

Moore and Bloomsbury

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Hasna Begum. *Moore's Ethics: Theory and Practice*. Dhaka, Bangladesh: University of Dhaka Press, 1982. Pp. xii, 259. Price unknown.

Tom Regan. *Bloomsbury's Prophet. G.E. Moore and the Development of His Moral Philosophy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987. Pp. xix, 307. US\$29.95.

G.E. Moore. *The Early Essays*. Ed. Tom Regan. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987. Pp. x, 249. US\$34.95.

S.P. Rosenbaum. *Victorian Bloomsbury. The Early Literary History of the Bloomsbury Group*. Vol. 1. London: Macmillan, 1987. Pp. xvi, 316. £29.50.

Alan and Veronica Palmer. *Who's Who in Bloomsbury*. Brighton: Harvester Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987. Pp. xi, 215. US\$29.95.¹

G.E. MOORE DIED, a grand old man, in 1958. At the time of his death he was respected as an exponent of common-sense philosophy and a precursor of ordinary-language philosophy, which was then fashionable. To admit, as Moore admitted (in Schilpp, p. 14), that philosophical problems were not suggested to him by the world, but only by what philosophers had said about the world, was taken to indicate, not a certain narrowness of vision, but a deep wisdom—the sign of a man who knows which part of the apple's got the worm. In these respects Moore seemed in the 1950's a much more modern figure than Russell, whose view that philosophy should aim at a reform of the fabric of knowledge was dismissed as nineteenth-century megalomania. With the subsequent evaporation of ordinary-language philosophy, Moore's reputation has suffered a decline.

It is only recently that he has come to be seen in historical perspective, and what now seems of most importance is his early work. What he wrote after about 1903, when *Principia Ethica* and "The Refutation of Idealism" appeared, seems, with one or two exceptions, of much less interest. Like almost everyone else, Russell thought Moore's *Ethics* (1912) "very poor",² but he also thought that even *Principia Ethica* was "nothing like so good" as "The Nature of Judgment", in which Moore firmly parted company with neo-Hegelianism and began the development of analytic philosophy.³ There is something to be said for Russell's judgment (much of it revealed, however unwillingly, by Begum's book). "The Nature of Judgment", for all its sketchiness and confusion, offers the hope that Moore's further work will result in a fundamental clarification of a broad range of philosophical issues. *Principia Ethica*, in a sense, dashes that hope even in the restricted field of ethics. For despite all Moore's efforts, the fundamental concepts and distinctions of *Principia* remain murky and confused.

¹ For brevity the works under review will be cited as "BP", "EE", "ME", "VB", and "WW" respectively. Other works frequently referred to are: G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966; 1st ed., 1903), cited as "PE"; *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 1, *Cambridge Essays, 1888–99*, ed. K. Blackwell et al. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983), cited as *Collected Papers*, 1; Paul Levy, *Moore: G.E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), cited as "Levy"; P.A. Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, 3rd ed. (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1968; 1st ed., 1942), cited as "Schilpp"; and J.M. Keynes, "My Early Beliefs", in *Collected Writings* (London: Macmillan, 1972), x: 433–50, cited as "Keynes".

² Letter to O. Morrell, no. 577.

³ Russell's remark is reported by Virginia Woolf: see *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. A.O. Bell and A. McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978), II: 294. "The Nature of Judgment" was published in *Mind* (1899) and is reprinted in *EE*, pp. 59–80. It was culled from Moore's second fellowship dissertation of 1898, as manuscript remains among Moore's papers reveal. Begum (*ME*, pp. 112–13) misses the extent to which it was a reaction against Bradley. In this she was not helped by Moore's propensity to make appalling choices of terminology, a propensity which embrates *Principia Ethica* as well.

The authors under review, however, are not likely to share Russell's opinion; nor did Bloomsbury (which was no doubt why Russell made the comment to Virginia Woolf). For them, *Principia Ethica* is Moore's crowning achievement. The influence that *Principia* had on Bloomsbury has been widely recognized since the publication of Keynes's *Two Memoirs* (1949), but it has not attracted much attention from philosophers. In this Begum's book broke new ground when it appeared in 1982. The second half of her book is concerned with what she calls Moore's "practical ethics", and the second of its two chapters is devoted to his influence on the Bloomsbury group.

The first half of her book, however, offers an account of Moore's metaethics, material which is more familiar to philosophers. Her treatment of the metaethics is slow and careful. She has chapters on goodness as a consequential property, the relation between value-making qualities and value, and Moore's account of natural properties. Curiously, the naturalistic fallacy (so-called, though it is neither naturalistic nor, strictly, a fallacy), though not ignored, does not receive the extended treatment these other matters are accorded.

Altogether, Begum reveals that Moore's presentation of his theory is a good deal murkier than is often supposed, and certainly murkier than his reputation for clarity would lead the innocent reader to expect. A case in point is his distinction between natural and non-natural qualities. The distinction appears intuitively plausible, but, like Aristotle's similarly plausible distinction between essence and accident, it seems to defy precise articulation. Moore's original account (*PE*, pp. 40–1) is so bad that, when confronted with it forty years later, Moore himself declared it was "utterly silly and preposterous" (in Schilpp, p. 582). Begum points out that the situation is further complicated by the fact that Moore really has a trichotomy of qualities—natural, non-natural, and supersensible—and thus any attempt to understand non-natural qualities merely by getting clear about natural ones will fail. This is an important point that many commentators have failed to note.⁴ But Begum undermines it by concluding that ultimately "supersensible qualities are not qualities at all for Moore" (*ME*, p. 34). She supports this conclusion, however, entirely with evidence from the period after *Principia Ethica* (she cites *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, written in 1910–11, and *Ethics*, 1912). Moreover, her interpretation seems also to rely upon mistaking supersensible qualities for supersensible objects.

On the value of the final two chapters of *Principia* Begum and Regan are at odds. According to Begum, in the last two chapters Moore's mastery of argument "has lost its grip and the judgements grow more frankly personal and arbitrary" (*ME*, p. 145). For Regan, by contrast, "[i]n terms of sheer concentration, rigor, precision, and analytical power, the fifth is quite likely *Principia's* best chapter" (*BP*, p. 228). We may agree with Regan that Moore's position in the fifth chapter is more subtle than is usually supposed, yet, of the two assessments, Begum's seems closer to the truth. Indeed, there are serious log-

ical errors in Moore's argument which Keynes exposes in his *Treatise on Probability*.⁵ Keynes himself remarked that Moore's use of probabilistic arguments in the fifth chapter of *Principia* was part of the reason for his own work on probability (Keynes, p. 445). Rosenbaum also mentions one of Keynes's Apostolic papers that was devoted to criticizing Moore's use of probability in the fifth chapter (*VB*, p. 261).⁶ Keynes's argument in the *Treatise*, however, seems to be completely effective in demolishing Moore's main conclusions in the fifth chapter. Incredibly, since Bloomsbury's reaction to Moore's fifth chapter is one of his major themes and Keynes's "My Early Beliefs" one of his major texts, Regan says nothing about any of this.

Faced with the difficulties of delineating an influence which is complex and controversial, the last resort of a desperate intellectual historian (or the first resort of a lazy one) is to claim that the influence is personal rather than doctrinal. This has the advantage of cutting short any discussion of the doctrines of either side. Now there is no doubt that Moore did exert a powerful personal influence on various members of Bloomsbury. But it simply will not do (as Rosenbaum carefully explains, *VB*, p. 216) to limit Moore's influence in this way. Moore's influence on Bloomsbury was intellectual: there were doctrines Moore propounded which various members of Bloomsbury accepted from him. What makes the question of influence more difficult is that Bloomsbury had no single system of beliefs, so different members learnt different things from him. More importantly for the books under review, there were certain doctrines that Moore taught in *Principia Ethica* which seem not to have been accepted at all by Bloomsbury. And the question arises as to why these doctrines weren't accepted and whether they could be consistently denied once the other doctrines had been accepted.

In her last chapter, Begum attempts to survey Moore's influence on Bloomsbury. It is a large topic and she does little more than scratch the surface, providing a sort of scrapbook of quotations. She groups her material under three headings: Bloomsbury's views of friendship, politics and aesthetics. I'm not sure that one ought, as Begum does, to take Clive Bell's concept of significant form as the only important concept in Bloomsbury aesthetics. But, if one does, it seems hard to claim, as Begum also does, an important influence for G.E. Moore. Natural beauty does not exhibit significant form, and thus, on Bell's account, cannot move one aesthetically.⁷ For Moore, by contrast, the admiring contemplation of a work of art and of natural beauty are both classed among aesthetic enjoyments and, of the two, the latter is preferable to the former (*PE*, p. 195). "We think", Moore assures us, "that the world would be improved if we could substitute for the best works of representative art *real* objects equally beautiful" (*ibid.*). Whether we find here an echo of Plato, or of

⁵ Cf. Keynes, *Collected Writings*, VIII: 341–2.

⁶ Keynes's editors, following the British editorial practice of giving readers only what they think will be good for them, have not included this paper in the *Collected Writings*. But see R. Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes* (London: Macmillan, 1983), I: 152–4, for some further details.

⁷ C. Bell, *Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1914), Ch. III.

⁴ For example, A.R. White, *G.E. Moore: a Critical Exposition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), and W.K. Frankena, "The Naturalistic Fallacy", *Mind*, 48 (1939): 464–77.

the aesthetics of Moore's genteel middle-class upbringing, it is difficult to reconcile it with Bloomsbury formalism, or with what Forster called "the Bloomsbury undertone", that it is not the subject that matters but the treatment (quoted in *VB*, p. 243); or, more pointedly, with Lytton Strachey's claim, in his first Apostolic paper, that defecation could be a fit artistic subject.⁸ Indeed, Moore's claim seems absurd. One wants to ask, *what, exactly, could he mean* by it? Does he think that we believe that the world would be a better place if a *real* stag stood at bay above the mantelpiece? Whatever may be the case with the world, we can't help but believe that the living-room would be much the poorer.

That Moore's views on friendship were congenial to Bloomsbury is obvious enough, but his influence on their political thought is more intriguing and took diverse forms. Begum compares the effects on Leonard Woolf and Clive Bell. For Woolf the aim of civilization was "liberty and equality", "a society of free men as opposed to a society of masters and slaves" which offered "equal opportunities of happiness, wealth, knowledge, and culture".⁹ The extent to which he was influenced by Moore in this remains doubtful. By contrast, the influence of Moore on Bell's appalling social doctrines is all too evident, though Bell tactfully doesn't mention Moore by name. Civilization, on Bell's account, requires a class of slaves whose purpose is to provide a leisured elite with those conveniences which will enable them to enjoy "the most intense and exquisite states of mind"—these last being the only things good in themselves, and the members of the elite being the only people capable of experiencing them. Begum is at pains to point out that Bell's fascism¹⁰ is by no means a direct consequence of Moore's ethics. In the first place, Moore did not claim that certain states of mind were the only things good in themselves (though he's often supposed to have done so—e.g. in *WW*, p. 115). Second, there is no reason to suppose (on Moorean or other grounds) that such states can be experienced only by a small number of people, nor that such states in people in one class are more exquisite, more intense, or of more value than comparable states in those of another. Third, Moore says nothing about the distribution problem, nor about the likely incommensurability of the different intrinsic goods. This makes it extremely difficult to draw any political conclusions from his ethics.¹¹ (Begum thinks he might agree with Bell's view of distribution [*ME*, p. 210], but I see no warrant for this.) Fourth, Bell ignores Moore's doctrine of organic unities, on which a despotism in which the despots have the best states of mind might be worse, overall, than an egalitarian society in which no one has the best states of mind. Fifth, Bell ignores the fact that, for Moore, certain states

of mind are positive evils, whose disutility when they are promoted among the members of the slave class, may well outweigh the utility of the good states of mind promoted among the (far less numerous) members of the leisured class. Also ignored is the more evident historical fact that despotism often enough produces in the despots the worst possible states of mind rather than the best. The Victorian bourgeoisie, which Bloomsbury despised, constitutes a compelling example. Moore, in short, provides little warrant for Bell's simple-minded and self-serving prescriptions.

Regan has a more specific purpose in dealing with Moore's influence on Bloomsbury, that of showing that Bloomsbury did not misinterpret Moore when they used *Principia Ethica* as a justification for their lack of conformity to conventional morals. This involves him (*BP*, Ch. 8) in a detailed account of Chapter 5 of *Principia*, where he aims to reverse what he calls "the standard interpretation" according to which Moore endorses adherence to conventional morality. There is plenty of *prima facie* evidence for the standard interpretation, for example: "The individual can therefore be confidently recommended *always* to conform to rules which are both generally useful and generally practised" (*PE*, p. 164), and "There is, therefore, a strong probability in favour of adherence to an existing custom, even if it be a bad one" (*ibid.*). It was remarks like these which led Russell to complain of the "unduly Conservative and anti-reforming" tendency of Moore's position.¹²

Regan maintains, however, quite correctly, that these remarks apply to only one class of cases; those where a rule can be shown to be generally useful and is generally practised, and that, in other cases, the individual should decide for himself what to do, "by a direct consideration of the intrinsic value or vileness of the effects which his actions may produce" (*PE*, p. 166). Further, since the difficulty of showing that a rule is generally useful is so great, it can only be done "in a very few cases" (*PE*, p. 165), thus leaving the larger class of cases, "almost all actions" (*PE*, p. 165), to the discretion of the individual. In particular, the few rules whose general utility can be justified are those whose general observance is necessary for the existence of a stable society, since a stable society "is necessary for the existence, in any great degree, of anything which may be held to be good in itself" (*PE*, p. 158).

All this is certainly a correct interpretation of Moore. But it is doubtful whether it adequately refutes Russell's charge. Certainly Moore is anti-reforming, and Regan, in fact, admits as much. For the same arguments which make it difficult to show that a generally practised rule is generally useful, make it difficult to show that a proposed new rule, not generally practised, will be generally useful. Moreover, Moore qualifies his claim that "almost all actions" will belong to the area of individual discretion with a phrase Regan omits: "except those which, in our present state of society, are generally practised" (*PE*, p. 165). Thus his claim is that the decision about how to act may be left to individual discretion in "almost all cases, except those which, in our present

⁸ "Ought the Father to Grow a Beard?" in M. Holroyd and P. Levy, eds., *The Shorter Strachey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 257.

⁹ L. Woolf, *Barbarians at the Gate* (London: Hogarth Press, 1939), pp. 141, 148–9 (rearranged).

¹⁰ The term is mine, but I use it exactly. Cf. Bell, *Civilization* (West Drayton: Penguin, 1947; 1st ed., 1928), Ch. VII.

¹¹ Skidelsky comes to the same conclusion, though for rather different reasons. He claims that Russell and Woolf, for example, drew on "older moralities" than Moore's to sustain their political activity (*Keynes*, I: 146).

¹² Letter to G.E. Moore, 10 Oct. 1903 (Moore Papers, Cambridge University Library; copy in RA).

state of society, are generally practised". But this is a much narrower class of cases than the one Regan has in mind, viz., "almost all cases, except those which, in our current state of society, are generally practised and generally useful". For it is the proof of general utility that is difficult according to Moore, and would keep the class of exceptions small on Regan's reading. That Moore drops the requirement of general utility is no slip on Moore's part, for he offers reasons for conforming to rules which are generally practised even when they are not generally useful (*PE*, p. 164).

Finally, Moore assumes that a stable society is always good as a means. Even granting that a stable society is necessary "for the attainment of any great goods in considerable quantities" (*PE*, p. xxii), it by no means follows that we ought to act in such a way as to ensure the perpetuation of a stable society. That would require that a stable society were sufficient for the attainment of any great goods. Moore ignores both the possibility that a stable society may contribute to no good of any kind and the possibility that it may be necessary for the attainment of any great evils. Closer attention, either to the logic of his argument or to the details of life under turn-of-the-century capitalism, might have made Moore less sanguine about the value of ensuring the stability of "the present state of society".

Why, then, did Bloomsbury find in *Principia Ethica* an ethic of liberation? It seems likely they would not have perceived the gap in Moore's arguments for a stable society. They were not, alas, social revolutionaries. Nor, perhaps, would they have objected to Moore's ruling out the possibility of justifying conformity to new moral rules. They were not moral reformers in the sense that informed the Victorian temperance movement, for example. (Russell, as we know, was.) But it is too simplistic to suggest, as Goronwy Rees did, that "few of [them] understood [Moore] correctly."¹³ After all, as Regan points out (*BP*, p. 221), they were not stupid. And they can hardly have failed to notice Moore's rule utilitarianism—indeed, Keynes mentions it specifically (Keynes, p. 436). It seems most likely that they simply ignored it—taking (as some of them admitted)¹⁴ only what suited their purposes. There would be nothing inconsistent in this. In fact, Moore himself, doubtless as a result of Keynes's criticism mentioned above, abandoned his rule utilitarianism when he wrote his *Ethics*,¹⁵ a fact which (curiously enough) Regan doesn't mention. It was probably Moore's firm rejection of duty and virtue as ends in themselves that made Moore's thought appear a liberation to the Bloomsberries. In this, the historical context of their violent reaction to Victorianism is crucial.¹⁶ Moore was an important ally in their revolt against the "fog and fetters" (L. Woolf, *Beginning Again*, p. 34) of Victorianism. Moore's circumspect conservatism of

1903 was thrown to the winds (with good reason, given Keynes's criticisms). Moore, himself, circumspectly abandoned it in 1912.

Regan's other, and perhaps more important, purpose in *Bloomsbury's Prophet* is to trace the development of Moore's thinking on ethics from 1895, when he was in his first Moral Science year at Cambridge, to the publication of *Principia Ethica*. He has made extensive use of Moore's unpublished papers in the Cambridge University Library (at least, those of them written before 1914), material which was not available to Begum. As a result he offers a good deal of new information and some useful commentary on it. In this respect his book helps to fill the gap in our knowledge of the early Moore currently occupied by Paul Levy's *Moore: G.E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles*.

The organization of his book leaves something to be desired. The book is written in very short sections which are not listed in the table of contents and are usually given very uninformative titles. This, coupled with a poor index (only Rosenbaum's book, of those under review, has a satisfactory index), makes it hard to find one's way around the book. Each chapter begins, and many of them end, with an often fictionalized vignette of Bloomsbury or academic life. I found the device awkward and irritating. The vignettes are rarely relevant to the chapter they introduced. And the little details inserted presumably to make the scene more convincing (e.g., "[Duncan Grant] sits down on the back of the couch, brushing against Vanessa's shoulders as he does"; *BP*, p. 5) serve only to remind one that the whole scene is invented. Not even Lytton Strachey got away with this sort of thing. The vignettes and the short sections make the book seem more like a scrapbook than it deserves—for it is, in many ways, a serious and useful piece of scholarship.

Regan adds a good deal to our knowledge of Moore's development up to *Principia Ethica*. Later developments are only superficially treated: Moore's short *Ethics* (1912) (*BP*, pp. 285–9); his unfinished and unpublished Preface (1922) for the second edition of *Principia Ethica* (*BP*, pp. 204–5),¹⁷ and his notorious flirtation (in Schilpp, pp. 535–54) with emotivism which Regan aptly characterizes as "Moore's wobble" (*BP*, pp. 213–4). Regan also avoids detailed commentary on Moore's earliest contributions to the Apostles, saying, quite rightly, that these papers contain "little worthy of note" (*BP*, p. 39). Levy, by contrast, characteristically finds in all of them anticipations of the greatness of *Principia*, describing them variously as "of great importance" (Levy, p. 129) and "startling" (Levy, p. 146). The reader who wishes to know more of them will learn as much as he desires from Levy's lengthy summaries (Levy, pp. 129–50).

Regan's story really begins with Moore's fifth paper to the Apostles, "What is Matter?" (1895), in which Moore breaks away from his previous materialism to espouse a form of idealism. Regan is surely wrong in saying that this idealism is similar to Berkeley's (*BP*, p. 76), which is explicitly criticized in the paper.

¹³ G. Rees, "A Case for Treatment", *Encounter*, 30 (March 1969): 75.

¹⁴ E.g. Leonard Woolf, *Sowing* (London: Hogarth Press, 1960), p. 156: "In 1914 little or no attention was paid to Moore's fifth chapter"; and Keynes, pp. 436, 445, 446.

¹⁵ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; 1st ed., 1912), pp. 80–3.

¹⁶ This is emphasized, e.g., by Leonard Woolf, *Sowing* pp. 151–4, 160–8; *Beginning Again* (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), pp. 33–5. It is endorsed also by Rosenbaum, *VB*, p. 230.

¹⁷ Despite his access to Moore's *Nachlass*, Regan tells us nothing new about this document. For a fuller account see, C. Lewy, "Moore on the Naturalistic Fallacy", in A. Ambrose and M. Lazerowitz, eds., *G.E. Moore, Essays in Retrospect* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970), pp. 292–303.

Unlike Berkeley, Moore rejects the idea of an infinite mind which perceives what finite minds do not, and accepts as psychologically necessary the belief in "independently existing objects". These objects, however, do not exist in space, for "space is only in my mind" and "no being is in space". It seems clear enough that this is closer to Kant's transcendental idealism than to Berkeley. This conclusion is supported by the fact that a generally Kantian epistemology underlies Moore's fellowship dissertation of 1897.¹⁸ The interesting thing about this is that Moore decisively rejects this Kantian epistemology in his fellowship dissertation of 1898.¹⁹ In particular, Moore rejects, what his idealism of "What is Matter?" depended upon, the validity of an inference from the psychological necessity of belief in a certain proposition to that proposition's truth. This rejection forms a central part of his criticism of Russell's neo-Kantian *Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* which he reviewed in *Mind* (1899). It is also clearly stated in "The Value of Religion" (*EE*, p. 109), in which context Regan discusses it (*BP*, pp. 44–5), but even more clearly in a marvellous little essay of 1904 on "Kant's Idealism" (*EE*, pp. 233–46), for my money one of the best things he ever wrote. In Moore's opinion, Kant's transcendental idealism and all its offshoots depend upon fallacious inferences of this kind.

This was a crucial step in leading both Russell and Moore to abandon idealism in 1898, and it seems to have been Moore's initiative.²⁰ Regan gives a rather facile account (*BP*, pp. 138–9, 215) of the steps by which the two abandoned idealism and laid the foundations of analytic philosophy. No one who knew what was going on in 1897–98 could refer to Russell's "idealistic slumbers" (*BP*, p. 138). Admittedly, Russell's published version is not very helpful,²¹ but Russell's 1898 manuscripts (especially, "An Analysis of Mathematical Reasoning") show that he had a far more elaborate theory of concepts and propositions than Moore, several months before he read Moore's 1898 dissertation (and quite possibly before it was written). Even cursory attention to Russell's *Nachlass* would have saved some embarrassment here.

In another respect, Regan overestimates Russell's influence on Moore. This concerns Russell's paper "Was the World Good before the Sixth Day?" read to the Apostles in February 1899. It seems no one can get this paper right.²² Levy has claimed that this paper annoyed Moore because it travestied one of

his papers to the Apostles (Levy, pp. 204–5). In fact, however, as Russell himself explains in the paper, it was an attack on a position Moore had put forward in a series of lectures ("The Elements of Ethics") given in London the previous year.²³ Regan repudiates this mistake (*BP*, p. 141) but claims that Russell's paper is of special importance in that it attacks the weakest part of "The Elements of Ethics", "Moore's thought about intrinsic value" (*BP*, p. 142). This attack, he claims, Moore found so devastating that it produced in him a state of nihilistic despair which lasted until 1901 when, in an unpublished paper, "Art, Morals, and Religion", he came to the conclusion that the beautiful was alone of intrinsic value (*BP*, p. 164). Thereafter, other things of intrinsic value were admitted, as Regan reports, until the position of *Principia Ethica* was achieved (*PE*, Ch. vi). Between Russell's "Was the World Good ...?" and Moore's "Art, Morals, and Religion", however, Moore had come ruefully to the conclusion that nothing was of intrinsic value, a view put forward with great force to the Apostles in "Vanity of Vanities" (April 1899)—"Moore's melancholy response" to Russell's paper, according to Regan (*BP*, p. 142).

It is difficult to accept Regan's account of Russell's influence. Unfortunately, he seems not to have read Russell's paper—an inexcusable lapse, since the paper is in print (*Collected Papers*, I: 113–16). Instead, he quotes (*BP*, pp. 140–1) extracts previously quoted by Levy (Levy, p. 205)—reproducing, in the process, all the latter's misreadings. Had he read the whole thing, he would have realized that the thrust of Russell's paper was neither to deny that there were intrinsic goods, nor that the appreciation of beauty was one of them, nor to assert that beauty is purely subjective. Russell merely denies that beauty, when there is no one to appreciate it, is an intrinsic good. The state of mind engendered by the contemplation of beauty in someone with good aesthetic taste is, Russell maintains, an intrinsic good. But it is not the same state of mind as that engendered by the contemplation of ugliness in someone with bad aesthetic taste, even though they both judge that the object of their contemplation is beautiful (*Collected Papers*, I: 114–15).

It does seem likely that this view had some influence on Moore. For, although Moore admits beauty itself as an intrinsic good (*PE*, p. 189), he maintains that the appreciation of what is beautiful is a much greater good, and requires that for this appreciation it is necessary to have "an appropriate emotion" toward the object contemplated (*PE*, p. 190). This last effectively accommodates Russell's subsidiary point, though Moore sticks to his guns against Russell's main claim that beauty itself is not an intrinsic good. But it is hard to believe that Russell's paper provoked the nihilistic despair of "Vanity of Vanities", and harder to believe that, if this were the source of his despair, Moore could have overcome it by simply denying, as he does in "Art, Morals, and Religion", Russell's main contention. And it is certainly false that "Vanity of Vanities" was a "response" to Russell's paper, for it was a response to a paper by Sanger, read the previous month, which resulted in a vote on "Can moral philosophy

¹⁸ Moore's Kantianism is noted by Regan: *BP*, pp. 79, 81. Part of it found its way into print in "Freedom" (1898), a paper which was originally part of the 1897 dissertation (*EE*, pp. 25–57).

¹⁹ Extracts from this also appeared in print as "The Nature of Judgment" (1899) (*EE*, pp. 59–80).

²⁰ Cf. *My Philosophical Development* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959), p. 9: "What ... chiefly interested Moore was the independence of fact from knowledge and the rejection of the whole Kantian apparatus of *a priori* intuitions and categories.... I agreed enthusiastically with him in this respect." Cf., also, Russell's letter to Moore (18 July 1899) expressing his agreement with Moore's critical review of *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry*.

²¹ Regan cites "My Mental Development", in P.A. Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell* (New York: Harper, 1963; 1st ed., 1944), I: 12—though he gets the title wrong.

²² Except S.P. Rosenbaum in a much earlier article, "G.E. Moore's 'The Elements of Ethics'", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 38 (1969): 216–17—whose reference to it is brief but accurate.

²³ Cf. my "The Acts of the Apostles", *Russell*, n.s. I (Summer 1981): 71–82.

provide any antidote for unhappiness?" Moore, at the time, thought that it could, but seems to have changed his mind when he came to write his own paper (Levy, pp. 206, 207).

What Regan does well to emphasize is the importance of "Vanity of Vanities" for Moore. Levy, by contrast, who offers lengthy accounts of almost all Moore's Apostolic papers, dismisses it in a single paragraph (Levy, p. 207). Yet it does seem to reflect a prolonged "dark night of the soul" that Moore went through before *Principia* was complete. This is confirmed by Moore's correspondence at the time, as well as by other papers. In a singular paper on conversion (1900), Moore abandoned analysis and turned to Wordsworth for inspiration.²⁴ In "The Value of Religion" and other papers (some written before Russell's "Was the World Good ...?"), he even reconsidered his agnosticism in the hopes of a solution (though ultimately to no avail; *EE*, p. 106). All this is completely missed by Levy, who remarks on Moore's "lack of genuine interest in religious questions" (Levy, p. 193), as it is by Begum who says Moore never exposed his atheism or agnosticism (*ME*, p. 124). Yet it explains why, when Cambridge University Press had offered Moore a contract for "The Elements of Ethics", it was another four years before *Principia* could appear. Even though many of the characteristic doctrines of *Principia* were present in the "Elements" (e.g., the distinction between natural and non-natural properties, the naturalistic fallacy—in fact, the bulk of the first four chapters), Moore did not have the final chapter on "The Ideal", without which the whole system would turn to dust and ashes.

Concurrently with *Bloomsbury's Prophet*, Regan has provided another service to Moore scholarship by bringing out a collection of Moore's much neglected, early published papers. In *The Early Essays*, he reprints ten papers Moore published between 1897 and 1904. They range from his first idealist effort, "In What Sense, If Any, Do Past and Future Times Exist?" (1897), through the Kantian essay on "Freedom" (1898), the three logic papers of his "absolute realist" phase,²⁵ two detailed studies of McTaggart, a paper on religion and one on empiricism, to his devastating attack on Kant of 1904. These are all papers of considerable historical importance, some are important even outside their historical context, and it is good to have them easily available in a single volume.

Regan reprints the essays without commentary, correcting only a few typographical errors. He does usefully include the original pagination for each paper. Not all Moore's papers published between 1897 and 1904 are included, however. Regan sensibly excludes the well-known "Refutation of Idealism" (1903) which is already available in Moore's *Philosophical Studies* (1922). Less

satisfactory is his omission of the articles Moore wrote for Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy*. These are all very short, amounting to brief definitions of terms, but Moore put a lot of effort into writing them, they are often very useful for understanding his position, and they are clearly among the most fugitive of his writings for the period. Regan also excludes Moore's reviews—unless the lengthy paper on McTaggart's *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (1902) be counted a review. Here, I think, a more selective policy would have been better. Clearly a number of the books Moore reviewed were of little interest to him (or to anyone else). But his reviews of some of the others are worth preserving, e.g., his enthusiastic review of Brentano's *The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (*International Journal of Ethics*, 1903), and his occasionally perceptive review of Russell's *Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* (*Mind*, 1899). Moreover, some important themes in his philosophy made their first public appearance in reviews, e.g., his anti-psychologism in a review of Brunschvicg's *La Modalité du jugement* (*Mind*, 1897) and his anti-naturalism in a review of Bon's *Ueber das Sollen und das Gute* (*Mind*, 1899). I think it a pity that the four reviews mentioned were not included.

Moore's influence on Bloomsbury is a theme common to all the books under review. In Rosenbaum's case, however, it is just part of a magisterial study of Bloomsbury's background. He starts with Leslie Stephen (Chapter 2) and other family backgrounds (Chapter 3), and then pursues literary and philosophical influences in the two central parts of the book, concluding with a discussion of Bloomsbury's juvenilia, namely their writings as Cambridge undergraduates (Part IV). Comprehensive as all this is, it is only the beginning of Rosenbaum's work. Indeed, it deals in a way with Bloomsbury's prehistory. For, although the origin of the Bloomsbury group is variously dated,²⁶ it cannot really be regarded as a Victorian phenomenon. Rosenbaum's first volume is thus to be followed by a second on *Edwardian Bloomsbury* (though there is no mention of a third, on *Georgian Bloomsbury*).

There has been, of course, a plethora of Bloomsbury biographies,²⁷ memoirs, autobiographies, letters, diaries, and miscellanies. Yet remarkably little has been written on Bloomsbury as a whole. What has appeared is either now dated, as e.g. Johnstone's *The Bloomsbury Group* (1954), or else insubstantial, as Edel's disappointing *House of Lions* (1979) or Quentin Bell's delightful (but minute) *Bloomsbury* (1968). Thus, despite the immense Bloomsbury literature, Rosenbaum's book fills a real gap—though even Rosenbaum cannot claim a truly comprehensive coverage, for his is a "literary history of the Bloomsbury group", and Bloomsbury painters (Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant) are essentially ignored. (Roger Fry gets coverage, but only as a critic.) Nonetheless, it is clear that, even without the painters and a third volume, Rosenbaum's book,

²⁴ Incidentally, Moore reread this self-confessedly literary paper at the single meeting of the Apostles that Wittgenstein attended. Regan suggests (*BP*, p. 216) that it may have had some influence on Wittgenstein. Since what Moore was trying to say (in so unusual a manner for him) was what Wittgenstein later maintained could only be shown and not said, perhaps we are to conclude that Moore's efforts were what convinced him!

²⁵ This useful phrase is J.O. Nelson's, in "Moore, George Edward", in P. Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), v: 373.

²⁶ 1904, when Leslie Stephen's children set up on their own in Gordon Square after his death, is a popular choice; but Leonard Woolf suggests 1911, when he returned from Ceylon; and others have suggested 1899, when many of the male Bloomsberries went up to Cambridge.

²⁷ All major characters are now covered (many in two volumes)—except Leonard Woolf, who pre-empted biographers with five volumes of autobiography.

when complete, will be the most comprehensive work on Bloomsbury to date. It is the more important because it is based in part upon unpublished papers in voluminous Bloomsbury collections around the world. The Bloomsbury literature is already too vast to be conveniently handled. It will be a long time before anyone does a better job of handling it than Rosenbaum, in this compact and densely detailed volume.

Alan and Veronica Palmer's *Who's Who in Bloomsbury*, which provides short, alphabetically arranged biographies of just about everyone associated with Bloomsbury, also fills an important need. How else can one hope to find one's way around the endless complexities of the Stephen and Strachey families? The biographical listing is supplemented with a much briefer list, "What's What", mainly of Bloomsbury institutions (the Memoir Club, the 1917 Club, the Hogarth Press, etc.), and a list of Bloomsbury houses and their locations (suitable for a Bloomsbury tour of southern England). The biographical entries are certainly fun to browse. They are informally written and anecdotal and concentrate almost exclusively on the subjects' Bloomsbury connections. Thus we have entries on Derain, Matisse and Picasso based largely on the inclusion of their work in Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibitions and their few meetings with members of Bloomsbury. The Palmers, understandably, cast their net widely, and bring in useful entries on little-known friends and obscure relatives. There are entries, e.g., on Janet Case (who taught Virginia Woolf Greek) and Octavia Wilberforce (whom Leonard Woolf consulted about Virginia's madness). It is harder to see why Christopher Isherwood and William Plomer warranted inclusion, though both were (briefly) Hogarth authors. Conversely, it is surprising that Walter Raleigh, who had an important influence on Lytton Strachey, was not included.

The value of the book as a reference work, however, is open to question. Certainly the article on Russell is alarmingly inaccurate (in marked contrast to Rosenbaum's very accurate chapter on Russell). Russell is said to have been collaborating with Whitehead on *Principia Mathematica* during the tenure of his Trinity Prize Fellowship (1895–1901). This fellowship, the Palmers claim, was not renewed because Russell "became openly an agnostic" when he was considered as Liberal candidate for Bedford in 1909. (There are numerous errors here: Russell had been openly an agnostic since 1890; the subscription rules which prevented non-Christians from holding fellowships had been revoked in the nineteenth century; Trinity fellowships under Title (α) were non-renewable and Russell's had long expired; and the Bedford constituency selection was in 1910.) Further on we are told that in 1916 Russell was fined £100 "for the publication of a leaflet approved, though not written, by him"—in fact, he had written the leaflet, not published it—and that his writings start with his study of Leibniz (in fact, his third published book). More seriously in a book on Bloomsbury, the Palmers maintain that Russell "largely shared" Bloomsbury's ideals. In fairness, the Russell entry seems to be unusually bad: spot checks elsewhere in the volume revealed no comparable howlers. They get the date of Keynes's *Treatise on Money* wrong (1930, not 1925), and they

inexplicably omit all mention of Lawrence's relations with Russell and his disastrous visit to Cambridge in 1915. With the exception of the entry on Russell the book seems to be both enjoyable and useful.

Russell said of Bloomsbury that

They aimed ... at a life of retirement among fine shades and nice feelings, and conceived of the good as consisting in the passionate mutual admirations of a clique of the élite. This doctrine, quite unfairly, they fathered upon G.E. Moore, whose disciples they professed to be.... Moore gave due weight to morals and by his doctrine of organic unities avoided the view that the good consists of a series of isolated passionate moments, but those who considered themselves his disciples ignored this aspect of his teaching and degraded his ethics into advocacy of a stuffy girls-school sentimentalizing.²⁸

The picture is hardly fair. At best, parts of it apply only to some members of the group. Neither Keynes (as Russell concedes) nor the Woolfs nor Fry could be accused of retiring among fine shades. Nor can even Strachey be dismissed as a stuffy girls-school sentimentalist.

But what jars most in Russell's account are his protests at the unfairness of attributing all this to Moore. Moore certainly retired, if not among fine shades, at least among academic cloisters, albeit with a good deal of personal integrity. The fact is emphasized by the extreme diffidence with which Moore made what seems to have been the sole political intervention of his career, a surprisingly sarcastic letter to *The Cambridge Magazine* protesting Trinity's banning of private meetings of the UDC in College rooms (*BP*, pp. 176–82). Moore's doctrine of organic unities, at least as presented in *Principia Ethica*, seems entirely synchronic. Keynes himself complained that organic unities took no account of development through time (Keynes, pp. 436, 449), and this does not seem to have been a misreading. Finally, while Bloomsbury did ignore Moore's morals, this, given the extreme conservatism of the morals (at least in *Principia*), was no bad thing. Russell would probably have disliked Bloomsbury more had they not done so.

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²⁸ *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 1: 1872–1914 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), pp. 70–1.