (Add. Ms. 8330), his philosophical papers (Add. Ms. 8875), and additional material that from time to time is discovered and added to the collection (Add. Ms. 9978). Some of Moore’s own books are also archived at the Library, including his copy of Wittgenstein’s Tractatus (complete with fading marginal notations). Moore kept a series of meticulous lists early on, and his personal papers include various lists and chronologies that record his early years at Cambridge, along with “summaries of activities,” which include lists of what books he was reading, how many hours of work he devoted to what, his summer holidays, reading parties, and music he was learning (Add. Ms. 8330 1/1/1-2). The complete surviving diaries are from 1908, 1909–1916, 1924 (some extracts from diaries also survive), and there is an ample correspondence. Letters from Moore to his parents, to his sisters and brothers, and to his close friends Desmond MacCarthy (1877–1952) and Robert Trevelyan (1872–1951) survive, as well as letters from MacCarthy, Russell, and Wittgenstein. These documents all contain fragments of information that together help to build a picture of Moore’s early philosophical (and personal) development.

Moore’s initiation into philosophy is an important part of the story. Moore added a Part II Tripos in Moral Science to his Part I in Classics, and for two years (1894–1896) attended philosophy lectures, writing

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7 Baldwin and Preti (BP, 2011).
8 The Russell and Wittgenstein papers have fared better. The Bertrand Russell Research Centre at McMaster University has been engaged in the project of publishing Russell’s Collected Papers (36 volumes in total), since McMaster acquired Russell’s papers in 1968 and established the Bertrand Russell Archive. The archive is currently in the process of making Russell’s correspondence digitally accessible. Wittgenstein’s Nachlass was described by von Wright (1969) as a vast number of notebooks, manuscripts, typescripts, and other documents, comprising over 20,000 pages of material. Though almost entirely unpublished at the time of Wittgenstein’s death in 1951, it is now widely available through the University of Bergen (http://wab.uib.no/index.page).
9 These latter are published in McGuinness (2008). See also Griffin (1992). Letters from Moore to Russell are at the Russell Archive at McMaster University.
essays for Ward, Stout, McTaggart, and Sidgwick. He was also warmly embraced into the exclusive Cambridge Conversazione Society (the Apostles), whose weekly meetings were frequently lively (even facetious) debates on philosophical questions. The intellectual incubator at Cambridge at the turn of the twentieth century was in many ways tailored to Moore’s personality. He was intense and somewhat reserved, but flourished among the very small, compatible, and intellectually buoyant set of young men that surrounded him not just at Trinity but in the Apostles. Though difficult to square with the later portrayals of him as a grand old man of inter-war Cambridge philosophy, Russell, for one, described Moore’s early forays into philosophy as examples of “intellectual intensity,” and his contemporaneous impressions of Moore at their first meetings were nearly farcically enthusiastic. Moore’s friends were deeply loyal, as their letters show, and he was described by J. M. Keynes, Lytton Strachey, and Leonard Woolf as having had a captivating effect on them in the early 1900s. Wittgenstein, though notoriously prickly, became an affectionate correspondent. Those who heard him lecture—even into the 1940s—stressed his individual affect; as a lecturer, his style and method of inquiry was thought to be unique, engrossing, and even memorable.

Almost none of this stirring effect, it must be said, is evident in Moore’s published work. In a remembrance published after Moore’s death, and in spite of the substantial encomiums he lavished on Moore, Russell unsparingly criticised Moore’s later work—what Russell called his “more minute discussions”—as pedantic and lacking in the intellectual gusto that his fellow Apostle had exhibited as a young philosopher. And perhaps Russell rightly mourned the loss of the more philosophically daring Moore. After 1899, Moore seems to have lost some of the sang-froid with which we see him taking on his sceptical (even horrified) examiners in

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12 At least after 1929, when they became colleagues. Their relationship was rocky for some time before that. See Monk (1991), Preti (2008a; OHBR).
13 See for instance White (1960).
14 Russell (1959a).
1898, although PE kindled admiration of his intellectual audaciousness in some of its readers after it appeared in 1903.\footnote{See Levy (2005), Regan (1986a), Rosenbaum (1984).}

It may be that the burdens of his job took their toll on Moore’s philosophical dynamism—he lectured three times a week without fail from 1911 to 1939 at Cambridge, took a turn as secretary of the Moral Sciences Club, regularly gave papers at philosophical meetings like the Aristotelian Society, and was editor of \textit{Mind} from 1921 to 1947. But as a young man, engaged in a two-year exposure to philosophy (and with Saturday night Apostolic reinforcement), he found himself systematically contending with the defence of his own philosophical views in the company of dynamic young (some quite brilliant) fellow scholars, and in his attempts to work them out, he shows composure and even some assertive asperity in answering his critics and sticking to his guns.

Moore’s early work adapted and assimilated the philosophical views that made up his \textit{milieu}, but, contrary to the traditional accounts of this period, the intellectual setting was not as Bradleyan as it has been depicted.\footnote{The term \textit{milieu} is used by Dummett (1993, 3) in denying that Moore and Russell, at Cambridge, could have been familiar with the “true” origins of analytical philosophy, in the work of Austrian and German thinkers of the period. I will show that Dummett was wrong about the intellectual environment at Cambridge.} It is not entirely clear, for instance, that Moore engaged as deeply with Bradley’s work as has been commonly claimed, in spite of his acknowledgement to Bradley’s metaphysics in his 1897 dissertation (and elsewhere). He did read a good deal of Kant’s work in preparation for his Prize Fellowship dissertation(s), and his own construal of the malicious effect of Kant’s psychologism on his ethical views raises the question of, among other things, the source of Moore’s Kant interpretation. I will make the case here that it was Moore’s unique combination of lukewarm Bradleyan metaphysics, criticism of Kant’s psychologism, and late nineteenth century mental science that was at the core of the nerve in his philosophical approach, and that Russell found so appealing, early on.

My own interest in this came about mostly by accident. I had been wondering what exactly was behind Moore’s formulation of the nature of judgment in terms of a mind-independent proposition in “The Nature of Judgment” (Moore 1899a). This was what Russell long celebrated not only
as a pioneering influence on his own work, but the beginning of a radical change in philosophy. It is not clear how exactly Moore “revolted” against Bradleyan idealism with this new conception of judgment, and it cannot be said that Moore (1899a) is perspicuous or even entirely coherent. Finding out how Moore came to his views led me to wonder whether what motivated him could be traced through what was left of his early papers, so I went to Cambridge to look through them. I will say that building a case for the influences on his thinking, pace Dummett, actually did involve investigation of “the usual sort,” namely long hours in the library, year after year. The conception of judgment that featured in Moore’s early philosophy had to have come from somewhere, and as it turns out, it did, and through the usual intellectual channels—his own study of primary and secondary sources, journal articles, discussions with teachers and friends, and the sustained undertaking of defending his own philosophical views.

I will focus below on Moore’s work between 1894 and 1899. It will emerge that PE is a mature stage of ideas that first found root in some of his Apostles papers, developed in his Fellowship dissertations (1897 and 1898), and were further refined through his 1898 and 1899 London School of Ethics lectures. In Chap. 1, I examine the influences on Moore’s evolving intellectual life between 1894 and 1897 in the philosophical themes then in active debate at Cambridge. I will focus in particular on the anti-psychologism that was making its way across the continent in the development of the new science of psychology, and how this was assimilated at Cambridge by Moore’s teachers. In Chap. 2, I assess the role of what was then known as mental science in the work of Stout and Ward, and the ways in which this influenced Moore’s own developing thought. In Chap. 3, I discuss how Moore’s views on Kant’s philosophy were influenced by the way in which his own teachers read and taught Kant, with a focus on Sidgwick’s role in Moore’s philosophical growth. In Chap. 4, I examine Moore’s 1897 and 1898 dissertations, in order to show and explain the roots, development, and defence of the revolutionary

17 Russell (1903, xxviii, 1944, 12, 1959a, 54).
18 Dummett (1993, 1–2) is a notable example of the dismissive attitude to history of philosophy that was common for some time.
19 Moore himself preferred his own 1912 to PE, but it cannot be said to have had an impact equal to that of PE. For his London School of Ethics lectures, see Chap. 4 and Regan (1991).
account of judgment that makes its appearance in 1898. I close with a look at some of the work that Moore produced immediately after 1898. Most accounts of the origins of early analytic philosophy in late nineteenth century Cambridge naturally feature, but also tend to link, the efforts of Moore and Russell, and not without reason. Both Moore and Russell helped to entrench the by-now accepted key elements of the story of their role in the beginnings of analytic philosophy, each at various times crediting the other for influence on significant ideas in those early days. But Moore’s and Russell’s recollections of the early years of their emerging philosophical views—mostly decades after the fact and mutually, even self-consciously, cordial—were those of a pair of esteemed elders of mid-twentieth-century professional academic philosophy. This was a discipline very different from that of their youth, and one they themselves, even unwittingly, had had a hand in shaping. Neither was necessarily in the best position to accurately describe—let alone appraise—their early philosophical development in its own context. But their recollections stood for some time as the official portrait—not always totally reliable, as I will argue—of those early years. Certainly, the mature Moore himself gave his own role in the origins of early analytic philosophy, and the impact of his early work on this period, very short shrift. It is noticeably missing from the reflections on his work in Schilpp (1942), which for some time stood as the authorized account of Moore’s role in twentieth century philosophy. But there is no particular reason to take Moore’s later word for the assessment of his early philosophical endeavours. His views, in their own context, can speak for themselves.

References


1 Introduction

The origins of analytic philosophy in the English-speaking world can be traced to the early work of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, in the period roughly between 1894 and 1903. It is the origin of Moore’s early work in particular that is my focus here. But there are some challenges in reconstructing the genesis of the views that led to the new analytic approach, the first phase of which culminated in the tandem 1903 publication of *Principia Ethica* (PE) and *Principles of Mathematics* (PoM). As I noted in the introduction, (i) Moore and Russell themselves were responsible for the preliminary accounts of their maiden forays into philosophy, accounts that remained unopposed for some time; (ii) it was nearly 100 years after the initial publication of PE and PoM before scholars could comprehensively examine and query some of the early particulars that had burrowed their way into the narrative; and (iii) contextual/historical work in the origins of analytic philosophy was subject to mid-to-late century analytic philosophy’s general disregard for history of
philosophy.¹ I believe that the story has become encumbered by some distortions that could use some revision, and there are puzzles, in addition, that have not yet been entirely resolved. I will set out the case for this in what follows.

In this chapter, I will give an account of how the intellectual atmosphere at Cambridge was shaped in the nineteenth century. I particularly want to emphasize the robust presence of what was then known as mental science in philosophical study at Cambridge, a line of influence in this story that has received, on the whole, limited attention. This will set the stage for the examination and analysis of Moore’s undergraduate work (1894–1896) and his post-graduate philosophical achievements (1897–1899) in the subsequent chapters and will serve as a general introduction to the story of the rise of analytic philosophy that we can extract from Moore’s work of this period.

## 2 The Moral Sciences at Cambridge

In a 1953 symposium paper, the philosopher C. D. Broad gave what he titled a “local historical” account of the study and teaching of philosophy in Cambridge (Broad 1966). Terminological details squared away (that philosophy at Cambridge was long officially known as moral science), Broad went on to say that philosophy at Cambridge was not, as at Oxford or at the Scottish universities, a subject that formed part of the curriculum for all or most students; instead, it was the object of a specialized and small group of practitioners. There were few actual teaching positions at Cambridge in philosophy, for one thing: up to 1896, the only professorial chair was the Knightbridge Professorship, though in 1896, Henry Sidgwick endowed another philosophy chair, the Professorship of Mental Philosophy and Logic. All in all, Broad remarked, “Cambridge philosophy tends to be a thin stream, confined to a rather narrow and isolated, if deep, channel, and always in danger of almost drying up for considerable periods … it has been and is somewhat a peculiar growth, in fact a kind of hot-house plant” (Broad 1966, 15–16).

Broad’s characterization had been anticipated in Sidgwick’s account of philosophy at Cambridge (Sidgwick 1876). Sidgwick noted in the previous 50 years (circa 1826), there was no official recognition of philosophical studies in the academic curriculum. In general, he noted, “The educational movement in Cambridge was entirely absorbed in developing and determining the mutual relations of Classics, Mathematics, and Physics: and was content to leave Ethics and Metaphysics to the care of Scotland and Germany” (Sidgwick 1876, 236). It was mathematics and mathematical physics, Sidgwick noted, that became the “peculiar study of Cambridge” (Sidgwick 1876, 237). The Mathematical Tripos is the oldest examination at Cambridge, and for the first half of the nineteenth century, the curriculum was characterized by “the long-cherished superstition that mathematics and classics alone gave a liberal education” (Winstanley 1947, Chap. V). Throughout the eighteenth and into the mid-nineteenth century, the only avenue to a degree at Cambridge—particularly an honours degree—was mathematics. The road to the introduction of the Moral Sciences Tripos, however, contains some important details for the account of Moore’s influences.

2.1 Nineteenth Century Reform of the University: Religious Tests and the Tripos Examinations

The introduction of Moral Sciences Tripos at Cambridge came about through the mid-nineteenth century reforms at both Cambridge and Oxford. Sidgwick himself was a prominent figure in the reforms at Cambridge, which most directly affected two things: its connection to the Church of England, and its curriculum.2 For most of its history the concerns of the University were inseparable from those of the Church of England,3 and religious tests—declarations of membership in the Church of England—were required at nearly every stage of the university process: to enroll, to sit for examinations, after successfully completing an honours

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3 The reforms of the Church of England itself in the 1830s–1840s inaugurated reform at the Universities (Winstanley 1947). During this period, the holders of office at both institutions tended to think of these as requiring very little, if any, actual work.
degree, and to hold fellowships and other university and college offices. Opposition to this had surfaced as early as the eighteenth century, and once reform of the university began in earnest circa 1850, Tests Bills came thick and fast. In 1869, Sidgwick notably resigned his Trinity fellowship to shake off “dogmatic obligations,” (and was described as having performed a “purely voluntary act” about which it is “impossible to exaggerate the moral splendor”). He actually had little to lose: by 1871, the majority of religious tests had been abolished at Cambridge by acts of Parliament.

As for the curriculum, degree candidates were for decades in effect restricted to mathematics until the Classical Tripos was established in 1824; even then, until it was separated from the Mathematical Tripos in 1850, the Classical Tripos could be only entertained if the candidate had previously obtained honours in mathematics. Between 1747 and 1824, the ranking of candidates in the Mathematical Tripos was the single official measure of a graduate’s achievement—even the object of intense public interest, with honours lists published in the papers. Those with less aptitude for mathematics obtained the non-honours ordinary (poll) degrees.

That mathematics in the Cambridge undergraduate curriculum in the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century was the dominant subject of study is odd, however, since a conspicuous isolationism characterized Cambridge mathematics at that time. The discovery of the infinitesimal calculus inaugurated modern mathematics, and was the subject of an infamous dispute between Newton and Leibniz. Newton’s notation was adopted

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4 Between 1820 and 1840, roughly 75% of all Cambridge graduates became Anglican clergymen, schoolteachers, or missionaries (Craik (2008)).

5 Winstanley (1947, 67). See also Rothblatt (1968); Schultz (2004). In fact, Trinity immediately re-hired him.

6 See Winstanley (1947, 89–90).

7 The ranks were Wranglers, Senior, and Junior Optimes. Russell was seventh Wrangler in 1893 (Griffin 1991); J. M. Keynes was twelfth, in 1905. From 1881, women were permitted to sit for the Tripos exams; in 1890, Philippa Fawcett became the first woman to obtain the top score in the Mathematical Tripos, but was denied the title of Senior Wrangler (Craik 2008).

8 “Poll” for *polloi*. Poll degree students, however, still had to show examination skills in mathematics—they merely ranked lower than the honours students (in today’s ranking, below third class). Charles Darwin, for one, took a poll degree (Craik 2008).

9 Rouse Ball (1889).

10 See, among others, Guicciardini (2003), Becher (1980, 1986), Snyder (2006), Craik (2008), Rouse Ball (1889), and Whewell (1849) for an account of the effect that the discovery of analytic mathematics had on the teaching of mathematics in Cambridge.
in England, while the rest of the mathematical world adopted that of Leibniz and Bernoulli (updated in further work of French mathematicians).\footnote{The infinitesimal calculus can be expressed either in the notation of fluxions or in that of differentials. It was also expressed by Newton in geometrical form in his \textit{Principia Mathematica}. Rouse Ball (1889) noted that part of the decline of Cambridge mathematics between 1730 and 1820 was because the mathematicians there continued to employ geometrical proofs: “elegant and ingenious, but processes not nearly so general as those of analysis” (98–99). See Guicciardini (2003).} This local loyalty however, lead to “a rapid falling off in quality of work produced by mathematicians at Cambridge,” who seemed to have regarded any innovation “as a sin against the memory of Newton.”\footnote{Rouse Ball (1889, 117).}

The inauguration of the Moral Sciences Tripos had its basis in the nineteenth century reform controversies and in the attitude of powerful dons towards changes in the mathematics curriculum. From his bully pulpit as Master of Trinity, William Whewell\footnote{William Whewell (1794–1866) was Knightbridge Professor of Moral Theology and Casuistical Divinity 1838–1855 (which he converted to the chair of Moral Philosophy), and Master of Trinity: 1841–1866. See Snyder (2006).} defended Newtonian mathematics as indispensable for the properly educated young man at Cambridge.\footnote{Women were admitted to study at Cambridge in 1869 but were not fully recognized as degree holders until 1948.} There was no emphasis on pure mathematics or abstract principles: “rules were to be learnt before reasons” (Whewell 1849). Honours lists were made up of those who in effect could memorize the most theorems and reproduce them fastest; and by those who could then “solve” the greatest number of practical or applied problems.\footnote{See Craik (2008) on the private tutors who made a name for themselves for turning out the right kind of Tripos success-oriented students.} Whewell’s reasons for defending the Newtonian against the analytical model turned out to be those at the heart of Russell’s description of the dispiriting nature of his mathematical studies at Cambridge, some 40 years later:

The mathematical teaching at Cambridge when I was an undergraduate was definitely bad … The necessity for nice discrimination between the abilities of different examinees led to an emphasis on ‘problems’ as opposed to ‘bookwork’. The ‘proofs’ that were offered of mathematical theorems were an insult to the logical intelligence. Indeed, the whole subject of
mathematics was presented as a set of clever tricks by which to pile up marks in the Tripos. (1959a, 37–8)\(^{16}\)

What was bad for Cambridge mathematics, however, turns out to have been good for Cambridge philosophy. Whewell introduced the Moral Sciences Tripos in 1848 and it was held for the first time in 1851.\(^{17}\) Professorships in Moral Science and Natural Science did already exist at Cambridge, so the proposal to add Tripos exams in these subjects was not entirely radical.

In its early years, passing the examination did not entitle a student to a degree, and it attracted few takers. It was even thought of as a soft option (Craik 2008) and “was in particularly evil repute” (Winstanley 1947, 186).\(^{18}\) By 1870, Sidgwick complained that the Moral Sciences Tripos was the victim of a vicious circle: “standards are low because able and industrious men do not devote themselves to the study, and they don’t because it is not rewarded, and it is not rewarded because the standard of a first class is low” (Winstanley (1947, 186)).

One problem was the miscellany of topics represented in the early Moral Sciences Tripos (Winstanley 1947). Sidgwick himself noted that it was inadequate because it was formed on the basis of subjects “in which the University happened to possess Professors” and not the more natural divisions by which philosophy is commonly studied: that is, logic, metaphysics, “or even Psychology” (1876, 242). The original Tripos included moral philosophy, logic, history, political economy, general jurisprudence, and the laws of England.\(^{19}\) But once the Law

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\(^{16}\) Russell went further: “most of what I learnt at Cambridge had to be painfully unlearnt later” (Russell 1961, 16; 23).

\(^{17}\) Sidgwick was lavish in praising Whewell, to whom “more than any other man that the revival of Philosophy in Cambridge is to be attributed” (1876). Rouse Ball paints a less charitable picture: “His contemporaries seem to have regarded him as the most striking figure of the present century, but his range of knowledge was so wide and discursive it could not be very deep, and his reputation has faded with great rapidity” (1889, 128). See also Winstanley (1947) and Schultz (2004).

\(^{18}\) Between 1851 and 1859, 66 students had taken moral science honours—just about seven per year.

\(^{19}\) Now known as economics.
Tripos was itself established, mental philosophy replaced English law in the Moral Sciences Tripos (Winstanley 1947, 188). The newly established Moral Sciences Board made further changes in 1867: the Tripos was now to consist of moral and political philosophy, mental philosophy, logic, and political economy. Between 1870 and 1880, it could be said that the tide was turned in terms of respectability: the numbers of candidates increased, and appointment of College lecturers and granting of other College remunerations began to take philosophical studies into account.\(^{20}\) By 1876, there were five lecturers spread across various colleges distributing between them the subjects of moral and political philosophy, mental philosophy, logic, and political economy. Commenting on the tenor of philosophical studies at Cambridge in 1876, Sidgwick had this to say (245):

> the preference that the traditional training of Cambridge naturally generates for exactness of method and certainty of results in comparison with breadth and completeness of view is unfavourable to the ambitious constructions of post-Kantian metaphysics … These characteristics appear to some extent in the scheme of the Moral Sciences Tripos: where exceptional stress is laid on Logic (including Methodology) and Political Economy, which are made departments co-ordinate with the larger but vaguer subjects of Mental Philosophy (Psychology and Metaphysics), and Moral and Political Philosophy; and where again the historical study of metaphysics is limited so as to exclude the post-Kantian developments in Germany. But how far these peculiarities are likely to appear in any school of philosophy, that may hereafter be formed at Cambridge, is hard to say.

\(^{20}\) “The student of Moral Sciences in Cambridge will find no difficulty in obtaining teaching. Lectures in its several branches are given by the Professors of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, and by lecturers in Trinity, St. John’s, Caius, Queens’ and St Catharine’s Colleges …. It is to be hoped that … other foundations in our University will follow the example of Trinity College in announcing their intention of giving systematic encouragement to philosophical study” (Cambridge Student Guide 1863–1876, 198). James Ward and John Neville Keynes both took firsts in the Moral Sciences Tripos during this period and were appointed as Fellows at Trinity College and at Pembroke College, respectively.
It was thus only a few decades after a modern Moral Sciences Tripos had become an established part of Cambridge academic studies that Moore and Russell entered into their study of philosophy at Cambridge, with far-reaching consequences for the century that followed. As we have noted, continental headway in mathematics was ignored in Cambridge for some time. Sidgwick (1876) further added to this that the study of post-Kantian metaphysics was not a feature of Cambridge philosophy. But not every continental development was entirely disdained there.

I have highlighted the circumstances of the founding of the Moral Sciences Tripos here in order to emphasize that nineteenth century mental science—psychology—was a deeply entrenched part of the Cambridge moral sciences curriculum, integrated with other aspects of Moore’s philosophical background, and therefore inextricably linked to Moore’s early philosophical development. Traditional histories of this period have for the most part stressed the extent of the influence on Moore of idealist metaphysics, whose chief purveyor in England was F. H. Bradley (at Oxford). Instead, I will examine more closely the extent of the influence on Moore of the combination of metaphysics and psychology that was known as mental philosophy or mental science. What I will show throughout the following chapters is that the influence of Moore’s exposure to debates in the mental sciences had (among other things) a number of striking consequences for his interpretation of Kantians ethics, Kantian logic, and Kantian psychology, in his 1897 and 1898 Dissertations and beyond.

3 Moore and the Mental Sciences at Cambridge

In June 1894, Moore decided to add the study of Moral Sciences to his Classics Part II Tripos preparation and soon after began attending lectures by J. M. E. McTaggart, Henry Sidgwick, G. F. Stout, and James

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21 Babbage and the Analytical Society did manage to establish a more up-to-date notation for the calculus (Guicciardini 2003; Peckhaus 1999, 440).

22 Unlike at Oxford.
Ward.\textsuperscript{23} Broad has described the philosophers who made the greatest impact on the subject at Cambridge between 1860 and 1960 as follows. He divided the field into six groups: the logicians (John Venn, J. N. Keynes and J. M. Keynes, W. E. Johnson, and Frank Ramsey), the psychologist-philosophers (James Ward and G. F. Stout), the pure metaphysicians (J. E. McTaggart, the only one), the ethicists (Henry Sidgwick and W. R. Sorley), Moore (Broad puts him in a class by himself), and the logico-mathematical philosophers (Whitehead, Russell, and Wittgenstein). Broad called Stout “a highly independent thinker,” one who participated avidly in the “psychological, epistemological, and metaphysical developments which made that period so exciting” (Mace 1966, 40). As to Ward, Broad noted that an “important part of his mental equipment was a profound knowledge of German philosophical and psychological literature” (Mace 1966, 35).

By the 1890s, the Moral Sciences Tripos had been divided into two parts. Part I consisted of: (I) psychology; (II) logic and methodology; (III) political economy. Among the readings recommended for the Part I.1 (psychology) part of the examination were James Ward’s 1886 article “Psychology,” a \textit{locus classicus} for decades, and Hermann Lotze’s \textit{Microcosmus}, vol. I.\textsuperscript{24} The Part II Tripos consisted of a number of complex options.\textsuperscript{25} The regulations required that “every candidate shall be examined \textit{either} in Ethical and Metaphysical Philosophy \textit{or} in Ethical and Political Philosophy, also in one or two but not more than two of the four special subjects.”\textsuperscript{26} The compulsory subject, Ethics and Metaphysics, was divided into two sections. In Metaphysics (I(a)), there were six sections: (I) Knowledge, analysis, and general characteristics; (II) Fundamental

\textsuperscript{23}Moore to his parents (11 June, 1894/Add. Ms. 8330 2/1/33): “I have decided, so far as I can tell, to take up the second part of the Moral Science Tripos as well as Ancient Philosophy in my fourth year. Drs. Verrall and Jackson consent.” Moore had taken first class honours in the Classics Part I Tripos in 1894.

\textsuperscript{24}Cambridge University Calendar (CUC 1896, xvii). See Chap. 2.

\textsuperscript{25}CUC (1896, xviii–xx). The examination regulations specify that “one paper will be set on each of the subjects included under A, and two papers on each of the subjects included under B. An Essay paper will also be set containing questions on all the above subjects.” A is the category of compulsory topics; B is the category of special subjects.

\textsuperscript{26}CUC (1896, 54). There is no better evidence that Moore chose the compulsory subject Ethics and Metaphysics in the Part II Tripos than the title of his Trinity Fellowship Dissertation, \textit{The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics}. 