

Pre-print version;
the review was published in *Metaphysica. International Journal for Ontology & Metaphysics*,
Online First, January 17, 2013; DOI: 10.1007/s12133-013-0116-3 (later in *Metaphysica* 1/2013).
The published version is available at: www.springerlink.com.

Review:

A.W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics: Making Sense of Things*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 668 pp., ISBN 9780521851114.

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I find the book about metaphysics under review an important and remarkable book; some of my very critical remarks notwithstanding. It is divided into three parts of seven chapters each. The parts are called “The Early Modern Period” (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel), “The Analytic Tradition” (Frege, Early Wittgenstein, Later Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Lewis, Dummett), and “The Non-Analytic Tradition” (Nietzsche, Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger, Collingwood, Derrida, Deleuze). As can be seen, Moore has with respect to the third group deleted the usual label ‘continental philosophy’; a good move.

If I could have added one philosopher to each part, I would have chosen Kierkegaard, Thomas Nagel, and Sartre; three philosophers who, each in their own way, are much concerned with how to come to terms with human subjectivity in thought and action. There is, however, no reason to indulge in a discussion of Moore’s choice of philosophers. It is not easy to make a book like this a one-volume book.

1 Aims and Readership

The overall aim of the book is to describe the evolution of modern metaphysics and meta-metaphysics. However, and equally important, the book has two clearly stated subordinate aims. One is to argue for a certain view about how to proceed with metaphysics in the future. Not that Moore wants to forbid some kinds of metaphysics, but there are three specific presuppositions on which he wants it to move on. He captures them by means of three questions (p. 9) and three ensuing answers:

(A) “Is there scope for our making sense of ‘transcendent’ things?”

Answer: No; we are limited to making sense of ‘immanent’ things.

(B) “Is there scope for our making sense of things in a way that is radically new?”

Answer: Yes; we are not limited to making sense of things in broadly the same way as we do.

(C) “Is there scope for our being creative in our sense-making?”

Answer: Yes; we are not limited to looking for the sense that things themselves already make.

The positive answer to (B) means that in order to make sense of already existing things we may have to create completely new concepts, whereas the positive answer to (C) means that we can create new sense in a way that does not say something about already existing things. These three answers of his can be found, he claims, also in Carnap, Nietzsche, and – especially to his liking – in Deleuze. I give my answers in section 7.

The second subordinate aim is to tear down the cold war wall between analytic and non-analytic philosophy. Moore classifies himself as an analytic philosopher; and, certainly, he long ago earned his analytic spurs by the magnificent treatise *The Infinite* (1990). But he despairs “of the arrogance [among analytic philosophers] that casts them [the non-analytic philosophers] as charlatans” (p. xx). This subordinate aim is a natural outcome of the overall. When looked at from the point of view of metaphysics, it is obvious that philosophers of both kinds have put forward views worthy to scrutinize. A number of abstract similarities between analytic and non-analytic philosophers can then be extracted. Here are four quotations from Moore:

- (i) “The latter, more extreme objectivity which Frege accords senses – the Platonic variety – is curiously reminiscent of the objectivity that Hegel accorded concepts. For both philosophers, the stuff of thinking stands over against us, no less amenable to scientific investigation than the stuff of nature.” (p. 213)
- (ii) “Really, what Nietzsche is doing is rejecting not a hypothesis but a concept: a way of making sense of things. [...] But – rhetorical considerations once again aside – we can compare this with what Carnap would have seen as the use of the material mode of speech to reject a linguistic framework.” (pp. 387–8)
- (iii) “I have been highlighting similarities between Derrida’s views and those of the later Wittgenstein. Here we see similarities between his views and those of Quine, whose repudiation of Fregean senses we witnessed in Ch. 12.” (p. 523n33)
- (iv) “this means that combinations of words that the early Wittgenstein in particular would have counted as straightforwardly lacking sense can for Deleuze be said to express sense of a special kind, enabling them to highlight just such nonsense.” (p. 565)

Now, who may be interested in reading a non-mainstream philosophy book like this? Well, I for one. I have taught both analytic and non-analytic twentieth-century philosophy, as well as the history of philosophy. Moreover, I am formally retired and free to give priority even to a thick book like this. There are, however, many other kinds of philosophers who can profit from reading it. Everyone interested in metaphysics as defined by Moore (see next section) ought to read the whole book. But it can be useful also to philosophers who are interested in only some of the chapters. Teachers can find good pedagogical moves to pick for their lectures; and students can find good questions to put to their teachers. Philosophers who suspect there is something odd about the still lingering general conflict between analytic and non-analytic philosophy can by reading the book justify these suspicions, and philosophers who have no such suspicions ought to read it in order to get some.

2 Metaphysics and Meta-metaphysics

Moore’s introductory definition of metaphysics reads: “Metaphysics is the most general attempt to make sense of things” (p. 1). He discusses all the terms herein used, but I will only present what he says about ‘make sense’. This expression has “myriad resonances” and he wants “them all to be audible throughout” (p. 5). It is meant to embrace “the meaning of something, the purpose of something, or the explanation for something” (ibid.); when used intransitively, ‘make sense’ comes close to *be intelligible*.

I find Moore’s characterization of metaphysics good. It implies that metaphysics should be self-reflective; the term ‘most general’ implies that when one is doing metaphysics wholeheartedly, one has also to “try to make sense [...] of the sense that one makes of things” (p. 7). In other words: “we cannot make maximally general sense of things without making

sense of how we make sense of things” (p. 220). On Moore’s definition, even self-proclaimed anti-metaphysicians such as Hume, Quine, Heidegger, and Derrida are metaphysicians.

Moore is of the opinion that there is “no sharp distinction between metaphysics and meta-metaphysics” (p. 585), and that the “meta-metaphysical views [of a philosopher] are deeply informed by his metaphysical views” (p. 388). The three questions mentioned, however, are definitely meta-metaphysical, and, consequently, Moore declares that he will be more concerned with the philosophers’ views *about* metaphysics than *within* metaphysics (p. xviii). His book is mostly a “kind of history of *meta*-metaphysics” (ibid.).

Moore’s view of meta-metaphysics must not be conflated with what is at issue in papers such as those in *Metametaphysics. New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology* (Chalmers et al 2009). This book “gathers together [...] essays that are [only] concerned with the semantics, epistemology, and methodology of metaphysics” (p. 1). The self-reflection asked for by Moore is here absent. The authors ask themselves neither how they can make sense of the semantic, epistemological, and methodological reflections they are using, nor how they even can take the *existence* of semantics, epistemology, and methodology for granted without bringing in some ontology. I find this odd; and I take it that Moore must be of the same opinion.

When metaphysics is done in order to highlight especially one part of a metaphysical system, then Moore says that this metaphysics is *in the service of* that part. Already in the headings he says that Descartes’ metaphysics is in the service of science, Spinoza’s in the service of ethics, and Leibniz’ of theodicy. Kant’s is in the text said to be in the service of metaphysics itself, which of course makes him extra interesting from a meta-metaphysical point of view. Perhaps one can in the same vein say that Hume’s metaphysics is in the service of semantics, Fichte’s in the service of self-consciousness, and Hegel’s of history.

Three distinctions are of special importance to Moore’s own meta-metaphysical views, limit–limitation, propositional–non-propositional sense, and doctrine–activity; and I will let my review revolve around these. I will not try to present a summary and evaluation of Moore’s view of each of the twenty-one philosophers he has chosen to focus on. The main aim of my review is to highlight and discuss the meta-metaphysical views of Moore himself, not the meta-metaphysical views of the philosophers he discusses.

3 Limits as Limitations and as Essential Features

The self-reflection requirement that Moore builds into his notion of metaphysics can also be phrased like this: “Does [the philosopher’s] own work conform to the views advocated in it?” (p. 138). It creates a special problem for all philosophers who claim that there are limits for meaningful thinking, for knowledge, or for both. The problem is conspicuous in Kant, who claims to have proved, and thereby claims to know for certain, that there is a noumenal realm that we cannot know anything about.

Moore discusses the problem in the light of what he calls “the Limit Argument” (p. 135), but I think had better been called “the Limit-Impossibility Argument.” It consists of two Premises and the entailed Conclusion:

- (P1) We cannot properly draw a limit to what we can make sense of unless we can make sense of the limit.
- (P2) We cannot make sense of any limit unless we can make sense of what lies on both sides of it.
- (C) We cannot properly draw a limit to what we can make sense of.

It is tempting to think that a limit must be made sense of in the same way as what is inside the limit is made sense of. Moore, however, introduces a distinction between *thick* and *thin* sense-making, and allows that a limit need only be made thin sense of. In relation to P2, the distinction means that concepts referring to the transcendent realm are allowed to have another nature (thin sense) than those referring to the immanent realm (thick sense).

According to Moore's terminology, philosophers who are trying to make sense of what is on both sides of a limit are trying to state a *limitation*. Philosophers who discard this requirement (P2) can nonetheless try to state a limit of a certain realm by stating the *essential features* of it. (So far, it is only a matter of propositional sense-making of the limit.)

Moore thinks, and I agree, that Kant wants to prove a limitation for the phenomenal space-time realm. Famously, Kant says that "concepts without intuitions are empty," but using Moore's distinction he should have said: "concepts without intuitions are thin." In spite of this possibility, Moore convincingly argues that the thick–thin distinction cannot save Kant from the charge of not being in all respects self-reflectively consistent.

Many commentators have pointed at similarities between the early Wittgenstein and Kant. When the *Tractatus* states "The facts in logical space are the world" (1.13), it may sound as if Wittgenstein wants to say that logic sets *limitations* to reality. But, and again I agree, Moore claims that Wittgenstein hereby only wants to "display reality's *essential features*" (p. 233). He ascribes Wittgenstein the view that "Logical truth does not *transcend* non-logical truth; it pervades it" (p. 234). Let it be added, as Moore does, that Kant held that the principle of non-contradiction is as valid for the noumenal world as for the phenomenal; i.e., the principle *pervades* both worlds.

With the exception of the early Wittgenstein (see next section), Moore says: "I shall do little to challenge a relatively orthodox interpretation of each of my protagonists" (p. xviii). He explicitly dismisses the so-called "New Hume" (pp. 89n9, 280n3), which for a certain reason should be noted. According to this interpretation, Hume makes a distinction between "conceiving ideas" and "supposing relative ideas," which allows him to refer both to a mind-independent world and to necessity-causal relations by means of relative ideas. Only conceived ideas are subjected to his principle no-meaningful-simple-idea-without-a-preceding-impression. Therefore, already (the New) Hume can be said to have made Moore's distinction between thick and thin sense-making.

The way Moore uses his distinction between limits as limitations and as essential features comes out succinctly in a comment on Husserl: "his idealism [...] seems to me to risk the same fate as other forms of transcendental idealism: that of trying to represent as limits, in the sense of limitations, what are merely limits in the sense of essential features, and thereby lapsing into nonsense" (p. 454).

The limit-impossibility problem is often stated as an insoluble problem for the logical-positivist principle of verification (pp. 297–301). It then takes the form: Is the principle itself an empirical truth, an analytic truth, or no truth at all? Moore thinks most critics move too fast when saying that there is no answer available to positivists. In his opinion, defenders of the no-truth option may well say that there is no need to draw a limit, i.e., premise P1 is rejected; defenders of the analytic option may say that there is no need to make sense of the transcendent side, i.e., premise P2 is rejected; and defenders of the empirical option may bite the bullet and say that the principle is empirical and may one day be refuted. Nonetheless, at the end of the day, Moore concludes with the critics that the principle leaves some problems unanswered.

Quine, rejecting the positivists' synthetic–analytic distinction, might be said to exchange the principle of verification for a principle of naturalism. The term is mine, but it conforms to Moore's view that Quine's empiricism and physicalism emanate from his naturalism, not vice versa; naturalism being defined as "the way to make sense of things is the way of (natural)

science” (p. 305). Moore’s argument against Quine, briefly put, is that Quine does not realize that even though he tears down a number of traditional philosophical bi-partitions, he puts forward one of his own, namely the distinction between the theses labeled ‘the indeterminacy of translation’ and ‘the underdetermination of truth by evidence’. And this distinction he does not make sense of, moreover cannot make sense of, since “the (natural-)scientific way to make sense of things is not the way to make sense of making sense of things” (p. 324).

Moore regards Carnap’s attempt to eliminate metaphysics as being much better than both Ayer’s and Quine’s, but he ends his chapter on Carnap by saying: “Carnap and the other logical positivists, like Hume before them, do not so much eliminate metaphysics as put us in mind of its importance” (p. 301). Especially, he is fond of Carnap’s notion ‘linguistic framework’ and the connected distinction between questions that are internal and external to such frameworks. His positive appraisal stems partly from the fact that he takes Carnap to allow concepts in new frameworks to contain radically new senses, partly from the fact that Carnap regards frameworks as at bottom decision-based.

The kind of self-reflective problems that logical positivists and quinean pragmatists would encounter, were they seriously to bother about what they take for granted, are even greater in an analytic philosopher who is a descendant, David Lewis. Moore says: “His metaphysical work has countless laudable features. [...] But it is not particularly self-reflective” (p. 331). I find this an understatement. Lewis is glaringly un-self-reflective. Leaving Moore’s diagnosis and discussion of Lewis’ modal realism to the reader, I will just add some self-reflective questions that I think Lewis should have answered. But he has to my knowledge not even tried to. Here they are:

- A proposition is said to be a set of possible worlds, but in what world(s) do such sets exist? In a hyper-world distinct from all the possible worlds?
- How are possible worlds individuated? Within each possible world, between two spatial regions that are not in contact there must be a third spatial region. Different possible worlds contain different spaces, but these are not in contact, and there is no spatial region between them. What makes this hyper-world-fact possible?
- How can we in our world, Lewis for one, refer to entities in the other possible worlds? Since possible worlds are causally isolated from each other, is the language in each world for some reason in itself world-transcending? If ‘yes’, how to explain this seemingly non-Humean rationalist fact within Lewis’ metaphysics?

As I understand Moore, he thinks that in order to draw the kinds of limits that mainstream analytic philosophy mostly *either* are blissfully unaware of (Lewis and much analytic metaphysics), *or* unsuccessfully tries to state (logical positivism and quinean pragmatism), one has to transcend the central analytic-philosophical notion of propositional sense. There is though, according to Moore, one great analytic philosopher who really has tried to accomplish this feat, Wittgenstein. Moreover, he has made two different attempts, which is the reason why Moore ascribes him such an importance that he allots him two chapters.

4 Propositional Sense versus Non-propositional Sense

Moore’s distinction between propositional and non-propositional sense is introduced in the chapter on the early Wittgenstein. It is at the same time used to put forward a new interpretation of the *Tractatus*; in particular of how to interpret Wittgenstein when he says: “anyone who understands me eventually recognizes [my propositions] as nonsensical” (6.54).

Moore distinguishes between a traditional reading (Anscombe, Hacker, Pears) and a new reading (Conant, Diamond, Kremer), and looks upon himself as making a synthesis of these.

According to the first, Wittgenstein is implicitly distinguishing between two kinds of nonsense, complete and illuminating, and wants to say that the *Tractatus* story taken as a whole is illuminating nonsense. According to the second interpretation, nonsense is always complete nonsense. However, nonetheless some nonsense can have the peculiar therapeutic function of showing that it, and things like it, really is pure nonsense. According to Moore, instead of *nonsense* of one or two kinds, the *Tractatus* is, when taken as a whole, presenting a special kind of *sense*, non-propositional sense. And such sense can in spite of its non-propositionality contain knowledge; and by means of this be both illuminating and have therapeutic effects. To Moore, knowledge is not necessarily knowledge *that* (p. 7n10); and he seems to regard much, if not all, non-propositional knowledge as a kind of knowing how.

He summarizes his attempted rapprochement thus: “The *Tractatus* helps us to make sense of propositional sense. But the sense that it helps us to make of propositional sense *is not itself propositional*” (p. 242). Moore connects this notion of non-propositional sense closely to the notions of being *ineffable* and necessarily being an *activity*. To have ineffable sense means being “incapable of being [directly] expressed in words” (p. 238n46), even in infinitely many words (p. 253n85). And such sense is not necessarily tied to linguistic activity; it can be expressed in actions and in art works of various sorts, too (p. 238n46, p. 254). He very much likes Wittgenstein’s view: “Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity” (4.112).

Moore is, however, even more impressed by the later Wittgenstein than the early: “Of all my protagonists it is the later Wittgenstein whose views I find most compelling” (p. 267). He finds important continuity: “Again philosophy is paraded as an activity, rather than a body of doctrine [...] Again this aim is conceived as a therapeutic one” (p. 255). And he finds important discontinuity: “The upshot of all this is a radically new conception of necessary truth and our grasp of it” (p. 265). But despite his admiration, Moore is deeply dissatisfied with the later Wittgenstein. Whereas Wittgenstein famously wants philosophy to “leave everything as it is,” Moore wants philosophy to create radically new senses.

When discussing the later Wittgenstein, Moore does not use the opposition between propositional and non-propositional sense that is central to his discussion of the early. He exchanges ‘propositional sense’ for the wider notion ‘linguistic sense’. The reason is of course the later Wittgenstein’s stress on the meaningfulness of all the very mundane non-assertive uses that ordinary language is put to, too. Linguistic sense is said to *include* propositional sense (p. 346n7), but then – very unfortunately for the whole book, I would say – Moore never tells us how he looks upon that realm of plain linguistic sense that is not propositional; let me label it ‘performative sense’. Since Moore says nothing to the contrary, his use of ‘non-’ must be understood as introducing a contradictory opposite. Therefore, performative sense must be a kind of non-propositional sense. Performative *sense*, however, has no internal relation either to being ineffable or being an activity; the characteristics that Moore otherwise links non-propositional sense to.

Perhaps the complication mentioned is the reason why Moore in his chapter on the later Wittgenstein avoids the notion ‘non-propositional sense’; despite obviously meaning that even this Wittgenstein by linguistic activity is trying to convey an ineffable message. Later in the book, he feels again free to use the opposition he uses when he discusses the early Wittgenstein. Here is a quote: “Derrida, like the early Wittgenstein, like Bergson, and arguably like Heidegger, is making play with linguistic resources to convey non-propositional sense” (pp. 534–5). Using the notion of performative sense, I think he could have said (a) that the *Tractatus* accepts the existence of propositional sense but regards the book’s philosophical sense-making as ineffable, and (b) that the *Philosophical Investigations* accepts the existence of both propositional and performative sense but regards the book’s philosophical sense-

making as ineffable. Derrida, by the way, seems (c) to regard all linguistic sense whatsoever as ineffable. According to him, between two linguistic tokens of the seemingly same type, there is always a “deferral and difference” (Fr. “différance,” a term coined by Derrida); we can never step twice into the same sense/meaning. Derrida claims that sense-identity based communication cannot possibly exist.

As I have already indicated, I think Moore’s neglect of a discussion of performative sense (i.e., plain linguistic sense that is not propositional) affects the whole book. In my opinion, he should explicitly have distinguished between two kinds of non-propositional sense, performative (non-ineffable) and ineffable non-propositional sense. If Moore had thought more about performative sense, I think he would have diminished the stress he now puts on the ineffable. There can be much radical sense creativity connected to performative sense, but Moore seems to think that almost all such sense must belong to ineffable sense. Let me bring in some speech act theory, more precisely Searle’s take on it, in order better to make clear what I mean. Moore brings in speech act theory only when presenting Derrida’s views on Austin.

Searle classifies all well-formed normal utterances into five speech act genera: *assertions* (‘The cat is on the mat’), *directives* (‘I order you to leave!’), *commissives* (‘I promise to pay’), *expressives* (‘Thank you for helping me!’), and *declarations* (‘I hereby declare the meeting open’). As I have defined ‘performative sense’, the last four genera have performative sense, whereas the first has only propositional sense. What then about the possibility of creating radically new propositional and performative senses, respectively?

Mainstream analytic philosophy contains two assumptions that each on its own gives rise to the view that it is impossible to create radically new propositional sense. One is an explicit or implicit semantic empiricism that claims that perception is always logically prior to meaningful non-formal sentence formation. The other (see e.g. *Metaphysics. The Key Concepts*, 2011) is that propositions are *necessarily existing* abstract (i.e., causally inefficacious and not spatiotemporally localizable) objects. I think both assumptions are false; and I am not completely alone in this denial. Searle and much speech act philosophy seem implicitly to be of the same opinion, and, explicitly, Popper is (remember his stress on the need for bold conjectures in science). He rejects the necessary-existence view of propositions, and places propositions in his so-called world 3, which is a man-made world where propositions come into being at a certain time. There is also a great metaphysician I would like to mention; I think McTaggart should be ascribed the view that propositions exist only in contingently existing beliefs. From this perspective, let us look at Moore’s B- and C-questions; both of which he answers with a ‘yes’.

Moore’s B-question is: Is there scope for our making sense of already existing things in a way that is radically new? In order to answer it with a ‘yes’, one does not have to bring in non-propositional sense; be it ineffable or not. Natural science has in its development repeatedly created new propositional senses. It seems to me as if Moore must be stuck in at least one of the two false assumptions mentioned; even though in a footnote he says he thinks that in non-metaphysical sense-making there might be both creativity and discovery (p. 14n26).

When it comes to performative sense, the possibility of creating – in our everyday social world – radically new entities is obvious. All language-dependent social entities such as nation states, banks, money, contracts, games, ceremonies, and so on, are radically man-made; and are for their existence dependent on one or several kinds of performative senses (see e.g. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 1995). A performative speech act does more than connect to already existing things; it creates a non-propositional product. The important result of ‘I promise to pay’ is an enduring promise; the speech act is not about a pre-existing promise. It creates, so to speak *ex nihilo*, the promise; and the utterance becomes (at least in

my opinion) because of this in its propositional aspect both self-referential and self-verifyingly true. Many such new kinds of senses have been created during history; and in all probability new such senses will be created in the future. I don't know whether or not Searle thinks he has constructed a speech act taxonomy into which all possible speech acts must fall, but be this as it may; I find such a view odd. How can we possibly know that all speech acts have to be assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, or declarational? I cannot even get a glimpse of an argument that there is a pre-given limit.

Moore's C-question is: Is there scope for our being creative *ex nihilo* in our sense-making? In order to answer it with a 'yes', there is no need to bring in ineffable non-propositional sense. Man has repeatedly in the past been creative in the non-ineffable way just described. Seemingly, Moore has not taken due account of contemporary philosophy of social ontology.

These were my comments on the link Moore finds between non-propositionality and ineffability. Now I will move on to the link he thinks exists between non-propositionality and activity.

5 Doctrine versus Activity

I have earlier quoted Wittgenstein when he, to Moore's strong liking, states: "Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity." And already in his preface, Moore says: "For Plato, philosophy was more of an activity than a science. That seems to me an extremely important model for our own understanding of metaphysics" (p. xviii). As I will show, it is wrong to fuse Wittgenstein and Plato in the way Moore suggests. The opposition between doctrines/science and activity is in need of unpacking.

The first thing to note is that the activity Moore mostly is thinking of is not that of trying to find, as in Plato, pre-existing true propositions. Moore's real opposition is *creational (non-discovering) activity*-doctrine. In my opinion, already this fact ought to have stopped Moore from trying to get support from Plato for his view on what philosophy essentially is.

Since doctrines are products, the opposition activity-doctrine entails the opposition activity-product, and in what follows, I will focus also on this opposition.

The next thing I will draw attention to relates to my earlier stress on speech act philosophy (interpreted as implicitly denying that propositions are necessarily existing entities). On this view, a speech or writing act that creates a completely new kind of assertion (or creates a completely new kind of directive, etc.), is a truly creative activity. Nonetheless, when the activity has ended, a product has been created, namely an assertion that contains or expresses a proposition. If it continues to live in the memories of some people, it can be regarded as a socially enduring entity (cf. orders, promises, etc.). But even if it does not, it has created a product, although a *non-enduring* product. This kind of product has seldom been focused on in philosophy, but it has been noted. (Twardowski is probably the first; and I have earlier made use of his insight, "Performatives and Antiperformatives," *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26:666.) When plain linguistic acts are seen in this (to me true) light, there can be no opposition between creational linguistic activity and linguistic products of the clear-cut kind that Moore wants us to endorse.

The option left for Moore, in order to defend the existence of a contrariety between linguistic activity and product, is to exempt propositional and performative sense-making and claim that his strong opposition activity-doctrine applies only to linguistic activity that gives rise to ineffable sense. However, even a thesis so qualified must be rejected. Take the *Tractatus* as an example. On Moore's own view, the book can be seen as a product that is intended indirectly to give rise to an ineffable sense. But even if this sense is extremely difficult to apprehend, it would be odd to claim (and neither Moore nor Wittgenstein does)

that its ineffable message is impossible to apprehend for someone else than Wittgenstein. Rather, it is only on the assumption that this is possible that the publishing makes sense. As far as I can see, Moore must on reflection regard the *Tractatus* as a product in spite of the fact that he interprets it as having an ineffable message. If it is retorted that Wittgenstein's writing the book was surely an activity and that the possible grasp of its ineffable message must, equally surely, consist in the activity of apprehending the message, I retort in turn: Yes of course, but so what, this is equally true of each and every speech and writing act with only ordinary sense. On the anti-Platonic assumption that there are no necessarily existing propositions or propositional contents, all linguistic sense comes into being only through active production and apprehension of senses by humans.

So far, I have presented Moore's notion of non-propositional ineffable sense in its relation to Wittgenstein. Next, I will relate it to Derrida and Deleuze. Thereby, I will also introduce a distinction between two kinds of ineffable sense. Such sense can either be thought of as grounded in positively given sense identities (Wittgenstein), or it can be thought of as grounded in, and emerging from, logically prior and fundamental difference relations (Derrida and Deleuze). The latter view I will label 'the primacy-of-difference thesis'. According to it, Moore says, "difference is [...] that *by which* what is given is given" (p. 555).

Before I proceed, I would like to make the three bi-partite distinctions of sense I have introduced clearly visible, and related to each other. I hope the schema below accomplishes this:

Linguistic Sense

Plain Linguistic sense		Ineffable Linguistic Sense	
Propositional Sense	Performative Sense	Identity-Grounded	Difference-Grounded

Above, I have argued that in the cases of (see the last line) propositional sense, performative sense, and identity-grounded ineffable sense, it is not possible to find a straightforwardly contrary opposition between linguistic activity and linguistic product. Left for discussion is the lower right hand corner in the schema, i.e. difference-grounded ineffable sense. In the next section, I will argue that it is impossible to make sense of such sense. Therefore, as a consequence of all this, there exists to my mind no contrariety activity–doctrine by means of which it can be claimed that philosophy or metaphysics should be an activity that never puts forward doctrine-products. Moore, however, is firmly convinced that the primacy-of-difference thesis is true. Here, on the first-order metaphysical level, we differ deeply, and I will say more about this soon.

Let me first add, in order not to be misunderstood, that I do not believe in any infallibility of doctrine-products, be the doctrines commonsensical, scientific, non-metaphysically philosophical, or metaphysical. And since I regard doctrines as fallible, philosophy and metaphysics should even in my opinion consist in an everlasting "conversation of mankind" (to take a famous expression from Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1980). However, the conversation should with respect to pre-existing things also (pace Rorty) involve arguing for and against doctrines about what best mirrors nature.

6 The Primacy of Difference

In trying to say something general about non-analytic philosophy, Moore says it contains "a tendency to prioritize difference over identity" (p. 22). I do not agree. Derrida and Deleuze

have this view actually, not as a tendency; and, of course, there is a strong such tendency in much post-structuralism. I cannot, however, find the tendency in, for instance, Husserl and Habermas. If it is to be found in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, it is only in their later philosophy, i.e., after *Being and Time* and *The Phenomenology of Perception*, respectively. In the books mentioned, they rather want to delete a difference, the difference between subject and object; and Moore seems (rightly, to my mind) not to be of the opinion that what appears in a late phase of a philosopher must have been there as a tendency from the start. If the tendency is in Sartre, it must, on the other hand, be in the early Sartre (*Being and Nothingness*); the later Sartre (*Critique of Dialectical Reason*) is with respect to the subject-object distinction and the understanding of language quite commonsensical.

The early Sartre says: “The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist *at a distance from itself* as a presence to itself” (1966, p. 125). According to Sartre, in every intentional act, the subject and its intentional object are (at the time of the act) distinct. Between them, there is always a difference/distance, but this does not mean that this relation of difference/distance is primary to the relata, the subject and the object. It means that the three entities are so to speak logically simultaneous; i.e., that they mutually presuppose each other. It might also be worth noting that the later Heidegger is not univocally giving priority to difference. In the preface to *Identity and Difference* (1957) he writes: “The *close* [my italics] relation of *identity and difference* will be shown in this publication to be what gives us thought.”

As said, one of Moore’s aims is to moderate the conflict between analytic and non-analytic philosophy. But I think his (false) view that most non-analytic philosophers have a tendency towards the primacy-of-difference thesis subverts his own aim. To say without qualification that non-analytic philosophy tends towards what is typical of Derrida and Deleuze will surely not encourage many analytic philosophers to look at anything in non-analytic philosophy.

Nietzsche is often, seemingly also by Moore (pp. 399–400), regarded as being the first modern philosopher to put forward the primacy-of-difference thesis. But, again, I do not agree. Obviously, he wants to delete the notion ‘enduring entity’, but that does not in itself imply that ontologically fundamental positive identities have to be substituted by ontologically fundamental difference relations. Even though Nietzsche regards everything as always at bottom being in flux, he describes this flux by means of terms for events and processes, and these can be, and normally are, looked upon as something that is positively given. A distinction in contemporary analytic metaphysics, the one between *enduring* and *perduring* entities, can help us see what probably is implicitly at issue in Nietzsche’s ontological moments. As far as I know, the distinction is absent from non-analytic philosophy.

An enduring entity has an identity that runs through and is wholly the same in all the time intervals where the entity exists; a perduring entity, on the other hand, is no more than the concatenation of its temporal parts. In a perduring entity, there is nothing that runs through all the time intervals of its existence. To be noted now is that there is no analytic philosopher who straightforwardly combines the view that all spatiotemporal entities are perduring entities with a presentist philosophy of time (i.e., that only the presently existing entities exist), but this is precisely what Nietzsche does. In my opinion, he embodies an ontological position that neither non-analytic nor analytic philosophers have clearly seen (closest comes the analytic so-called ‘presentist four-dimensionalism’). When it is seen, there is no longer any need to ascribe Nietzsche a primacy-of-difference thesis in order to understand him. His perspectivism can then instead be seen as consisting in the view that different wills-to-power (individuals) and different aggregates of such (cultures) impose different kinds of *enduring entities* on an absolutely *perduring flux*; this in order to try to make more desire-related sense of the flux.

The important question, however, is of course how to evaluate the primacy-of-difference thesis. Here, I can be brief. Despite having made several efforts, I cannot simply understand what it should mean that a relation of difference is logically *prior* to its relata. That there might be facts where the relata and the relation between them are mutually dependent is quite another thing; and with this thought I have no problems. But to accept the primacy-of-difference thesis is to me just as odd as to think there are logical contradictions in mind-independent nature.

Let it as a curiosity be noted, that the view that relations can be logically prior to their relata has today obtained a respectable position in analytic philosophy. It is defended by some of the philosophers in the camp of “ontic structural realism” (e.g. James Ladyman). And they do not confine their thesis to the relation of difference; therefore, to my mind, they are even worse off than Derrida, Deleuze, and Moore.

In §3 of his Deleuze chapter, Moore argues in own words directly in favor of the primacy-of-difference thesis, but I do not find his argument valid. It brings in the determinable-determinate distinction, which I happen to have written about a number of times (e.g. “Determinables as Universals,” *The Monist* 83:101–21). Moore claims that differences in intensive magnitudes such as brightness, heat, and speed “cannot be understood in terms of the prioritization of identity over difference” (p. 558). In other words, he claims that parts of mathematical physics and sensory psychology can at bottom not be understood without his difference-is-prior-to-identity thesis. I admit (see the next two paragraphs) that he has noted a seldom noted peculiar ontological problem, but this can be solved by means of the notion of identity-in-difference. (Readers not interested in the ontological subtleties around comparisons and quantifications can skip the rest of this section. Those who are much interested can also read my “Mathematical Vectors and Physical Vectors,” *dialectica* 63:433–47.)

Assume we are looking at two stars that shine with different brightnesses. In our perceptual field, there are two brightnesses that a realist will regard as instances of a universal and a trope nominalist will regard as tropes. Let us name them ‘this b1’ and ‘this b2’, respectively. Furthermore, let ‘b1’ name either a brightness universal or the collection of brightnesses that are exactly similar to the b1 we are looking at, and let us do the same with ‘b2’. (In what follows, however, I will only spell out my argument presupposing realism; the trope nominalist has to exchange the realist’s notion ‘identity-in-difference’ for a notion such as ‘exact-similarity-in-difference’.)

By raising one of our hands, we can block the sight of any of the two stars. When we block the one, we see only the other’s brightness, and vice versa. The difference in brightness appears to be grounded in the two in our perceptions positively given brightnesses, this b1 and this b2; brightnesses that we see also when we look at only one star at a time. How does Moore try to explain these first-hand appearances away? Note: it is neither a matter of explaining the *numerical* difference between this b1 and this b2, nor how the perceptions are *causally* produced. What is to be explained is the given *qualitative* difference within the perceptual field itself. Many analytic philosophers try to explain relational facts such as this-b1-is-brighter-than-this-b2 as follows. They claim that independently of language there are only two instances or tropes, and that the seeming relational fact is only an effect of a conventional linguistic decision to apply in the case at hand the relational predicate/concept ‘brighter than’. That is, according to them, there is neither an instance of a relational universal nor a relational trope. This presumed solution is out of the question for both Moore (I think) and me (surely). My reason is that it does not take into account the fact that the brightness difference is pre-predicatively given; even children who can’t talk, and don’t know anything about what they see in the sky, can see this b1 and this b2, and be aware of a qualitative difference between them.

Moore's reasoning goes as follows. There are two qualitatively different brightnesses, but in their perceptual qualitative difference this b1 and this b2 are *simply qualitatively different*; they are not qualitatively *related* to each other. This view is no peculiarity of Moore's; it can be found also in Hume. He regards difference not as a relation, but "rather as a negation of relation" (*Treatise* 1.1.5.10). Therefore, Moore finds a problem with how to explain from where the intensity *relation* comes. Since it is a difference relation, it must consist in the relata's *failing* to share some feature, but, Moore now says: "the only relevant [relational] feature here, namely brightness, is one that they precisely do share" (p. 558). Briefly put, Moore is looking for a difference relation that *connects* this b1 and this b2, but finds only a similarity relation. His conclusion is that there must be a prior hidden relation of difference that connects the two particulars and simultaneously gives them their qualitative identities.

What is needed in order to save first appearances and the common positive way of regarding identities is, as I have already indicated, to exchange the presumed curious phenomenon difference-prior-to-identity for the intelligible phenomenon identity-in-difference. Now, as it happens, this latter phenomenon is ontologically rejected also by most analytic philosophers. I think, however, that this is mainly due to the fact that the notion 'identity-in-difference' was dear to the British idealists who G.E. Moore and Russell fought down when analytic philosophy was born in Britain. In my opinion, there is no necessary connection between the phenomenon identity-in-difference and idealism.

In the context presented, identity-in-difference means: Both the different determinate brightnesses, this b1 and this b2, co-exist and are fused with the same determinable, the brightness B. This b1 and this b2 are instances of universals; B is a universal, too, but one that in the situation at hand has two instances. No determinate brightnesses such as b1 and b2 can exist without a simultaneous instance of the top-level determinable brightness B; and no instance of B can exist without an instance of *some* determinate b. On this analysis, we find relations of ontological dependence and three different kinds of *positive* identities: B, b1 and b2.

As Moore conceives the situation, there are (apart from his prior-to-identity difference relation) only this b1, this b2, and a similarity relation between them, i.e. no positively grounded difference relation. As I conceive it, there are this b1-of-B, this b2-of-B, a similarity relation between them that is due to B, and a difference relation between them that is due to b1-of-B and b2-of-B. On my account, each individual brightness contains a necessary *duality*, a positively given determinate (b) and a positively given determinable (B). There is, however, no *dualism*; b and B do not exist independently of each other. Two numerically different brightnesses can, based on their positively given identities, stand in a *relation* of difference because of the phenomenon of identity-in-difference.

7 Answers from a Non-reductive Metaphysical Realist

I will now present my answers to Moore's meta-metaphysical A-, B-, and C-questions, but first I would like to state my realist metaphysics from which the answers emanate. I am a straightforward ontological realist with respect to the external natural world, as well as to the external existence of consciousnesses other than my own; and I don't think consciousness can ontologically be reduced to brain states. Also, I think that, independently of me, there are consciousness- and language-dependent social realities; some of them are wholly external to my consciousness, some only partly. Such realities cannot be completely consciousness-external. Furthermore, I am an ontological realist with respect to universals, but an anti-Platonist such realist. I am a naturalist in the specific sense that I think that everything that exists have to exist in our spatiotemporal world. Therefore, with respect to universals, I am an

immanent realist (but not sharing all of Armstrong's views about universals). Epistemologically, I am a realist in the sense that I think it is possible for us to obtain more or less truthlike knowledge of large parts of our world.

In metaphysical outlook, I differ radically from Carnap, Nietzsche, and Deleuze, which in turn differ between them, but I can nonetheless, answer Moore's meta-metaphysical questions the way they (according to Moore) and Moore himself do. The answers to (C) and (B) follow more or less immediately from what I have already said in section 4, and the answer to (A) follows from the paragraph above.

(C): Yes; we are not limited to looking for the sense that things themselves already make. Nature has in its evolution created emergent mind-independent properties, and man's consciousness has created emergent social realities. It seems to be an empirical fact that we can create new senses that do not mirror anything pre-existing. There is no valid argument around that says that no such new senses can emerge within metaphysics, too.

(B): Yes; we are not limited to making sense of already existing things in broadly the same way as we do. There is no universal opposition between creation/invention and discovery. Just as by means of the inventions of the microscope and the telescope science discovered new objects and facts, science has by means of the creation of new concepts discovered hitherto unknown objects and facts. There is no valid argument around that says that such new senses cannot emerge within metaphysics, too.

(A): No; we are limited to making sense of immanent things. As Moore makes clear, here much depends on how 'immanence' is defined. Different philosophers define it differently, and Deleuze defines it his way. I would like to cast the immanent as that which is immanent to the spatiotemporal world (cf. Moore p. 579, who does not mention this possibility). My answer is wholly based on my ontological view that there is no transcendent realm. I think no reasonable semantics can show that no concepts can refer to transcendent entities. Since I believe in the existence of universals, and that we can create concepts that refer to some of them, I must admit that, if a universal that we can talk about in our world is instantiated in a transcendent world, then the same concept is applicable there.

To Moore I would like to say, it is on the metaphysical level possible to be a complete anti-Deleuzian, as I am, but nonetheless answer your meta-metaphysical questions the way you and Deleuze do.

8 Discussions and Interpretations from Nowhere

There is one meta-metaphysical question that I am surprised that Moore never touches: Is it possible ever to understand metaphysical systems, which when first encountered differ radically from one's own? Moore mentions neither the discussion of incommensurability in analytic philosophy (centered round Kuhn and Feyerabend), nor the somewhat similar discussions within hermeneutic philosophy (centered round Gadamer). Even if the first is concerned with scientific paradigms and the latter with cultural-historical frameworks, the analogy with how to know that one has understood, and so can start to evaluate, another philosopher's metaphysical system is obvious. Quine's thesis of the indeterminacy of translation is mentioned, but Moore never applies it to his own readings/translations of his twenty-one philosophers. He writes as if in principle there are no deep interpretative problems, despite never distancing himself from Derrida's Heraclitean view of meaning, according to which there is a difference in understanding even in the minutest of communication situations.

Moore has earlier written the book *Points of View* (1997), and closest to the kind of reflections on interpretation problems that I find wanting are some remarks he makes on points of view. In a footnote, he relates to his earlier book and says:

In that book I argue, *contra* Nietzsche, that there can be sense-making that is not from any point of view [...]. How does this consist with my claim in §4 of the previous chapter that it is not possible for us to make sense of things except from our position of engagement with them? The matter is complex. But summarily: I do not count our position of engagement with things as a point of view. This is precisely because it admits of no alternative. (p. 379n39)

To my mind, Moore's notion 'no point of view' cannot be the same as the notion 'nowhere' made famous by Thomas Nagel in *The View from Nowhere* (1986), and later developed in *The Last Word* (1997). Nagel is defending the view that our reason can reflect principles that are valid independently of points of view, in spite of the fact that he regards us as fallible. It would have been nice if Moore's book had contained a clearer statement about how he looks at interpretative and epistemic relativism. The mere publishing of the book seems to suggest that Moore has a strong belief in philosophical dialogue, but his hero Deleuze writes: "The best one can say about discussions is that they take things no farther, since the participants never talk about the same thing" (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy*, 1994, p. 28).

For myself, I am quite happy with Nagel's books, apart from the fact that the expression 'view from nowhere' suggests that there is a point from which truth can more or less automatically be seen. In such a nowhere I do not believe. But I think that when two (or more) frameworks collide in one's mind or in a conversation, one can partly distance oneself from both; and in this sense be in no particular place. That is, be in a non-localizable area outside of both frameworks – a nowhere. But this is not a place that guarantees that truths can be seen. It is only a nowhere where the outcome of interpretations and discussions are not pre-determined by any of the pre-existing colliding frameworks, or by the collision itself.

Timothy Williamson ends a review of Moore's book *Points of View* by saying: "The book's flaws contrast with very many shrewd and subtle points made in passing. If one must listen to the unfresh sirens of transcendental idealism, one should tie oneself to the mast rather more firmly than Moore has done" (*Philosophical Books* 40:43–5). To the mainstream analytic philosopher I would like to say: Read Moore's new book; don't tie you to your mast so firmly that you can't be untied when you meet your Penelope.