3 The Context and Origin of Moore's Formulation of the Naturalistic Fallacy in *Principia Ethica*

Consuelo Preti

I Introduction

Moore's storied account of Good in *Principia Ethica* (PE) is motivated in large part by his view that most attempts to formulate it commit the naturalistic fallacy. What this amounts to, however, is murky. Baldwin identifies three accounts of the naturalistic fallacy in PE: (1) the denial that goodness is indefinable; (2) the assertion, concerning something other than goodness, that it is goodness; and (3) the denial that goodness is *non*-natural (1990: 69–70). Frankena, for his part, backs onto the naturalistic fallacy in Moore's views by an inventory of what Moore must have meant by intrinsic goodness being non-natural: (1) that it is "not an object of perception"; (2) that it is "not a psychological idea"; (3) that it "depends on a thing's nature in a certain peculiar way"; (4) and that it is "somehow non-existential or non-descriptive" (1942: 98). Baldwin is moreover severe on Moore for in effect *identifying* the naturalistic fallacy with the denial of the view that goodness is simple, indefinable, and unanalyzable (1990: 69-72). But even on this, according to Baldwin, Moore is not unswerving. Moore does appear to give a sequence of different definitions of the fallacy – often by example – which do not, on the face of it, have much in common.

There are additional difficulties that surface on a continued probe of the nature of the naturalistic fallacy in Moore's thought. Frankena notes that one traditional understanding of the fallacy arises in Hume's *Treatise*, where it is identified as arising from a "bifurcation between 'ought' and 'is'" (1939: 465). This bifurcation supports a view that no ethical conclusions can be drawn from premises that are purely non-ethical. But there is a *prima facie* puzzling lack of explicit and/or detailed connection on Moore's part to the Humean version of the naturalistic fallacy.[1] Moreover, the naturalistic fallacy is

[1] See Baldwin (1990: 86) for discussion.

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dropped altogether as an argumentative linchpin a few years later in Moore (1912; Moore's own "shilling shocker"), and makes no appearance in Moore's most explicit formulation of the notion of intrinsic value (Moore 1922). In Schilpp (1942: 582), Moore disarmingly states that "in *Principia* I did not give any tenable explanation of what I meant by saying that 'good' was not a natural property," but reminds the reader that he did offer a conception of the distinction between natural and non-natural properties in Moore 1922. Moore does assure us, though, that "it is certainly the case that this account is vague and not clear."

And there's more. As Frankena makes plain, it is by now a commonplace that whatever it is, the naturalistic fallacy is not a logical fallacy in any straightforward sense. Frankena calls it "definist" fallacy: a fallacy of confusing, identifying, or defining a property with or in terms of another (1939: 471). Baldwin agrees in the main with Frankena on this, taking Moore's discussion to be "hopelessly confused on this matter" (1990: 70). Finally Moore further attributes the commission of the naturalistic fallacy even to metaphysical philosophers (Idealists like Bradley, say) whose metaphysical views seem distinctly opposed to those of the more obviously naturalistically inclined empiricists, hedonists, and Utilitarians.

It certainly may seem from the above as if achieving any kind of explanatory unity or even clarity with respect to Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy will be difficult. All is not entirely lost, however. I think there is an account of Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy that can make sense of his views in their own historical context. I will make the case that Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy is one that had its roots in a committed anti-psychologism that characterized his early work, from which PE was composed. The non-naturalism that motivates Moore's conception of Good, that is, was based for him on a particular anti-psychologistic conception of ethical judgment and its objects. I will argue that Moore's formulation of the nature of ethical judgment is the linchpin that links together the key themes in PE: the non-naturalism of Good; the role of the naturalistic fallacy; and Moore's conception of ethics as severed from conduct.

There are two key features of the influences on Moore and on the evolution of his views that will need examination. The first is the escalating divide between psychologism and anti-psychologism in academic disciplines toward the end of the 19th Century – and in psychology, in particular. The second is the effect of this on the way Kant was read at Cambridge, since Moore's earliest accounts of ethics and judgment were first developed in his criticisms

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of Kant's views. I turn next to sketching out the historical context of Moore's developing thought.

II Psychology and Mental Science in late Nineteenth-Century Cambridge

It is not as clear as it could be in the history of analytic philosophy that disciplinary turbulence was the order of the day in the late nineteenth century. The study of philosophy in Cambridge was no exception. For example, philosophy there was long known as moral science, which was a blend of logic, psychology, metaphysics, and ethics. Each of these could be understood in a variety of senses and no present-day formulation can capture how they were understood at that time. So we need a rough tidying up of the terminological and conceptual disarray.

Metaphysics at Cambridge was understood as "the whole of philosophy except Moral Philosophy" and in Moore and Russell's day it included the study of Kant, Lotze, Hegel, and Bradley, among others (Schilpp 1942: 17). "Psychology" and "logic" were used quite widely to refer to concerns from the contents of mind, to the conditions of knowledge, to the nature of reason. Attempts to account for the nature of judgment and knowledge fell under psychology; accounts of ideas, concepts and judgment fell, traditionally, under logic. Paramount in all of these was the attempt to formulate the relation of the mind to reality, from Lotze's *ideal-realismus*, Kant's transcendentalism, and the Hegelian synthesis, to the views of the classical empiricists on ideas and down to Bradley's Absolute. But there were significant changes brewing, particularly in the conception of the nature of psychology.[2]

By the late 1890s (when Russell and Moore sat their exams) the Moral Sciences Tripos had been divided into two parts. Part I consisted of: (I) Psychology; (II) Logic and Methodology; (III) Political Economy. The Part II Tripos consisted of a number of complex options. The regulations required that "every candidate shall be examined *either* in Ethical and Metaphysical Philosophy *or* in Ethical and Political Philosophy, also in one or two but not more than two of the four special subjects." The compulsory subject Ethics and Metaphysics was divided into two sections. In Metaphysics there were six sections: (I) Knowledge, analysis, and general characteristics; (II) Fundamental forms of the object of knowledge; (III) Certainty; (IV) Criteria applicable to special kinds of knowledge; (V) Sources and limits of knowledge; and (VI) Coordination of knowledge. For the Ethics part, there were four

[2] And of course, in the development of logic, which needs more attention than I can give it here.

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sections: (I) Analysis of the moral consciousness;[3] (II) The end or ends of rational action; (III) Exposition and classification of particular duties and transgressions; and – notably – (IV) Relation of Ethics to Metaphysics, Psychology, Sociology, and Politics.[4]

The presence of psychology as a central element in both parts of the Moral Sciences Tripos may come as some surprise to contemporary eyes. The intellectual environment of the day, however, was characterized by disciplinary upheaval, one effect of the growing spread of naturalism or materialism in empirical science. This had a profound effect on the discipline of psychology. And the welter of archival evidence shows that that Moore's undergraduate Tripos preparation included exposure to what was a new conception of psychology/mental science that was rapidly developing at this at this period.[5] We need to look at this more closely.

By the late nineteenth century a broadly encompassing controversy between psychologism and anti-psychologism known as the *Psychologismusstreit* had implicated nearly every discipline. Kusch (1995: 119-121) comprehensively catalogues a set of definitions and criteria of this dispute in the literature of the day, among which were the following: any philosophical view that regarded philosophy as applied psychology, advocated subjectivism and relativism, conflated genesis and validity, or which combined psychology and empiricism. There were, moreover, metaphysical, ontological, epistemological, logical, ethical, aesthetic, and mathematical varieties of psychologism (1995: 108).

Moore's teachers Stout[6] and Ward[7] were deeply familiar with the continental turmoil in the field of mental science/psychology, and were leading and influential players in its discussion and dissemination in Britain. Stout was the principal conduit for Austrian mental science via his own work (Stout 1896, 1899) and also through his editorship of *Mind*. Ward's seminal 1886 was a *locus classicus* for decades as a then-contemporary formulation of the nature of psychology, and his Gifford lectures (*Naturalism and Agnosticism*,

[3] Significantly, this included among other things moral perception; moral judgment; object of the moral faculty; and freedom of the will.

[4] Cambridge University Calendar, 1896. As we know, Moore did Classics for his Part I; Russell, mathematics.

[5] Among the readings recommended for the Part I.1 (Psychology) part of the examination were Ward's 1886 article "Psychology," a *locus classicus* for decades, Hermann Lotze's Microcosmus, vol. I.; and Bradley's Ethics, Principles of Logic, and Appearance and Reality. These were presumably also on the reading list for the Part II and all cited in Russell 1983: 345–65. See Baldwin and Preti (2011) for evidence that Moore was familiar with these texts.

[6] Lecturer in Psychology at St. John's College Cambridge 1896–99.

[7] Chair of Mental Philosophy and Logic in 1897.

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delivered between 1896–98) were held to have solidly refuted the naturalism of the day.[8] Moore's teachers – not only Stout and Ward but Sidgwick as well – participated in spirited debates often spanning multiple issues of *Mind* with each other, with Bradley at Oxford (and other contemporaries like the Kant scholar Edward Caird and the later luminary Arthur Balfour), and with the American and continental psychologists, on concerns that crosscut psychology and logic; logic and metaphysics; metaphysics and psychology; and psychology, metaphysics, and ethics.[9]

For the mental scientists at Cambridge in particular, the conceptual crisis inaugured by the *Psychologismusstreit* was deeply felt, and further amplified by the threat coming from the rapidly growing field of laboratory psychology (Ward 1893: 54). Their answer was to formulate a conception of "psychology" as somewhere between what we would classify as nineteenth century mental science and twentieth century philosophy of mind: an anti-subjective, systematic, scientific taxonomy of the nature of subjectivity.[10] For Stout and Ward, the new psychology was to be thought of as a legitimate science: an objectively inclined examination of subjectivity itself.[11] One of the most important things about this latter attribute in Stout and Wards' thinking is that they conceived of the nature of subjectivity as essentially directed onto objects: as inextricably representational and relational.

Stout and Ward also took psychology, as a matter of disciplinary principle, not to be committed to any particular metaphysical view, and indeed to be compelled to maintain its independence from any such.[12] The priority for

[8] A review by Moore appeared in The Cambridge Review, November 2, 1899: 56–7.

[9] Thus Dummett (1993: 1) was flat-out wrong when he claimed, with respect to the origins of analytic philosophy in Austria and Germany, that "Russell and Moore sprang from a different milieu."

[10] Moore (1942: 28–30) describes the offer of a lectureship at Cambridge in 1911 (which he accepted) this way: "I should be wanted to lecture either on Logic or on Psychology . . . and it seemed to me that a great part of what was required to be taught under the name of Psychology . . . was not really an empirical science at all but a part of philosophy – something which might fairly be said to belong to the Philosophy of Mind. The chief books that were recommended for the subject – such books as Ward's article in The Encyclopedia Britannica, Stout's Manual and Analytic Psychology – . . . I had read all these books with a good deal of attention . . . " Moore lectured on Psychology and on Metaphysics for his entire career at Cambridge (he retired in 1939); he never lectured in Ethics. His Psychology (and Metaphysics) lectures survive.

[11] This (importantly) comes to the fore in their analysis of consciousness which takes it as fundamental – even primitive, in Ward's case – that consciousness entails objects of consciousness; that the right account of the mind was relational. Ward's position is that "what knows [or is conscious] can no more be identical with what is known [or is conscious] than a weight with what it weighs" (1883a: 468).

[12] Both Stout and Ward were, all the same, worried about tipping over too far into naturalistic or physiological psychology, and they did in their subsequent work tackle a companion metaphysics to complement their theories of mind. We can roughly characterize it as the usual attempt of

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both of them was: (i) to defend a conception of philosophical psychology against the encroaching physiological methods that were transforming psychology into a lab science on the continent; and (ii) to formulate a properly systematic, scientific psychology, entirely independent of metaphysical and epistemological considerations particular to philosophy.[13] And this makes sense in the context of the account of mind that they were grappling to distance themselves from (the legacy of, among others, Kant and Hegel). A fundamental concern was how to account for genuine knowledge, when, inevitably, its origin is in subjective processes of mind. Another was based in a traditional opposition of the sensible faculties and the reasoning faculties, which entailed a number of attendant epistemological and metaphysical conclusions that at Cambridge were to be rejected. These included the view (also inherited from Kant and Hegel) that reason or thought had special powers of transcendence, synthesis, and unification, all of which permitted its penetration of and grasp of the ultimate nature of reality, which was itself logical (in the sense of necessary; universal; unified; unconditioned; one). For the nineteenth century psychologist (mental scientist) at Cambridge, the pressure was thus on to give a legitimately scientific formulation of mind and thought, entirely independent of any particular metaphysical entailments that could be drawn from it. The one Stout and Ward defended, as noted above, was a relational one that sidestepped any particular metaphysical commitment to the object side of the relation but which implicitly defended a commonsense account of the relationality.

Late nineteenth century ethics was no less exempted from the naturalistic/psychologistic/anti-psychologistic controversies of the day, fiercely debated in the journals.[14] Chief among the concerns was how a proper normativity could ever emerge from a description of nature, in particular the nature of thought, judgment, or reason. Much of the meta-discussion on the nature of ethics at this time was focused on not only the critical issue of how a grasp or understanding of Good could compel conduct, but also on how a proper science of ethics could or should account for ethical normativity.[15] What I want to do now is to make the case that that there is a link between Moore's characteristic

a philosopher to find a place for normative value in the mechanistic picture of common sense science.

[13] "The psychologist is not bound to have a theory of knowledge which will at all point stand the test of philosophical criticism . . . the psychologist . . . sets out to trace the development of the knowledge of the world as it is now for common sense and science." (Stout (on Ward) 1926: 28–9).

[14] See for instance Balfour 1894; Blunt 1895; Morgan 1895; Myers 1901; Seth 1896.

[15] See among others Balfour 1894; Morgan 1895; Seth 1897. The debate was at the core of Kant's ethics as well.

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views in PE – the non-naturalism of Good, the naturalistic fallacy, and the severing of ethics and conduct – and the conception of the psychological act of judgment as distinct from its non-psychological objects, at the heart of the new mental science. The link, it turns out, is Kant.

III Psychologism and Ethics in late Nineteenth century Cambridge: Kant

There are two significant features in the historical context here that I want to emphasize: (1) that Moore's approach to Kant was deeply influenced by his teachers' reading of Kantian views, and (2) that the dominant reading of Kant in late 19th Century Cambridge was one which attributed a fatal psychologism to his views. For Moore's teachers (Stout, Ward, and Sidgwick, in particular), Kant was public enemy number one not only with respect to formulations of notions proprietary to the new mental science, but also with respect to constructing a half-decent ethics.[16]

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was early on condemned as psychologistic in a variety of senses.[17] All of Moore's teachers were entirely familiar with this particular aspect of both Germanophone and Anglophone criticism of Kant's views, which informed their own contributions to the literature. Classic criticisms in the wake of the publication of the *Critique* from this angle included that it was an attempt to derive normative conclusions from factual premises. Another was that Kant tried to ground necessary conclusions in psychological premises. The attributions to Kant of an unacceptable psychologism that dominated scholarship during this period focused on (i) his strategy of examining the faculties of sensation, understanding, imagination, and reason (*prima facie* psychological if anything is) in order to determine the nature of genuine knowledge with its inevitable normative component; and (ii) Kant's attempt, in order to avoid a collapse into subjectivism, to tie the nature of knowledge to *a priori* conditions of our psychological (knowing) faculties: specifically, what they had to be like in order for knowledge to be possible.

[16] See Sidgwick 1907: ch. V. Stout (1931; 1952), Sidgwick (1880; 1883; 1888) and Ward (1922) all published their views on Kant, which were mostly taken from their Cambridge lectures, all of which were attended by Moore. Sidgwick was also entirely au courant with the streams of mental-science influenced philosophy at Cambridge, but explicitly distanced himself from the idealist metaphysics of the day (Baldwin and Preti 2011: xxxvi).

[17] See Walsh 1982, Kitcher 1990, Guyer 1992, Kusch 1995 and Kohnke 1991, among others. Kitcher (1990) argues that such criticisms dogged its interpretation for 100 years after its publication (thus, we should note, featuring squarely in the literature of the Psychologismusstreit).

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Sidgwick was a towering figure at Cambridge and had a significant influence on the way Moore read Kant. I would propose that what Stout and Ward did for mental science at Cambridge, Sidgwick did for ethics with *Methods of Ethics*, the cornerstone of his views.[18] In that work, Sidgwick rejected any partisan metaphysical line in his account of the methods of ethics, preferring instead to defend a position that conciliated between a form of rational hedonism and a philosophically legitimate intuitionism. Sidgwick was moreover an enthusiastic Kant critic, as evidenced, for instance, in one dispute that raged across five issues of *Mind* between 1878 and 1880, between Sidgwick, Caird, and Balfour. In addition, Sidgwick also published a number of critical commentaries on Kant, an important one in two parts in 1883 on the critical philosophy. Sidgwick was unrelentingly skeptical about Kant's distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal (1883: 318) and was additionally unimpressed by Kant's conception of free will and its relevance to ethics (1888: 312). One key influence on Moore was Sidgwick's view that ethics required its own metaphysics in order to explicate its fundamental concept. So let us turn to Moore's earliest sustained work on this theme.

Many of the views that went on to more mature development in PE first took root 1896–7, when Moore finished his Tripos Part II exam and began to work on a dissertation for the Trinity Fellowship. The subject was Kant on freedom and when it failed to gain Moore a fellowship, he revised it a year later, expanding the discussion to Kant on reason (Moore was subsequently awarded a six-year fellowship). Moore titled both versions "The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics." Both include a sustained criticism of Kant's views in general and his ethics in particular, with an Appendix on Sidgwick's hedonism. In addition, the 1898 version contained what became Moore's influential realist account of the nature of judgment.

Moore argued in his dissertations that for Kant, the metaphysical basis of ethics was a prescriptive moral law concerning what ought to be done; and for Sidgwick, it was a utilitarian calculus that included a variety of hedonistic and teleological considerations (Schneewind 1977: 419). Moore goes on to distinguish his own enquiry "from all such as start from an empirical definition of the good"; claiming that Kant "seems most clearly to have recognised this distinction and to have done most towards a systematic exposition of the nature of the concept 'good.'" But Moore then notes that both Kant and Sidgwick consider that this topic falls "within the province of Practical

[18] Methods of Ethics was regularly updated; it ran to seven editions. See Baldwin and Preti (2011: xxxix) for the supposition that Sidgwick revised some of his views in the fifth edition as a result of Moore's 1897 criticisms.

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Reason" ("Professor Sidgwick would assign it to Practical Philosophy"). Sidgwick in particular formulates Ethics as "a department of the Theory or Study of Practice . . . the study of what ought to be, so far as this depends upon the voluntary action of individuals" (Sidgwick 1907: xxv). As Moore sees it, however, since to determine what we ought to do in Ethics "implied prima facie a discussion of 'what ought to be, whether we can do it or not,' the conception of 'Practice' must be taken to be wider than human action" (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 12-13). I will discuss this in more detail below, but would just note the hints here of the basis of Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy, of the true nature of Good, and of the distinction between ethics and conduct. What we see here, I believe, is an initial allusion to what becomes Moore's view that a proper science of Ethics must not include practical elements, which open the door to empirical (naturalistic) considerations which are extraneous to the determination of the genuine (normative) nature of Good.

Moore's approach to the metaphysics of ethics, at the heart of both his dissertations, was a challenge to what he called "Kant's too-psychological standpoint." In 1897, the focus was the impact of this putative psychologism on Kant's conception of freedom; but in 1898, Moore broadened the focus to Kant's views more generally.[19] This "too-psychological standpoint," Moore noted, had its source in Kant's Copernican revolution, which Moore called the "unfortunate suggestion" that "we can cognize of things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them."[20] The Copernican standpoint was of course essential to a number of foundational Kantian views, including: what constituted an object; what constituted a subject; what constituted the ground or validity of our claims to knowledge of the empirical world; and – significantly – what constituted the moral law. Roughly speaking: with respect to knowledge, Kant argued that although we cannot genuinely know anything but phenomena, the transcendental conditions of knowledge thwart any danger of skeptical idealism. Transposing this line of argument to ethics and volition, Kant argued that the transcendental conditions of freedom support genuine freedom of the will. This latter serves to introduce a significant element in the contextual reconstruction of Moore's formulation of the naturalistic fallacy that I want to draw attention to here – his rejection of Kant's conception of pure practical reason.

[19] Baldwin and Preti 2011: xlv.
[20] Baldwin and Preti 201: xx. Kant had called it "the happy thought."

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Kant's conception of the relevance of free will to ethics was regarded with some skepticism by Sidgwick and Moore frames his attack on Kant by way of Sidgwick's views (Sidgwick 1907: 62–5, 75). Sidgwick took the view that the "argument for Determinism is almost overwhelming" and that the metaphysical question of free will had no practical importance with respect to ethical theory. Moore goes quite a bit further: he calls Kant's conception of free will a "metaphysical monstrosity," arguing that no serious ethics can countenance the conception of a will whose causal properties remain incoherent. That is: as Kant conceives it, reason is meant to determine the will in the guise of practical reason, the ultimate ground of the will. Kant's move here is in line with the strategy, that, as we noted above, was heralded as psychologistic by his critics: the will is both that which provides the normative ethical object of our ethical deliberations, but also (inevitably) the causal mechanism by which we implement that object. Thus, according to Moore, it ends up as the metaphysical monstrosity of, in effect, an uncaused cause. And as Moore argues, this is an affront to the science of psychology. Moore is clear that there is no sense of causation that is not entirely natural; the will does not have any special metaphysical status. Moore's specific argument is that there is an "impassable gulf" between an idea considered as a psychical existent and the content of which it *is* an idea. The object, that is, of an ethical judgment is (must be) completely distinct from the psychological act of willing or judging. Our judgments (*qua* psychological states) might have some kind of causal relation to our actions, mediated by the will, but the objects of our judgments (we would say their content) can have no such causal power in themselves, as they are entirely mind-independent (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 39, 62–3, 212).[21]

Moore's early criticisms of Kant's "too-psychological standpoint," are thus importantly linked to the views that came to full fruition in PE. What we see Moore developing in 1897 and 1898 is the view that the nature of ethical judgment is such that it needs a metaphysical basis (an account of Good). But Moore argues that this metaphysical basis must be distinct from the demands of practical ethics (that is, severed from a theory of conduct), because there is no legitimate account of psychological causation that is not naturalistic, and any attempt to account for the metaphysical basis of ethics in terms of anything naturalistic will fail the properly objective and normative test. We turn to this in more detail below.

[21] Content's causal role problem, as it is known in the contemporary literature, is as yet imperfectly resolved. See Fodor 1987.

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IV The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics: The Context of Moore's Conception of the Naturalistic Fallacy

Moore's conception of Good in PE is meant to be a *sui generis*, totally abstract, causally inert entity, complete independent from mind, language, or conduct. But it may not be entirely obvious how much Moore intended this unique metaphysical objectivity concerning Good to thwart the slightest possibility of mentalism or psychologism from infecting his account of Ethics. It is moreover not entirely obvious that undercutting what he called the naturalistic fallacy was the way (or the best way) to defend this. As I have been arguing, the way to understand Moore's views is to connect his defense of the unambiguous objectivity of the objects of judgment – and in particular, the object of ethical judgment – to the evolving anti-psychologistic mental science coming to the fore during this period. I want now to make plausible the claim that the "naturalism" that Moore is concerned to head off with respect to the objects of ethical judgment was conceived of by him as a form of psychologism or mentalism that could encompass both empirical psychological states as well as the Idealist conception of reality, given that the latter is a conception of reality as determined by thought. Neither could be adequate, in his view, for a proper science of Ethics.

Let me soften any possible initial resistance to this proposal by a look at an important passage in PE as well as a revision that Moore intended. The passage in question comes at §26. Here Moore characterizes "Naturalism" as a "particular method of approaching Ethics":

> . . . a method which, strictly understood, is inconsistent with the possibility of any Ethics whatsoever. This method consists in substituting for 'good' some one property of a natural object or of a collection of natural objects; and in thus replacing Ethics by some one of the natural sciences. In general, the science thus substituted is one of the sciences specially concerned with man, owing to the general mistake (for such I hold it to be) of regarding the matter of Ethics as confined to human conduct. In general, Psychology has been the science substituted, as by J. S. Mill; or Sociology, as by Professor Clifford . . . But any other science might equally well be substituted.

What was known as "naturalism" in ethics during this period took on a variety of senses, most often characterized by alarm – not unknown in philosophy – at the prospect retaining explanatory philosophical (normative) properties in the face of one materialistic theory or another. Even Spencer's evolutionary

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view comes in for sustained criticism by Moore. But I think that Moore meant something more particular by "naturalism."

Moore was never satisfied with his own work and PE was no exception. PE was reprinted in 1922, but unrevised. In a brief introductory comment to the reprint, however, Moore claimed that he had in the end decided not to revise PE because there was in effect so much wrong with it that it would have required a complete rewriting (Moore 1993: 2, 37). But Moore appears to have begun planning a second edition: the Moore papers archive contains a set of drafts of a preface to a proposed second edition of PE, which included a series of attempts to try to amend some of the "mistakes and confusions" of PE. It should be said that Moore reprinted PE in 1922 without even this material, which remained unpublished until 1993 (Moore 1993: 2–27).[22]

In this preface material, Moore tries to refine the formulations of the positions he continued to consider the most important and worth defending in PE. Notably, his clarification of what he meant by "natural property" is this: "we might define 'natural property' as meaning 'property with which it is the business of the natural sciences or Psychology to deal' . . . " (1993: 13). In addition, he elucidates what he meant by "metaphysical property": " . . . as meaning 'property which stands to some supersensible object in the same relation in which natural properties (as now defined) stand to natural objects'" and concludes that this new set of formulations "will, I think, really indicate fairly definitely the class of properties of which I wished to assert that G[ood] was not identical with any one of them" (Moore 1993: 13).[23]

Now, Hurka (2003) has noted that claims of radical innovation made on behalf of the views in PE are overstated, at best. Hurka situates PE instead "in the middle" of a tradition of ethical writing, arguing that Moore's intellectual predecessors in ethics were Rashdall, Brentano, and Sidgwick; a contemporary was McTaggart; and his closest ancestral successors in ethics were Prichard, Broad, Ross, and Ewing. Moore's views of course did not develop in isolation. But I would counter that PE is not in the middle of a tradition of *ethical* writing as Hurka has claimed.

[22] The most complete of the drafts is 38 pages in Moore's hand. Lewy (1970) and Baldwin (1993) both date this material as 1920–1. But I think that Moore wrote it earlier, circa 1913. The most direct piece of evidence for my dating is Moore's diary for that period (Diary 8 August 1912 to 11 Feb 1914; Add. 83301/3/3). In December 1912 Moore noted that he "look[s] at P.E" and went to "the Press about printing"; on December 29 1912 he spent "1 ½ hours at P.E.: bad." Between January 1–15, 1913, he was "at P.E." On March 19 and on March 22, 1913 he "think[s] of Preface to P.E." And between March 27–1 April, 1913, he noted "4 or 5 hours most days at Preface to P.E."

[23] G is Moore's reformulation of the concept of good as explicitly related to right and wrong (Moore 1993: 3-4).

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Moore's intellectual motivation was not, I think, a deliberation on ethics in the same vein as that of Sidgwick or indeed any of those on Hurka's list. I have been making the case that PE, rather, is the end of a process of intellectual development that for Moore began roughly in 1894, when he began to prepare for the Moral Sciences Tripos Part II and then set to work to produce his dissertations in 1897 and 1898.[24] PE is thus best seen as the penultimate stage of Moore's early philosophical development.[25] The root of his realism about the nature of judgment (ethical and otherwise), as I have made the case so far, is to be found in the critical attributions by his teachers (Stout, Ward, and Sidgwick) of a terminal psychologism in many prominent accounts of judgment, knowledge, and the relation of the mind to its objects, most notably Kant's. The incentive for Moore's metaphysics of ethics thus emerged out of his account of a metaphysics of the objects of thought that would be of the right sort for genuinely ethical propositions. What mattered the most to Moore's conception of ethics was establishing the metaphysical underpinnings for a genuinely objective, entirely anti-psychologistic, non-natural, object of ethical judgment. So in order to understand the role of the naturalistic fallacy in PE, we need to understand the role it plays in Moore's account of the *metaphysical* basis of ethics.[26]

I will support this by tracing the key themes in PE to some of their predecessors in Moore's earlier work so as to clarify the line of argument. Much of PE was adapted from Moore's 1898 lectures titled "The Elements of Ethics" (EE).[27] Baldwin (1993: 312–13) has analyzed the contents of EE and compared them to PE, and notes that the first three chapters of PE are blends of different parts of different lectures in EE (typical of Moorean composition). Chapters I, II, and III of PE cover, respectively, "The Subject-Matter of Ethics," "Naturalistic Ethics," and "Hedonism." These chapters contain some (important) new bits but are largely explicit adaptations (or carryings-over) from Moore's EE lectures.

[24] Baldwin concurs (1990: 67).

[25] Penultimate in that Moore (1912) could be considered the last phase.

[26] Moore titled his dissertations "The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics" but it might have been clearer to have titled them "The Metaphysical Basis of Ethical Judgment," as we will see. It should be said that when Moore criticizes "Metaphysical Ethics" in PE, however, he does not mean the same thing. Metaphysical Ethicists are those that take reality to supersensible, and from which they attempt to derive the meaning of good. The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics, however, is the attempt to secure for good a basis that does not depend on any formulation of reality, empirical, or supersensible.

[27] Regan (1991) published one set of lectures; the other set, titled "Kant's Ethics" remains unpublished. Sidgwick and Bosanquet had by 1898 established a workingman's college called the London School of Ethics and Social Philosophy, and had asked Moore to supply a set of lectures for the curriculum.

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Chapter I of PE opens straight away with: (i) Moore's criticism of the role of the naturalistic fallacy in nearly all previous attempts at doing ethics; (ii) the indefinability/unanalyzability of Good (§§10, 61), (iii) the Open Question Argument (§13), (iv) holism, and (v) the method of isolation. As it happens, (i) and (ii) are detectable as early as 1897 and reappear in 1898 (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 8–11, 122–24). The sections that contain Moore's formulation of the Open Question Argument, his holism, and the method of isolation (§§ 15–23) are new; that is, not directly carried over from EE (Baldwin 1993: 313). But Moore's thinking on all of these has traceable origins before that.

To take one example: on February 11, 1899, Russell delivered an Apostle's paper called "Was the World Good Before the Sixth Day?" One of the brothers had attended one of Moore's EE lectures, and Russell here very archly treated the Society to an account of Moore's attempt to defend the view that "beauty is better than ugliness"; that is, that "beauty is good per se" and not "a means to the production of emotion in us." In fact, according to Russell, Moore took the view that: "a purely material world, with no one to contemplate it, is better if it is beautiful than if it is ugly." So Moore's view, according to Russell, was that "the world in its early stages . . . [w]as already good in and for itself . . . a world of matter alone . . . may be good or bad. For it may certainly be beautiful and ugly, and beauty is better than ugliness." To which Russell objects: "That the good is confined, as far as objects of experience are concerned, to what is psychical, is a conclusion . . . which the objectivity of beauty cannot alone destroy." Russell then goes on to "maintain . . . that . . . there is nothing good or bad except psychical states."[28]

Moore had in fact addressed this in 1897 (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 89): " . . . a thing may be beautiful, whether it is possible any one should contemplate it or not; . . . that, in so far as it is beautiful, it is *better* than that which is uglier, quite without regard to its possible effect on an observer."[29] Here we see Moore's attempt at reconciling what later became his method of isolation, his holism, the nature of Good, and the naturalistic fallacy all at once. Recall that in PE Moore exempts Sidgwick from having committed the naturalistic fallacy on grounds that Sidgwick understands that good is "unanalysable." Moore criticized Sidgwick, however, on confusing what is good as an end, and what is good as a means. Sidgwick denied that "production of beauty . . . apart from any possible contemplation of it" is rational; Moore, on the other hand, defends precisely that (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 88), taking it to be

[28] Levy 1979: 205–206; Russell 1983: 112–16.

[29] I think it is quite possible that Russell was leaning here on his own knowledge of the contents of Moore's 1898 dissertation rather than on any of Moore's EE lectures.

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unacceptable to account for the nature of beauty or goodness as only valuable as a means to *our* contemplation or appreciation of it. Whatever ethics is, it must be distinguished from "Psychology and Lexicography" (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 98, 124).[30] "Good . . . must have some meaning of its own, apart from any reference to empirical concepts . . . " (Baldwin and Preti 2001: 10, 123). To thwart *any* hint of psychologism from creeping into ethical concepts, I would emphasize, is at the heart of what Moore had in mind when deploying the naturalistic fallacy – and the act of judgment, of course, is psychological (that is, empirical/naturalistic).

Keeping this perspective in mind, I would claim, is the way to appreciate the context of Moore's arguments in Chapter II, which take on any attempt to give an account of good by way of empirical concepts like desire or pleasure. Moore takes Mill here as the primary offender, following Sidgwick's lead. Moore is mostly concerned with convicting Mill of the most naïve of all possible naturalistic fallacies; that is, trying to account for Good in terms not only of some kind of reality but – most offensive to Moore's conception of ethics – of a subjective psychical reality (happiness or pleasure). Likewise, however, for Chapter III (Hedonism). Moore does grant that Sidgwick's conception of a form of intuitionistic hedonism has at least the virtue of realizing that "good" is unanalyzable (§36) and that "if Hedonism be true, its claims to be so must be rested solely on its self-evidence" – though it is a self-evidence that Moore argues he cannot entertain.[31] In 1897, in fact, Moore suggests a contrary intuition: that "Pleasure . . . is a directly cognizable quality of feeling, 'strictly undefinable' from its simplicity," (a formulation he takes from Sidgwick himself), with the caveat that he is aware that "a psychologist of such high repute as Dr. Ward refuses to allow that it is directly cognizable" (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 92–3).

Now, it is a commonplace to treat Moore's ethics in PE as "metaethics" – an account of the nature of ethics that does not implicate conduct; and perhaps also commonplace to find this perplexing.[32] Baldwin, for example, argues that Moore's conception of Good is far too abstract to matter much to us in terms of a theory of what we should do, and gives a reconstruction of Moore's views to encompass at least

[30] In 1897 Moore's formulation of this sentence omits "Psychology." I think that he added it deliberately in 1898, for emphasis.

[31] But see Baldwin and Preti (2011: xxxviii) on how Moore may have misread Sidgwick.

[32] Recall that Moore argues that his account will not be casuistical in itself but rather is concerned with the principles that must underlie casuistry; and he is concerned to collapse the usual distinction between theoretical and practical ethics as misconceived (PE §§4–5).

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a notion of obligation (1990: 76).[33] I think this is a mistake, however. The way to understand Moore's notorious severing of Good from conduct in PE is to understand it as one of the foundations of Moore's attempt to undercut any threat of psychologism from infecting his Ethics. Moore quite boldly states – in the first few pages of PE – that a proper science of Ethics cannot be concerned with the empirical conditions of conduct. One of those conditions, of course, is psychological causality: how – how exactly – can a judgment, or a willing, or a grasp of Good compel me to act? As we saw above in our discussion of Moore's earlier criticisms of Kant's conception of free will, Moore rejected that conception as in effect perpetrating an uncaused cause. What Moore does instead to resolve the challenge of accounting for what we would call the causal role of ethical content is deny it has any: he argues that a theory of ethical compulsion cannot be the aim of a proper science of Ethics. Good is understood as that to which we aim in conduct (the end), but it is not the thing that is directly causally implicated in generating conduct (the means). This is not to say that Moore's conception is tenable. But I believe that when we situate it in its own context, it can be understood as Moore's strategy of thwarting a naturalistic psychologism from infecting Ethics, in which his arguments concerning the naturalistic fallacy play a key part.

I have been examining the evidence that I would argue helps to situate Moore's conception of the role of the naturalistic fallacy in PE in the context of the anti-psychologistic tenor of his early thought. One last remark. According to Baldwin, the only entirely new material in PE is in Chapter IV (Metaphysical Ethics) and Chapter VI (The Ideal), in the sense that the arguments here are not directly adapted from the EE lectures. I want to consider the main thrust of Chapter IV of PE, which contains the perhaps surprising Moorean claim that the naturalistic fallacy can be committed even by those that defend a metaphysical, not empirically inclined ethics. Metaphysicians, in Moore's pejorative characterization, take reality to be supersensible, and then attempt to derive an ethics from it. But according to Moore, "to hold that from any proposition asserting 'reality is of this nature' we can infer . . . any proposition asserting 'this is good in itself' is to commit the naturalistic fallacy" (PE §67). That is, according to Moore, *any* view that claims that "what is real" can entail "what is good" falls afoul of the fallacy.

[33] Conceding, it should be noted, that this does go against Moore's own "express beliefs" (Baldwin 1990: 79).

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Chapter IV is not *entirely* new, however. The 1897 dissertation contains the genesis of this view – and the genesis of his position concerning the naturalistic fallacy:

> . . . we can not only ask "what is good" with the meaning "Tell us what are the data of experience to which we may apply the term 'good' "; but it is at least possible that just as the question "what is being" cannot be answered by pointing to anything which is, or even to the whole world which seems to be, so the question "what is good?" may involve a metaphysical enquiry to which no identification of the good with any one empirical datum, such as pleasure . . . can ever . . . furnish an adequate answer. (Quoted in Baldwin and Preti 2011: 9)

Here Moore argues that it is a mistake to formulate the right kind of meaning for *good* in terms of *something else* – "a fallacy like that of identifying a chair or a table, because they are, with 'being,' or matter, when it is held to be real, with reality. Indeed, such definitions must become tautologous . . . " We can see here a few of the key elements of the views in PE: that ethical judgments (propositions) must be significant, but that they can't be genuinely significant if Good is defined in terms of anything else; and that what matters is the truth (about Good), and not its results with respect to conduct:

> . . . if the discussion what a word ought to be used to . . . mean or what it really does mean is to be of philosophical importance, it must always be implied that there is some real object or relation . . . to which the term in question has always had reference . . . it is in this sense that the present essay proposes to discuss the meaning of "good" . . . and it is maintained that there is a real object or relation corresponding to them . . . and the identification of which with anything empirical always involves a tautology.
>
> If the object of the enquiry is knowledge for its own sake . . . though the results obtained may be very inadequate to tell us how to live, qua knowledge, their value depends on their truth and not upon their use. (Quoted in Baldwin and Preti 2011: 10–12)

These passages were retained in 1898 (Baldwin and Preti 2011: 122–28). Moore there also adds "So far therefore as a general philosophical scheme goes, the standpoint here taken up seems to agree most with that of Plato. The 'good' is to be considered as an Idea . . . " In a letter to his friend Desmond MacCarthy on August 14, 1898 (just before he submitted the dissertation), Moore reiterates this Platonic theme, and moreover underscores the metaphysical, not so much purely ethical, gist of his thought (Add. 8330 2/5/6):

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> I have some 60 new pages finished, but it can hardly be that I shall be able to write on all the points that I intended. You may judge from the fact that all I have written so far is on Metaphysics – not a word of Ethics. I have arrived at a perfectly staggering doctrine: I had never seen where my principles would lead me. An existent is nothing but a proposition: nothing is but concepts. There is my philosophy . . . I am pleased to believe that this is the most Platonic system of modern times; though it is also not so far from Kant, as you might think at first . . .

V Conclusion

I have argued here that the role of the naturalistic fallacy in Moore's thought can be understood as linked to the development of his thinking on the nature of ethical judgment. That conception of judgment was unambiguously anti-psychologistic: the objects of judgment were conceived as entirely mind-and-language independent. Moore's developing thought, however, was very much of at the center of a late nineteenth century recalibrating of the understanding of the relation of thought to its objects. I have made the case here that his intellectual influences – not just the mental science of his day but also the way Kant was read at Cambridge – were very much at the center of those debates. As I have argued, Moore managed to articulate dramatically (even, Russell thought, too dramatically[34]) a realist metaphysics of judgment built up from the views that he had absorbed via Ward and Stout on a relational view of consciousness and its objects during his Tripos preparation. Russell, of course, had been exposed to the same material. But I would argue that Moore had the advantage, because the Moral Sciences Tripos drew a much more straight line between metaphysics, psychology, and *ethics* than it did between metaphysics, psychology, and *mathematics*. For Moore the distinction between the mind and objects of thought emerged more effortlessly from his focus on the kind of judgment required by a proper science of Ethics. Thus in Moore's developing thought, the anti-psychologism of the mental scientist on judgment became the non-natural objectivism that Moore was looking for to ground ethics and ethical judgment. This perspective, I believe, helps to give a more deeply contextual account of Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy and its role in PE, but also, more broadly, of details of the evolution of early analytic philosophy via Moore's work.

[34] Russell to Moore, Sept. 18, 1898 (Add. 8330 8R/3/8).

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The effect of PE, as we know, was a seismic one on the development of analytic philosophy. Just how seismic was captured by Strachey's description of it to Woolf, which I will appropriate here as a fitting conclusion:[35]

> Have you read it? The last two chapters – glory alleluiah [*sic*]! And the wreckage! That indeterminate heap of shattered rubbish among which one spies the utterly mangled remains of Aristotle, Jesus, Mr Bradley, Kant, Herbert Spencer, Sidgwick and McTaggart. Plato seems to be the only person who comes out even tolerably well. Poor Mill has simply gone.

[35] Strachey to Woolf, October 11 1903 (Levy 2005: 19).

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