



George Edward Moore (1873-1958)

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George Edward (G. E.) Moore was educated at Cambridge where he began his teaching career in 1911 and became Professor of Philosophy in 1925. After his retirement in 1939, he spent two years in the United States (1940-1942) as Visiting Professor in various American colleges and universities. From 1925 to 1947, he was editor of *Mind*, the leading philosophical periodical.

The teachers who made the most impression on Moore were Henry Sidgwick, James Ward, G. F. Stout, J. M. E. McTaggart and the classical scholar, Henry Jackson. Moore carefully studied Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* (1875). A comparison of this book with Moore's own *Principia Ethica* (1903) reveals the considerable debt Moore owes Sidgwick, a debt that Moore, with characteristic candor and generosity, acknowledges in his autobiography.¹

Soon after Moore entered Cambridge in 1892, he met Bertrand Russell. They became lifelong friends. Moore, a year younger than Russell, was Russell's academic junior by two years. It was his friendship with Russell, says Moore, that led him to study philosophy. Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein are the most prominent and influential analytic philosophers in the first half of the twentieth century. Wittgenstein went to Cambridge in 1911 to study with Russell. Both Russell and Moore admired and encouraged Wittgenstein. He succeeded Moore to the Professorship at Cambridge.

In his autobiography, Moore says that he has been more influenced by Russell than by any other single philosopher. Yet there are very basic differences between Russell and Moore as regards their motivation for engaging in philosophy and their method of doing it. Russell's primary motivation at the beginning certainly was a quest to certify the "truth" of mathematics. Moore, on the other hand, says: "I do not think that the world or the sciences would ever have suggested to me any philosophical problems. What has suggested philosophical problems to me is things which other philosophers have said about the world or the sciences."² This does not mean that philosophers such as Russell were not aware of, or interested in, what other philosophers had said about the world and the sciences. The important difference, which explains to a large extent the nature of Moore's philosophical method, is this. For Russell "what on earth a given philosopher meant" would hardly be of intrinsic philosophical interest. Russell wants to get on with the business of finding out what the truth is about such questions as the nature of mathematics, of truth, of belief, of mind, and of matter. Moore, however, writes: "In many problems suggested [by what other philosophers have said about the world and the sciences] I have been (and still am) very keenly interested — the problems in question being mainly of two sorts, namely, first, the problem of trying to get really clear as to what on earth a given philosopher meant by something which he said, and, secondly, the problem of discovering what really satisfactory reasons there are for supposing that what he meant was true, or alternately, was false. I think I have been trying to solve problems of this sort all my life. . . ." ³ This

stimulus (to philosophize about what other philosophers have said), the puzzlement as to what exactly they have said and the attempt to render their meaning clear by putting it in terms that anybody can understand prior to assessing their plausibility are the main ingredients of Moore's philosophical method.

Moore's philosophical method — both in theory and practice — his analytical ethics, and his attempts to analyze perception in terms of sense data are his most important and distinctive contributions to twentieth-century philosophy.

His theory and practice of philosophy involves (1) an appeal to common sense, (2) an appeal to ordinary language, and (3) analysis.

In "A Defence of Common Sense," Moore holds that we understand a number of common-sense statements and know with certainty that they are true, although we are frequently puzzled as to their correct analysis. Moore gives a long list of such statements, for example, that there exists at present a living human body which is my body, that this body, since its birth, has been at various distances from other bodies and things. These are common-sense beliefs not of the sort exemplified by the belief, natural to anyone ignorant of certain considerations, that the sun moves around the earth, which stands still.

What Moore singles out as components of the Common-Sense view he wishes to defend are statements that all of us constantly believe and cannot help believing. He also argues that if we deny that any of them is true, either our denial is inconsistent with something else that we hold to be true or we are implicated in a special kind of difficulty variously called "pragmatic contradiction" or "contradiction-in-use." A clear example of this would be my now trying to tell you that I do not know how to write in English. In the present context, what I was trying to tell you, namely, that I do not know how to write in English, is belied by what the context exhibits, namely, that I do know how to write in English. Moore puts it that if any philosopher has ever denied that any member of the class of common-sense beliefs is ever true, "it follows from the fact that he has denied it, that he must have been wrong in denying it." Thus, if I were to deny that every statement of the form "x is a material object" is true, I would be implicated in a pragmatic contradiction, for if every statement of that form were false, then it would be false that / existed, in which case / could neither deny nor assert anything. In short, the fact of my denying the truth of "there are material objects" belies what my denial says. And if we deny that some statements of common sense are certainly true while allowing that some others are certainly true, Moore continues, we are explicitly contradicting ourselves, that is, we are holding a belief that entails two mutually incompatible beliefs. Moore is here attacking those who, he thinks, have said such things as "There have certainly existed many human beings beside myself, and none of us has ever known of the existence of any human being beside himself." This patent self-contradiction comes about as follows: Moore's opponent is supposed to be claiming that the proposition "There are other people beside myself" is a proposition of Common Sense, and this claim amounts to expressing the conviction that the proposition in question formulates a belief very commonly entertained by mankind. This much is reflected in "There have certainly existed many human beings beside myself." But Moore's opponent also holds that "none of us has ever known of the existence of other human beings." However, if "There have certainly existed many human beings beside myself" is true, then "none of us has ever known of the existence of other people" must be false. And he who asserts these two propositions in conjunction is explicitly contradicting himself. Moore seems to be saying, furthermore, that whereas considerations could be brought against vulgar beliefs such as the one about the sun's moving around the earth, in the case of his list of common-sense statements there are no premises more certain from which we could infer them and no premises more certain from which we could infer their denials.

At this stage we should carefully examine two points. First, Moore never claims that the

characteristics he thinks are true of the statements in his list prove that those statements are true. Moore insists that any one of them might have been false. It is not inconceivable that I or the machine on which I am typing should not have existed, that there should have been no time, no space, no material things. Not everything can be proved. Some things we have to assume in order to prove anything else. The beliefs of Common Sense are known with certainty to be true not because they are provable from other premises more secure than themselves. We are nevertheless warranted to aver that we know them because there is no reason at all for thinking otherwise.

Second, the admission that common-sense statements are ultimate in the economy of our view of the world without being logically necessary truths is not a good reason at all for doubting that we know them with certainty. This is one of the central points in Moore's position. To grasp the force of his point it is essential to notice that Moore is using "know," "certain," and "true" in one of their relevantly ordinary senses: "I am certain that it is just past noon," "I know that he is in terrible pain," "It is true that he has taught for twenty years." More often than not statements of this sort are sincere and unassailable. There is, thus, a use of "know," "certain," and "true" that does not presuppose that the things known to be true with certainty are logically necessary. It is in this sense of "know with certainty to be true" that Moore claims to know that he has a body and all the rest of the statements on his list.

In his defense of Common Sense, Moore appeals to ordinary language. If we are to understand one of Moore's significant contributions to philosophy as well as one of his characteristic weaknesses as a philosopher, it is necessary that we see the point of his appeal to ordinary language. This appeal does something fresh and necessary. The enemies of Common Sense had provided elaborate arguments to support their bizarre conclusions. The standard procedure in philosophical controversy prior to Moore had been to attack in detail the argument. Instead of fighting the opposition in the old way by entering a forbidding jungle of metaphysical and epistemological controversy, Moore ignores the details of the opponent's argument. He does not try to prove that McTaggart or Bradley, for instance, are wrong in denying that time is real by trying to deduce or otherwise show from certain incontrovertible metaphysical or epistemological "axioms" that "time is unreal" is a false statement. Moore's proof of the reality of material objects and time is not "proof" in (to use Mill's happy phrase) the ordinary acceptation of that term. Moore does not proceed from recondite philosophical "axioms." Instead, he holds up his hands and says: "Here are two hands, hence, there are at least two material things in the world." Or he points to the fact that he had breakfast some time ago. Hence, time is not unreal. And he rightly insists (a) that no one would fail to understand what he meant by "here are two hands" or by "I had breakfast this morning"; and (b) that if there were genuine doubt (as against methodological doubt such as Descartes' or pathological doubt such as a madman's or drug-induced doubt such as might happen by injecting various chemicals into the body), the means were available for allaying them, for establishing (not, however, proving) the truth of the statements in question with certainty without pretending to have miraculously transformed them into logical necessities. Moore is simply pointing out that a statement such as "here is a human hand" has an ordinary meaning, and that in its ordinary sense it can be known with certainty to be true, as "known with certainty to be true" is itself ordinarily used. This cuts the ground from under any philosopher who wants to insist that no one can ever really know with certainty that here is a human hand, if that philosopher is using language in its ordinary sense. This is a high point of Moore's contribution to philosophical method. If a philosopher is being patently ridiculous when taken to be using language in its ordinary sense, he will, or at any rate should, explain himself, tell us how we are to understand him. What is more, Moore's technique forces us into a wider self-

examination. To life come such questions as: “What, after all, am I supposed to be doing as a metaphysician, an epistemologist, an analyst. ...?”

And, of course, it may be that the metaphysician, the epistemologist, the analyst are doing some things that are worth doing. They may, for instance, in saying that we are never really certain of such statements as “this is a hand” be trying, albeit confusingly and perhaps confusedly, to draw attention to a genuine difference, namely, the difference between empirical and logical truth. Or, in saying that time is unreal the metaphysician may be expressing in a misleading way that the common-sense concept of time is not as unproblematic as it appears. Over two thousand years ago, Zeno of Elea denied a common-sense certainty, namely, that motion is real. McTaggart and Bradley are spiritual descendants of Zeno. So that, by briefly explaining what Zeno was driving at, we might furnish an insight into the sort of thing with which Moore was dealing part of the time when he attacked McTaggart and Bradley (“time is unreal,” “space is unreal”).

Think of an arrow in flight, said Zeno. Now, at any moment in time, either the arrow is where it is at that moment, or it is not where it is at that moment. But it is logically impossible that at the same moment the arrow be where it is not. Therefore, the arrow is where it is at the moment in question. But if this is so, the arrow cannot be moving at that moment. For if it were moving, it would not be where it must, on pain of self-contradiction, be at that moment. This is only one of four arguments Zeno provides to back up his claim that motion, which appears to be real (we see things moving all the time), is really an illusion because it is logically impossible that there be motion.

Zeno’s arguments are no mere exercises in sophistry. They have taxed the ingenuity of some of the world’s best mathematicians and philosophers since Zeno’s time, and as yet there is no generally accepted solution to the technical problem, namely, the problem of providing a conceptual scheme, alternative to Zeno’s, within which it will be possible to make assertions that are, in Zeno’s scheme, self-contradictory. Even if a solution to the technical problem is provided, the controversy would not end. For there are, on the one hand, men such as Zeno, McTaggart, and Bradley and, on the other hand, such men as Moore, Russell, and Carnap. Every one of these men is highly intelligent, technically competent, and honest. Each one would admit the force of Zeno’s arguments and admit, as well, that arrows fly. None would remain complacent knowing that there is a discrepancy between what the testimony of their senses reveals and what reason says. Still, there are two important differences between these men. In case of conflict between reason and experience, the men in the first group would discount experience, whereas the men in the second group would discount what reason seems to require. Second, the men in the first group are happy with the paradoxes that seem to discredit common-sense beliefs to make room for a superior transempirical reality underlying mere appearance. This is just what in the Parmenides Plato says of Zeno. The men in the second group are very unhappy with the paradoxes, and they will exert their ingenuity to the utmost to prove that they are not genuine paradoxes and thereby “save the appearances.” Any argument supporting the hypothesis of a reality behind the world of experience without having to posit another world sounds valid to the men of the second group, because they are antecedently convinced that there is no other world to posit. This, I think, is the fundamental reason why we cannot be confident that there will be general agreement that any proposed technical solution is sound.

Moore’s appeals to Common Sense and ordinary language are his way of fighting the metaphysical otherworldliness of men like Bradley and McTaggart. Moore’s common-sense ploy performs a great and necessary service. It gives us a very powerful technique for deflating the exaggerated claims of anti-empirical metaphysicians. It also provides a very good start in the diagnosis of what the trouble is with the philosopher’s way of pointing to a distinction that may otherwise be perfectly sound. But here we come upon a weakness

characteristic of Moore's philosophical method. He is out to debunk the paradox peddlers, and in his apparent zeal to do this he forgets that what in the world a philosopher means cannot be decided unless one pays careful attention to the argument behind what he says; and even if such careful examination should reveal that the philosopher is radically confused, simply debunking him is no permanent service. It is much more to the point to worry about why on earth a philosopher who peddles paradoxes in a confused and confusing way should be doing this. Surely not because he is downright insane or much more stupid than the rest of mankind. Moore knows very well that McTaggart's and Bradley's paradoxical-sounding statements are subject to more than one interpretation. But, having successfully shown that in their ordinary sense, they are simply incredible, Moore fails to go on with an examination of the other possible senses. And it is here that the therapeutic analysis of the latter Wittgenstein and his followers, notably John Wisdom, has done something worth doing that Moore omitted to do. But of this more is forthcoming in the introduction to the section on Oxford philosophy. However, we should be less than fully just to Moore if we omitted to say that his debunking zeal is not the central driving force. He has, for instance, spent a very large amount of time studying the doctrines of Russell and his manner of dealing with Russell is wholly devoid of the penchant to debunk.

We now come to Moore's theory and practice of analysis, the third component of his philosophical method.

The point of departure is Moore's distinction between understanding the ordinary meaning of a statement or concept or notion and being able to give a correct analysis of the meaning so understood. This is an extremely important philosophical distinction to draw, and Moore draws it although he never succeeds in making clear just what the distinction is. Again, the correct explanation of the distinction is in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and it may be summed up this way: To understand a linguistic expression is to know how to use it. To give an analysis of the expression so understood is to spell out the complicated scheme of rules governing the use in question. And of course, we can do the former without being able to do the latter. We would, for instance, find it extremely hard to supply an analysis of "chair" when all the time we have no trouble at all in understanding one another's talk about chairs. Moore's theory of analysis bars his ever giving this sort of explanation although in practice a good deal of the time he does the sort of thing that not his but the Wittgenstein-like theory of analysis would require. In *Principia Ethica* (esp. Chap. 1, Sees. 6, 7, 8) Moore is very insistent that the analysandum (that which is to be analyzed) is not a linguistic expression but an extralinguistic entity that he variously refers to as an "object," "idea," "notion," "concept." He re-emphasizes this in the section on analysis in his "Reply to My Critics" (see p. 280). One very good reason why he insists on the extralinguistic nature of the analysandum is that he wants to distinguish philosophical analysis from dictionary making and from translation as from French to English. But these distinctions can and should be made without positing mysterious entities as our analysanda. Here is a respect in which Wittgenstein is an advance over Moore.

The distinction itself between understanding and being able to give an analysis is of prime philosophical importance. As early in the history of philosophy as Plato's *Meno*, we find this conundrum. A man cannot inquire at all. For he must inquire either about that which he knows or about that which he does not know. He cannot inquire about that which he knows for he knows, and there is then no point in inquiring. He cannot inquire about that which he does not know, for then he does not know what his inquiry is about (*Meno*, 80E). Let us call this "the misologist's conundrum," for it is a very general rejection of the possibility of any inquiry — philosophical, scientific, or any other kind. The paradox of analysis is another related but more restricted conundrum. It says that analysis is either

trivial or false. If analysis is the statement of equivalence in meaning between the analysans (that which provides the analysis) and the analysandum, then if the analysans has the same meaning as the analysandum, the analysis is a trivial identity. If, however, the analysans does not have the same meaning as the analysandum, then the analysis is false. In either case, we gain nothing by way of finding out something which, before analysis, we did not know.

Moore is fully aware of the issues involved. He owns that he “is not at all clear as to what the solution of the puzzle is.”⁵ And there is no solution as long as the analysandum is taken to be a nonlinguistic entity and analysis is construed essentially as the giving of an equivalence. But if analysis is construed not simply as translation and the analysandum not as something other than a linguistic expression, the paradox of analysis disappears.

Analysis characterizes much of Moore’s writings. Yet, we need to give due emphasis to Moore’s denial that he has “ever either said or thought or implied that analysis is the only proper business of philosophy! By practicing analysis I may have implied that it is one of the proper businesses of philosophy. But I certainly cannot have implied more than that. And, in fact, analysis is by no means the only thing I have tried to do.”⁶ In *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, delivered as lectures in 1910 and published in 1953, Moore wants to find out what sorts of things constitute the ultimate furniture of the universe. In *Principia Ethica*, a book mainly devoted to analytic (as against normative) ethics, Moore has a good deal to say about what sorts of things are worthy of being pursued and cherished, these being the sorts of things that ought to exist. By means of analysis he disposes of such “naturalistic” theories as the view that “good” means pleasure, clearing the way for his own view that many different things, knowledge, friendship, beauty are good intrinsically. Moreover, the appeal to Common Sense and to ordinary language, both of which are distinguishable from analysis, often serve metaphysical ends. They are bases for reaffirming that spatiality and temporality, to take two metaphysical “categories,” are ultimate features of the Common-Sense view of the world, and that anyone who denies this is *ipso facto* wrong.

Those familiar with the fact regard it as an anomaly that Moore’s *Principia Ethica* should have become a sort of handbook of the good life among the Bloomsbury Group toward the end of the Victorian era.⁷

This is indeed an anomaly first because it is the only known instance of anything written by Moore influencing people outside professional philosophy. Second, unlike Russell and Dewey, Moore seems to have had no appetite at all for participating in social or political action. Lastly, Moore’s style and stimulus in philosophy are not in the least suited for soteriological endeavors. We can only surmise that the young intellectuals in the Bloomsbury Group found in Moore’s encomia of love, friendship, esthetic grace, knowledge, and the like a liberating alternative to the rigoristic and strait-laced mores of Victorian society. In philosophy, then, Moore did more than analyze, and in at least one instance, the more that he did had unexpected extraphilosophical impact.

We have seen that according to Moore the statements of common sense have an ordinary meaning, and that taken in their ordinary sense they are certainly true. But Moore is very keenly interested in giving an analysis of the ordinary meaning of these statements. Now why should we perform an analysis? How does it help? It is possible to say generally that the point of analysis is to clarify philosophical questions and to help to find the answer to them. What this means, however, can perhaps be brought home best in terms of concrete examples. The examples chosen here are from Moore’s analytical ethics and from his analysis of perception.

In Chapter 1 of *Principia Ethica*, Moore’s chief concern is to draw a distinction hidden in the grammar of ordinary language. We say, “that thing is red,” “that thing is good,” “that is red because it has a molecular structure of the following description,” “that is

good because it is red, ripe and juicy.” “Red” and “good” are grammatical predicates. But logically, there is a crucial difference between describing a thing as red and evaluating it as good. To describe and to evaluate are logically distinct functions of language. This is one of the basic truths Moore is struggling to bring out in the open. Unfortunately, his theory of analysis sometimes gets in the way of his better practice with the result that the discussion in *Principia Ethica* is needlessly obscure.

He says, for instance, that we can see the logical simplicity (indefinability, unanalyzability) of the concept good if we hold before our minds the object to which the word “good” refers. This is in line with his theory that analysis is of concepts, extralinguistic entities, and direct intellectual inspection, very similar to phenomenological insight, is an ultimate technique of finding the analysis of what we already know in a familiar sense. But Moore’s actual practice is to try very hard to give arguments for the unanalyzability of the word “good,” and the arguments are of the sort that a Wittgenstein-like theory of analysis would condone. Moore traces the logic of the word “good” by trying to get us to see the similarities and differences between “descriptive” statements such as “this is yellow” and evaluations such as “this is good.” He further contrasts or suggests contrasts for us to work out between definitions such as “‘good’ means conduciveness to pleasure”; analytic statements, such as “murder is wrong”; and synthetic value judgments such as “this is good.” He makes it very clear that no moral or evaluative principle can be defended by deriving it directly from a definition. For example, no one can establish it as a principle of action or of evaluation that things conducive to pleasure and they alone are good on the ground that “good” means conducive to pleasure. Moore thinks that he has a general argument of which the immediately preceding is a corollary. The argument makes use of the “open question.” Take any proposed definition of “good,” the one above, for example. This is a faulty definition because in ordinary language it is not self-contradictory to say of things not conducive to pleasure that they are good. The open-question technique is conclusive against any infelicitous definition of “good,” but the argument applies case by case and not wholesale.

In one sense of the word as Moore uses it, “naturalism” in ethics is any ethical doctrine which has no undefined ethical or evaluative words in it at all. Moore mistakenly thinks that the open question argument disposes wholesale of naturalism in this sense. He says in Section 13, (2) of *Principia Ethica* that if we apply the open question argument to a succession of definitions, we will come to see that no definition will work. If this argument were sound, it would be a corollary of it that no moral or evaluative principle can be defended by appeal to a definition directly because there are no definitions of the sort required. But the open question argument does not work wholesale. Still, it can be independently argued that Moore is right about its being impossible to support an ethical position by direct appeals to definitions of ethical or evaluative terms. The open question argument itself is conclusive against any proposed elucidation of “good” that purports to be about the ordinary language concept “good” but in fact is wrong by the test of ordinary language. This is an important test of adequacy because any analysis of “good” that is not faithful to the ordinary concept is an *ignoratio elenchi*.

Moore’s remarks on the nature of perception have exercised epistemologists as much as his analytical ethics has exercised moral philosophers. Because Moore has held so many different views about perception at different times nothing short of a long and detailed account of each could do them justice. Our purpose here fortunately does not require such an account. We want to gain a serviceable impression of what Moore thinks is the point of doing analysis. His analysis of “good” and other evaluative and ethical concepts (“bad,” “ought”) is meant to dispel certain confusions and errors in moral philosophy. Similarly, his analysis of perceptual propositions is intended to provide an answer to a number of

puzzles arising when we reflect on the nature of perception.

These are the familiar puzzles of illusions, hallucinations, after images, the perception of extinct stars and the relativity of the way things appear in various states and locations of observers. Not in all of these cases is there a material object. For example, illusions are erroneous perceptions arising from misjudgments about material objects such as tables and events such as rainbows. Hallucinations, on the other hand, are not occasioned by misjudging the nature of an object or event. The hallucinated drunkard's pink elephants are not brought about by the presence of elephants of any kind. According to Moore, in all of these very different cases, there is a generic feature, the presence of a "sense datum." Although Moore was never satisfied with any of his own characterizations of sense data, he nevertheless believed to the end that in all the above-mentioned cases we are seeing something, not nothing. The drunkard is able to describe what he is experiencing; and the rest of us can describe the spot of light representing the extinct star or an after image. Having posited sense data as entities of some sort, Moore is then faced with the problem of giving an account of the relation of sense data to material objects and spatiotemporal, although not solid things, such as rainbows. For instance, seen from a certain angle, a round penny will look somewhat elliptical. How is the elliptical sense datum related to the presumably round surface of the penny? Moore argues that the elliptical sense datum cannot be a part of the surface of the round penny.

Different people looking at the same penny see sense data with incompatible characteristics. No two such sense data can be a part of the surface of the penny. Hence, not all the sense data can be a part of the surface. And there is no reason for identifying any one of them with a part of the surface. According to another theory of perception, introduced by Descartes and variously known as "epistemological dualism" or "the representative theory of perception," the sense datum is an appearance of the surface of the penny. Epistemological dualism supposes that there are independently existing material objects which are never perceived. The only way we can "get at" these material objects is by perceiving "representations," "ideas," "appearances" of them. There are standard objections to this theory.⁸ Moore finds some of them sufficiently telling. For example, Berkeley had three objections to epistemological dualism: (1) that the idea of an unperceived material object is self-contradictory; (2) that there is no evidence whatever for believing in the existence of unperceived material objects; and (3) that if we cannot ever compare a material object with any of its appearances, we can never tell which of the appearances truly represent the unperceived material object. Moore thought that he had disposed of the first and second objection. In "The Refutation of Idealism" (1903), one of the most important papers relating to the realism-idealism-phenomenalism controversy, Moore sets out to show that one of the crucial assumptions of Berkeleyan idealism, that the existence of material objects is identical with their being perceived, is false. Hence, the idealist cannot establish that the idea of an unperceived material object is self-contradictory. "A Defence of Common Sense" contains a possible answer to the second objection. That material objects exist even when unperceived, Moore observes, is a belief of Common Sense, hence true, although not capable of being proved and not in need of being proved. These points, to Moore's satisfaction, dispose of Berkeley's first two criticisms. But Moore is impressed by the force of the third objection as well as by other standard objections against the "representative" theory of sense data. Moore finds phenomenalism, a third theory of perception, also unacceptable. Phenomenalism is the view that material-object statements are equivalent to complicated, possibly inexhaustible, conjunctions of statements about sense data. Moore's fundamental objection is that phenomenalism is counter to our Common-Sense belief that material objects exist independently of our actually or possibly perceiving them. The familiar puzzles of illusion, hallucination, after images, and the rest

led Moore to posit sense data. The conviction that there are sense data as well as material objects and that the two sorts of things are somehow related led Moore to suppose that the fundamental problem of the philosophy of perception is this. Just what is the relation between sense data and material objects? Moore found no answer that satisfied him. His critics suggest that the sense-datum theory generates its own special and unmanageable difficulties, making it impossible to dissipate or solve the familiar puzzles about perceptual phenomena. (See, for example, Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, Chap. 7, pp. 581—617, below. Ryle does not mention Moore by name, but it is evident that Moore, among others, is under attack.)

Moore's critics may be right that he was misled into misidentifying the central question of the philosophy of perception. Even so, Moore's detailed and pains-taking philosophical analyses of perception are among the most important contributions to the subject in this century.

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