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MOORE'S CENTURY . . . AND OURS

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I. The Past as Prologue

Nearly a century has passed since Moore published Principia Ethica [(Cambridge, 1903); rev. ed. 1922. Unless otherwise noted, all refs. to PE will be to the 1922 ed. For previously unpublished material, consult the Preface to 2nd ed., ed. Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge, 1993)]. During that time the world has changed a great deal, but (true to form) Moore hasn't changed at all. Perhaps that's the secret of his success. Perhaps it's also why he's so exasperating. For the past three decades I have fought with Moore, tried very hard to refute him, and even tried to walk away from him, all to no avail. He keeps coming back, even when I don't want him around. I don't know why I am so obsessed with him but I know that by now the obsession is permanent, the disease quite incurable. To paraphrase Wittgenstein, whom we are also honoring today, the fly can't get out of the fly-bottle, even when the top is open and the way is clear. There is something Kafkaesque about all this, that recalls the parable of the door-keeper, minus the sense of doom. For there is nothing wrong with spending a lifetime on Moore, apart from the fact that Moore didn't do so himself. It is wrong, however, to spend a lifetime (or an entire century) on Moore's ethics without asking why he is so compelling, why we are still trying to figure him out, and why he keeps eluding us, as though he were a living mystery and not a dead man. Why is Moore so fascinating? Why can't we get rid of him, or just ignore him? What are we waiting for? And why are we willing to wait an eternity for Moore, like Godot, to reveal himself?

II. The Party Line

I have thought about this question for some time now, and (at last) I think I know the answer. However (as Moore would say) I may very well be wrong. It wouldn't be the first time, or (I hope) the last. Wrong as I may be, I will try to explain why Moore exerts

such a hold on us, why we must try to loosen that hold, and why, when all is said and done, his grip is even more secure than it was before. Not to keep you in suspense, it all boils down to one line in PE, a line which isn't Moore's own, but serves as his motto. The line (as you all know) is Bishop Butler's edict "everything is what it is, and not another thing," which Moore quotes opposite his title page, and again in Chap. VI, in the midst of his account of beauty, good, and organic unity or wholeness (PE 206). Everyone who writes about Moore cites Butler's famous maxim, which appears in the Preface to Butler's Sermons [Fifteen Sermons, ed. W.R. Matthews (London, 1953), p. 23], first published in 1726. But nobody bothers to ask what Butler meant, or what Moore meant by citing Butler with such obvious approval. My friend Tom Regan says, quite rightly, that Butler's quip is the only memorable line in PE (Bloomsbury's Prophet [Philadelphia, 1986], p. 215), but he doesn't analyze it. [Further refs. to Regan's magnificent book will be abbr. as BP]. Prof. Brian Hutchinson, whose book on Moore I had the privilege of reading in manuscript, says that Butler's motto signifies, at least in Moore's case, ". . . that ethical wisdom lies in simply *accepting* good's ultimacy" (G.E. Moore's Ethical Theory [New York, 2001], p. 18. Italics in original). No doubt. But as Moore, the inventor of the open-question argument (PE 21) might ask, *why* does ethical wisdom consist in accepting this proposition? Or in accepting anything? And besides, what does Butler's remark have to do with good, the ultimacy of good, or the acceptance of the ultimacy of good? If everything is what it is and not another thing, then surely (I can hear Moore saying) these are three very different things, which ought not to be confused, much less identified, with one another. And so on, *ad infinitum*.

Over the years, Butler's motto has become a prime example of what Mark Twain would call a classic--a statement that everybody praises but nobody takes seriously enough to examine. I propose to pay it a different kind of homage. Whereas others have said too little about it, I will err by going to the opposite extreme. That should enable others to find the right balance, or the proper equilibrium between the yin of silence and the yang of logorrhea. I will devote much attention to a single sentence, not to parody Moore (who was famous for doing such things) but to honor and reverence him, without slavishly imitating his style. If everything is what it is and not another thing, then the one constant of this essay will be its dedication to contemplating this one gnomic utterance. My excuse for this exercise (as though I needed one) is that Russell, Moore's friend and compatriot, saluted PE

even before reviewing it. Writing to Moore a few days after the book was published (October 10, 1903), Russell called it "a triumph of lucidity" (all except Ch. IV, Metaphysical Ethics, which he found "unavoidably" garbled in light of its topic). He went on to say "your motto strikes me as admirable," though he didn't say why. There he dropped it. Another admirer, Alfred Richard Ainsworth, picked it up and ran with it, writing to Lytton Strachey a week later: "The quotation [from Butler] makes me feel very much the force of Russell's criticism, that the only merit of this [Moore's] philosophy is its truth" [all quotes taken from Levy, Apostles, Ch. 9, p. 235/235n. Parentheticals added]. Since at the time Ainsworth was Moore's brother-in-law, he might have been slightly prejudiced in Moore's favor. But it hardly matters, since no one really took the motto seriously enough to subject it to scrutiny, much less translate it into the symbolism of first-order quantification, set theory, or (much later) Montague grammar. And why should they? After all, this is the stuff of which legends are made. And legends have their own logic, if not their own realm of truth. There are more things on heaven and earth than Tarski ever dreamt of.

Once we demystify the air or the aura around Moore's motto, the next step is to trace it back to its source, to dig up its intellectual roots, and see why Moore found it so handy or convenient for his own quite different (and larger) purpose. While I am no expert on Butler (for what authority or expertise isn't worth), in his case the answer is quite simple (sic). Butler distinguishes between virtue and vice, and at the same time, between and among virtue, self-love, benevolence, and (dis)interest. His goal is to show that an action is or can be moral without being prompted by moral motives; in particular, that a person may do the right thing (whatever that is) in order to go to heaven, or avoid hell, rather than because it is the right thing to do. Thus future (imagined) "pleasure or pain" (Butler's terms) causes people to perform (or avoid) certain acts, though it does not by itself justify either the individuals who act this way, or the acts themselves. In short, an action can be right without being done for the right reason, exactly as Kant would insist, half a century later. The difference (if any) between Butler and Kant is semantic; Butler uses ordinary English, whereas Kant employs the vocabulary of autonomy vs. heteronomy to make more or less the same point.

So much for Butler. Or at least, that's all I have to say about him. But in Moore's case the situation is different--or, like King Lear, I will make it different, just to be perverse. For one thing, Moore is not talking about virtue and vice, or at least not talking about them exclusively, though to be sure he does introduce those terms in Ch. V (PE 171-75). To put it another way, when he talks about virtue and vice he doesn't quote Butler, yet when he does quote Butler, he isn't talking about virtue and vice. So what is he talking about? Again I will make a bold leap--one which the text neither confirms nor denies. My guess is that Moore borrowed Butler's maxim, not because it suited his immediate purposes (though I'm sure it did) but because it stated and expressed his entire world-view, or, for lack of a better word, his philosophy. Why else does anyone adopt a motto, or claim an epitaph? My hunch (or intuition--a word Moore himself relied on from time to time) is that Moore regarded Butler's comment, not merely as a way of describing the difference between virtue and vice, or between a moral act and an act that is done out of pure regard for morality, but as the last word about everything--and the first thing that we must say about anything, in ethics or (speaking of differences) out of it.

Whatever Butler himself meant by 'everything is what it is . . .' in its original context, in Moore's case, it means much more than that. It is a cardinal rule, an axiom of logic, a first principle, an archetype (not in Jung's sense, but in Aristotle's) of thought. We might liken it to Jefferson's rhetorical strategy in declaring ceremoniously that ". . . we hold these truths to be self-evident." Granted, Moore tells us that ". . . no moral law is self-evident" (PE 148), but Butler's law (elevated to the rank of a high-level tautology) is not a moral law at all. Rather, it is a law without which there cannot be any moral laws, or any other kind, for that matter. It is (as Kant might have it) a condition for the possibility of laws. It is therefore on a par with Leibniz' law [a=a], the identity of indiscernibles. Indeed, it may be Moore's way of phrasing that fabled law, in the same year in which Russell [spurred by Peano and Frege, respectively) tangled with similar issues in the domain of set theory. For Russell's treatment of identity and reflexivity, see The Principles of Mathematics (New York, 1903), esp. pp. 96, 219. For Russell's sidewise glance at Moore's early (1900-1901) article on the notion of identity, see PM, p. 44.]. This may be mere coincidence; but, as we shall see later, the year 1903 was fateful (and fruitful) in more ways than one, or even two.

III. In the beginning was the question begging

Since Butler's motto is unarguable, there is no sense in arguing about it (though we'll dispute it, soon enough). The only argument concerns Moore's inflated use of it, or my inflation of his limited appeal into an unlimited, unqualified assertion. Since I cannot prove (sic) that Moore rested his whole verbal universe on this idea, I will do the next best thing: I will (like Socrates in the Meno) assume it without proof, just to see where this trivially true hypothesis leads. One place it leads to is the philosophical graveyard, in which much of 20th century thought lies buried--or awaits its final resting place. For no one can read philosophy journals (including Mind, which Moore edited for so many years) without realizing that they are devoted (as my children have taught me) to the mastery of the obvious. As Hamlet complained to a master liar (Polonius), it's all "words, words, words!" Even when the words ring true, they are about as enlightening (though not as facetious) as M. Jourdain's labored discovery of his own prose. Indeed, one of Moore's lasting and most painful legacies is what (with a bow to Marquez) we might call a hundred years of platitude. Long before Andy Warhol made mock modesty an art form, Moore perfected it as a sincere expression of character; for he frankly admits that his views on ". . . what things are worth having *purely for their own sakes*" is itself a "platitude" [PE 188; italics in original; for commentary, see Regan, BP 264]. Undoubtedly this is true; but to invert the old French proverb, "*qui s'accuse s'excuse*." The mere platitude conceals a deep truth--or a far more disturbing consequence than we thought it entailed. That's how Socrates got so many of his interlocutors to buy or accept more than they finally nixed the deal, and nixed Socrates for making it. And that was more disturbing yet.

Like Socrates, Moore knows how to play angel's advocate, and how to drive a hard Faustian bargain, without wings or horns. So much so, that even the notion of analysis itself [which C.H. Langford tried to unravel, as early as 1942, in his essay "Moore's Notion of Analysis" [in Paul A. Schilpp (ed), The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, 3rd ed. (La Salle, IL, 1968), pp. 321-42] remains unanalyzable, phil-proof, totally resistant, because, despite all the ritual invocations of the word, in the last analysis (sic) there is nothing to unravel. All the badinage about 'analysans' and 'analysandum' [see Moore's Reply to Langford, in ibid., 660-67] amounts merely to reshuffling the deck without cutting the cards, much less

revealing one's hand. Like the classic search for essences (*to ti en einai*) which it mirrors and models, the definition of analysis--which is the definition of definition, or the essence of essences--is either a verbal game, or a dead end. And why not? Analysis begins where Kant left off--with the relation between analytic propositions and those that aren't. Since those that aren't belong to science, while those that are belong to logic and mathematics, the only thing that belongs to philosophy is the dividing line between them--which, as Quine showed half a century after PE ["Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (1951), repr. W.V.O. Quine, From a Logical Point of View (Cambridge MA, 1953; rev. ed., 1961)] doesn't exist. It's all 'mere sophistry and illusion,' to be consigned to fatuous flames--if you believe in fire, cause and effect, or the uniform non sequiturity of Humean nature. That's why philosophy is trying so hard to become a science—because it isn't, and never will be. That's why philosophy bakes no bread--but provides necessary food for thought, for a self-consuming banquet.

If there is a third alternative, what is it? The either/or dichotomy is exclusive and exhaustive--nothing left but to pack up and leave. These consequences are dire, at least for those of us who are still trying to make a living by charging fees for our skeptical services. Philosophy may have its martyrs, but it has no subject-matter—and no business trying to create one, except to stay in business. Since then, analytic philosophy has been a live corpse, as Richard Rorty's autopsy reported in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton, NJ, 1979), or an intellectual in search of an ideology. Whether Moore enlarged or (I suspect) merely distorted Butler's maxim, he insured that it would become a mantra of ultimate meaning, if only because it is both obvious and meaningless.

IV. What price vainglory?

I could conclude here, but if I did, I'd be doing both myself and Moore an injustice. I might score a point or two, but it would be at my own expense. For people have been pointing out Moore's errors (real and alleged) for over a century now, yet he has outlasted all of his critics, not least because (like Socrates) he was so quick to criticize himself--and thus had the last laugh. Besides, I am acutely aware of the fact that so far, I am guilty of doing exactly what I accuse Moore of--taking a minor point, taking it out of its original context, blowing it out of proportion, and then trying to reduce it to absurdity. My

"analysis" of Butler's motto says more about me than it does about Moore; it is, as Prof. Harold Bloom might say, a strong misreading of the text--or a weak one. To the extent that every philosophy is (as James, and prior to him Nietzsche, and prior to both Emerson, and prior to all three Montaigne, and *a priori*, Alcibiades understood) a projection of personal guilt and desire onto a world which is indifferent if not downright hostile to (in)voluntary confessions, this may be excusable; but that doesn't make it right. Every philosopher is who (s)he is, and not another philosopher! So let's start again, with more method and less madness, or with a different method, which reflects a different form of madness. Only one thing will remain the same: Butler's maxim (or axiom). That will still be our watchword. For it is indeed a Word to watch, to be wary of, and to ponder.

V. The words made flesh

Every thing is what it is, and not another thing. When Moore wrote (or repeated) that line in 1903, the world was a simpler place--and the notion of place was itself much simpler than it is now. Einstein was a student in Zurich, two long years away from writing his dissertation on Brownian motion, publishing his first landmark papers on special relativity, and (as an afterthought) linking mass with energy: a sublime piece of mathematical poetry that defied the common sense belief that mass and energy are different, hence can't be compared, much less equated. Picasso hadn't moved to Paris, where he would soon make cubism into a revolutionary art form, while Lenin (living in exile) dreamt of starting a revolution in Russia, and Stravinsky (living in Russia) dreamt of composing ballets that would teach Tchaikovsky music. Analysis meant Freud--and he had just dreamt that up, in 1900, the same year as Planck found his constant, without knowing what that least unit of energy, the quantum without a proper name, would someday portend for our sense of what is [real], what we can know or predict, and above all, what we can say or conceive. What a pity that Moore never reckoned with probability; it might have made his account of 'he could have done otherwise' an analysis of possible worlds, instead of a fruitless exercise in conditional tenses [see chap. of Moore's Ethics (London, 1912), foreshadowed by Lecture VII, on "Free Will" (1898), in The Elements of Ethics, ed. Tom Regan (Philadelphia, 1991), 121-38. Hereafter EE. Indeed, the only time Moore bothered to calculate the odds, he supported the status quo (PE Ch. V, esp. pp. 161, 163), on the flimsy

grounds that following an established rule is always better (=less risky) than breaking it, unless everyone breaks it simultaneously, and thus puts a new rule in its place. Where this leaves anarchists is anyone's guess, but it leaves Moore content to sit still while the pot boils, the revolution rages, and action causes smug reaction. Alas, despite some brave words about Native Americans [PE, p. 47; quoted by Thomas Baldwin, G.E. Moore (London and New York, 1990),p. 94), it never occurs to Moore that injustice entails reform—and reform entails playing new games, while putting an end to old rules. Such is the dynamic of Moore's static dialectic, which converts a wise warning against change for change's sake into a thinly disguised plea that whatever is, must be right].

While Planck tried vainly to reduce h's [discrete bursts of energy] to continuous functions, Freud mapped the inner world of the unconscious, and sought the connection between drives and synapses, between the visible and the invisible world of the brain, spurred by promised results in neurophysiology. Kafka was still suffering in Prague--his contribution to German 'Kultur' would remain underground for awhile. Meanwhile, the Wright Brothers invented the airplane--though I should say, in deference to my hosts, that Santos Dumont helped them get off the ground, and would soon be airborne himself, thus making another dream come true, while giving the lie to received doctrines that dismissed human flight as impossible. And last but not least, from Paris (the Melies brothers' studio) to New Jersey (Edison's Black Maria) another invention was taking shape: the motion picture, which creates images faster than the eye can see, to create aesthetic wholes that are both beautiful and coherent, and often disturbing, both as art and as documents of what we call life. Indeed, Freud's unconscious realm was sublimated into mass produced fantasy before our eyes, as though embodying its own theory at the very moment of its creation. Here was a revolution in perception, in the very meaning of seeing, as images flashed on screen at a rate of 18 (or 24) frames per second raised the art of illusion (*trompe l'oeil*) to an exact science. And, as if that weren't enough, scientists were rediscovering Mendel's laws, without knowing what Mendel himself had accomplished by cross-breeding peas in the garden of his monastery at Brno, thirty-five years earlier. Obeying a divine command (be fruit fly and multiply) was all it took to link dinosaurs with DNA, as the evolutionary synthesis turned into a new Genesis.

It is never easy to assimilate what P.F. Strawson dubbed revisionist metaphysics, least of all when it doesn't come from metaphysicians (from whom we expect such flights of fancy) but from those entrusted with describing the universe, and the ways in which it appears to us (and we to it). Atonal music (Schonberg) was no less foreign than the sounds of science. It would take a long time to understand all this--and when understanding came, be it in fact (Benjamin, Lippmann, Mumford), futurity (Bunuel, DeChirico, Fuller) or fiction, including dystopian myths of Zamiatin, Huxley and Orwell (the last, born in 1903), or even the prophetic polemics of Bohr vs. Einstein on the topic of divine gambling (the bet God lost to himself and Schroedinger's cat in creating the universe), it was not the same as Leonardo's apocalyptic visions, which (as usual) anticipated nearly everything the 20th century had to offer, even the prospect of universal catastrophe that put Biblical floods to shame [for details, including all those exquisite drawings, see E.H. Gombrich, "The Form of Movement in Water and Air," in Charles D. O'Malley (ed.), Leonardo's Legacy: An International Symposium (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), 171-204, and also Sir Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci, 2nd ed., intro. Martin Kemp (New York, 1989), 1st publ. 1939]. But it certainly made a mockery of the notion that everything is what it is, and that as long as we can distinguish between variables x, y and z we are saved. Moore's world is simple, not because it is unscientific (or unartistic), but because it lacks the one thing that both art and science demand: imagination. For Moore, a chair is a chair, a table a table, a desk a desk. It would never occur to him (as it did to Eddington) to turn a table into a stream of swirling electrons, or to use the word 'stream' to describe something other than a body of water--as opposed to a confluence of H2O. Nor would he allow himself to draw a picture of a stream that might resemble abstract art--or an artifact that doesn't "resemble" anything, yet is a picture nonetheless, in ways that would make the architect of the Tractatus blush. But not Adler and Sullivan—or Frank Lloyd Wright!

VI. Unsaintly simplicity

"Simple" is the wrong word, for after all, great art, great science, great religious insight is simple too. But it is only simple in one sense, like Einstein's reduction of physics to two postulates, one of which is the constancy (and unsurpassibility) of c, or in Gandhi's case, on using non-violence to resist evil. [He too was starting to make noise as the 20th

century began, but the din from the far-off Transvaal never reached England on its way to India. Why it fell on deaf ears is a Tolstoian story that even Churchill didn't heed. To quote Hegel, quoting Schiller in punning parody, "*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgedicht*" [G.W.F. Hegel, Elements Of the Philosophy of Right (1821), ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1991), para. 340, p. 371, plus notes pp. 475-76]. It may seem odd to couple Einstein with Gandhi, but both were pacifists--and each recognized the other's genius. Moreover, it was Einstein who lamented the fact that "the unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking" at the same time as Gandhi was being assassinated (in 1948) by crude bigots whose own thinking was just as static--and just as deadly.

I'd like to say that Moore watched all this with horror, or with a mixture of fascination and dread. But he didn't seem to pay any heed to it at all--unlike (say) Russell. Given his Victorian roots, it should not surprise us that Moore can't fathom the world in which we live--can we? But he doesn't even try--or seem to realize that there is something missing from his repertoire, because (to put it modishly) he is operating with a semiotics that is too primitive to be adequate, and too hidebound to be useful. Moore's idea of language (rule-governed, coded symbolism) is limited to the here and now, the everyday, the familiar objects of macroscopic experience--what we have inherited from our predecessors, without revising it in light of recent events. [Only Whitehead attempted it, which is why his philosophy has attracted little interest in his own homeland. Yet even Whitehead's Process and Reality (New York, 1929) is apolitical, and therefore, for all of its metaphysical pretensions, incomplete].

Without betraying disappointment, Russell acknowledged that Moore, perhaps uniquely among 20th century thinkers, took little or no notice of science, and was not influenced by it at all. No wonder that Moore's ontology concerns objects, not events, that he does not wonder about wave-particle duality, or adjust his vocabulary and syntax to the microscopic realm (and the mathematical idiom required to master it). A telling criticism, yet far from being too sweeping, it isn't sweeping enough. For Moore takes no notice of modern art, or sculpture, or music, or poetry, or novels! Yet we are always told that he was the sage of Bloomsbury, that Virginia Woolf (among others) attended his seances with rapt admiration, that his own children became important poets and musicians (no doubt thanks

to Mrs. Moore), and so on. The legend, inevitably and inexorably, has created its own logic—so, like the man who shot liberty ambivalance, its flawed histrionics are now bard fact.

VII. Simply unsaintly

I wonder how Moore would analyze that! But that's quite irrelevant. For in the end, the world is a spectacle, not an argument—which is why Shakespeare will always know us better than we know ourselves. Even adults are mere babes: mixed-up adolescents, at best. Now, to an infant, as William James intoned, the world appears merely as a "blooming, buzzing confusion" [The Principles of Psychology, (New York, 1955), Vol. I, p. 488. Publ. 1890]. Don't ask how James knew that--it must be his inner child talking, or the successful "bracketing" of mediate(d) experience that led Husserl to postulate the 'epoche,' long after James had practiced what phenomenology could only preach. Language by its very nature is supposed to help us over that hurdle, to change that, and to reduce chaos to order. Too often, it does just the opposite. Even James' own empathy for the Proustian moments of his and everyone else's lost youth is compromised and contaminated by the use of categories, which are by definition foreign to infants themselves. If experience is Heraclitean, our arrangement of it is Parmenidean--a problem that perplexes everyone from Plato to Bergson. If philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence (or lack of it) by means of language, which turns us into overeducated savages [Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York, 1953 or later ed.), Part I, #194] then we are destined to lose the battle, because language is still our chief weapon in the struggle. "We lack words to say what it is to be without them," as P.F. Strawson ruefully observes, in a melancholy coda to The Bounds of Sense [(London, 1966), p. 273]. It was Kant who drove this lesson home, at least in philosophy. For he showed that we can never know the world as it is, but only our conventions for describing it--and even for calling it a world. As Strawson puts it, echoing Pope as well as Kant, "we must . . . be content with knowing ourselves" (ibid). If only we could! Despite Moore's overtures to realism, self-knowledge, both the Socratic and the Kantian varieties of it, is his point of departure and return. Hence his only way to avoid sheer despair (or utter relativism) is to insist on Butler's point, which he makes his own--

that there are irreducible differences between things, which enable us to navigate the seas of life without suffering from vertigo, nausea or sheer inability to distinguish water from land, ocean from beach. That may not be a noumenal guarantee, but it suffices--and it's all we've got. Consequently, Moore is serenely optimistic, or at least sees the glass as half-full--and as a glass, through which we glimpse something other than Alice, Ariel, and even ourselves. Thus chaos becomes order—and vice versa.

VIII. Moore's Century

Now, *any* of the developments in 20th century thought recited above might have disabused Moore of the idea that the world is rational, and that we are rational, too, to the extent that we grasp it. Such classical unity is charming, but naïve. Even a redefinition of rationality must grant Bohr's insight that the world is not only stranger than we imagine, but stranger than we can imagine. Imagine that! And yet we can, which is why transcendence transcends itself. Yet even that form of verbal magic can't save Moore. Recognizing his limits demolishes everything (sic) he believes in, and force him to rebuild his (and our) broken home from the ground up (or, if there's no foundation left, from the twilit sky down). Rather than rethink fundamentals, Moore stuck to what he knew, or thought he knew, or thought everyone knew. That was what was "simple" about Moore's approach--or too simple, and too naive to work. {'Simple' is a complex concept--hence too much for a man with a 1:1 ratio or correspondence between words and the world to swallow}. Fittingly, we can also say this another way. As a literary critic has remarked concerning Raymond Chandler, the master of detective fiction and the father of 'film noir,' "the simile . . . [is] 'the perfect device for describing a world in which everything is like everything else and nothing is itself" [Pico Iyer, quoted in Tom Hiney, Raymond Chandler: A Biography (New York, 1997), p. 281].

Try telling Moore that! How would he react to such brazen verbal promiscuity--such libidinous linguistic miscegenation? My guess is that he would be amazed, befuddled, nonplussed, embarrassed, shake his head, and write this off as nonsense, as illogical though not necessarily as immoral. But we all know from multitudes of bittersweet contradiction what it means, and not just because we have lived in (and through) a century of experimental fiction, from Proust, Faulkner, DosPassos, Joyce and (yes) Woolf to Beckett,

Borges, Marquez, Morrison, Pynchon, and DeLillo, among others. I must confess that when I read Iyer's comment, I thought of Moore immediately, not because I am obsessed with Moore, but because as much as he seemed obsessed with words, with definitions and descriptions and criteria and all the rest of the "analytic" paraphernalia, he took language for granted, in a way that writers (and people in general) never do. Though Moore grandfathered the 'S knows that P' industry, he never looked at language as a whole, as befits a thinker for whom everything (sic) is piece-meal, and nothing adds up. His mistake was similar to that of another giant, Rene Descartes, who doubted "everything," but found that he couldn't doubt that he was doubting (hence the proposition '*dubito ergo sum*,' 'I doubt, therefore I am,' which is the kindergarten version of the '*cogito*' (for the genesis of it, see *Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii* (1628), Rule XII, AT X, 421, or in English, Rules for the Direction of the Mind, trans. Dugald Murdoch, in The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1985), p. 46]. To doubt that would be to doubt the laws of logic, and after all, who can doubt those? As a mathematician, Descartes might be forgiven this lapse, though (again) in the 20th century we have learned to doubt even the law of non-contradiction, or at least to reformulate it. But Descartes never doubted that even in his solitude he was communicating when he said (or wrote) something. Hence he presupposed the very thing he was trying to prove—which by his own standards, begs the question. If doubt requires a doubter, than solipsism is self-defeating. Which it is--but only because by definition, language is social--public, not private, as Wittgenstein showed in 1953, in the Investigations [Part I, #309]. As though it needed proof, especially after Russell's dictum ("I always wanted to meet another solipsist") dissolved the whole dilemma into one apodictic aphorism.

IX. . . . And (not) ours

In Ch. VI of PE, Moore proposes an "isolation test" of (intrinsic) value (PE 187). Whatever the merits of this procedure, we should not isolate Moore's work from the world, or keep it in a vacuum, safe from all contact with the misery of everyday human existence. The boundaries of Moore's verbal geography have political as well as moral consequences. Let me illustrate, this time by using examples that are a little closer to home--and to real (as opposed to idle) problems. In 1903--that magical year--the United States invaded Panama,

in order to secure the canal zone a decade before the Canal itself was completed. This prompted Ruben Dario to write an impassioned poem, "To Roosevelt," denouncing the American president as an invader, a false apostle of progress, and (last but not least) as an atheist--or an idolater. At about the same time, Brazil was coming to terms with the scholarship of Euclides da Cunha, whose magisterial study "*Os Sertoes*" [Rebellion in the Backlands, trans. Samuel Putnam (Chicago, 1944)] had just been published the year before. In the Preliminary Note to that volume (p. xxxii), Euclides quotes the French historian [Hippolyte] Taine, who decried the tendency of many scholars to miss the wood for the trees, to get all the dates right yet lie about what matters most, to alter the meaning of events through subtle forms of deceit, to (as Taine put it) copy down all the facts but disfigure the soul, and above all, to see only what they want to see--a barbarian among the barbarians, an ancient among the ancients. I wonder what Moore might have thought if he had read this passage, or come across it somewhere else. Would he have gotten the point? Sartre did, though not with Taine's (or Euclides') help. For as he said so often, we are condemned to freedom--a live paradox which we can never live down [*L'Etre et le Neant* (Paris, 1943), pp. 541, 586; Being and Nothingness, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York, 1956), pp. 623, 677), making it impossible for anyone to be human, while at the same time making it impossible to be anything else. Thus the price of understanding is misunderstanding. Intimacy entails mystery, and every dialogue leaves us more alone than before. It follows that we are free only to confront our unfreedom. Freedom is "total and infinite" (EN 589; BN 680) precisely because we can never enjoy it; we are always what the Other makes of us, and we in turn (re)make the Other in our own warped image of her, thereby missing ourselves both going and coming. Stereotypes rule, which predestines perpetual estrangement, till death do us reunite. Such agonized ambivalence is too much for Moore to handle--and it means that he can no more understand human relationships (whether conducted in good faith or bad) than he can account for space-time, or the collapse of gravity (and galaxies) inside a black hole. [Although Russell does pay tribute to Moore for stimulating his awareness of the defects of "…the relational theory of space and time" in modern (meta)physics. See PM, p. 446n.]. In light of that, what would he make of Brazil--a nation that defies definite description, is in constant search of its own identity, yet is a witness to the sober fact (all but self-evident) that there is only one race, the damned human

race? A man accustomed to eggs and toast for breakfast and kidney pie for supper can only stomach '*moqueca*' [or Cajun gumbo] if he has room in his pantry for a melting pot. I trust my analogy is clear, even if the ingredients of the stew are all mixed together, belying the notion that every smell or flavor is what it is, and not another.

X. Cheap Shots, Straight Talk, and Mixed-Up Bags

I don't want to triumph over Moore in a Whiggish way, with the benefit of hindsight. I don't expect him to be C.S. Peirce (whose name no one but James knew, for the longest time) or Saussure, or to have studied linguistics, mastered structural anthropology, and be able to duel Levi-Strauss, Chomsky and Eco blind-folded, but anachronisms aside, is it too much to ask someone to see what is there, even through the filter (or prison) of words, which blinds us to the world it discloses? That would be (and is) the supreme irony, as history reveals every time we switch paradigms, or see old things in new ways. In Moore's case, the maxim he uses to make sense of things is in the end worthless, and does him more harm than good. For the solution to the insoluble problem of human meaning, or to the endless paradox of G.E. Moore himself, we must return to what we said earlier, when we quoted Pico Iyer's deconstruction of Raymond Chandler's use of simile. Iyer says (in so few words) that Chandler depicts a world ". . .in which everything is like something else and nothing is itself." This kind of nightmare is all too familiar to us, not just from literature but from life, whether under totalitarian tyranny or in the throes of mental illness. Sometimes the two combine, as in the late Ken Kesey's psychodrama (as a novel, 1962; as a play, adapted by Dale Wasserman, 1963; as a film, directed by Milos Forman, 1975) <u>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</u>, where medical malpractice and insane bureaucracy meet mental pathology, until they merge and become one. (What God has put asunder, let no one in their right mind rejoin).

Yet (I hear Moore saying) in order to describe a world in which everything is everything else (I am paraphrasing) and nothing is itself, a Bacchanalian revel [<u>*Phaenomenologie des Geistes*</u>, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1952), p. 39; <u>Phenomenology of Mind</u>, tr. J.B. Baillie (New York, 1961) p. 105. Publ. 1807] worthy of Hegel's own favorite pagan simile of the dialectical ballet [of master and slave, of history, and of God as truth], there must be a sense in which everything is *not* everything else, in

which something *is* itself, in which sanity reigns and madness (whether feigned, like Hamlet, or real, like Ophelia, or a little of both, like the world we know) is not on the throne, or not on it permanently, and without protest. Even Orwell (who in a burst of Swiftian satire reduces the Declaration of Independence to the single word "crimethink") admits that the Newspeak dictionary is unfinished, that "orthodoxy is unconsciousness" will not be true until the year 2050, though to be sure Big Brother is planning ahead, working on it diligently, and doing everything (sic) he can to make sure that "conversations like this will be impossible" by the time '1984' is no longer a number on the calendar but a way of life--and death.

If the rest is silence, but silence is restless, it is because language itself has died an unnatural death. And that is what Moore (among others) hoped to prevent. So he is not after all a reactionary, though he lived a sheltered life, and had no idea of what the world outside his academic cloister was like. As a secular monk, Moore was naive, but not an oppressor. The question is, was he in any sense a liberator? Or only on the verge of transcendence, thanks to his insistence on the infinite regress of all inquiry, and the corresponding 'n + 1' character of all speech and discourse? If there is always a One beside a Many, unity amidst plurality, and truth underlying all sophistry, then we have our answer--as well as an answer to Derrida's 'differance,' which deconstructs itself. To put it in the metalanguage of mathematics, Kurt Goedel's incompleteness theorem (1931) proves that mathematics is inexhaustible. But that's a reason to rejoice, for it means that the last word is that there is never a last word! And isn't that what Moore proved in Chap. I of PE? A provably unprovable proposition (Goedel's sentence G) is, like the paradox of the liar, simply a way of demonstrating linguistic immortality--the only infinity we'll ever know. And even a bad infinite is better than none. No heroes, no villains--just featherless bipeds with enough pluck to refute themselves again and again, without coming to a halt. What more could we (or Turing) want, except the unattainable?

XI. The Unprinciple(d)

Even this is not the end (how could it be?), though the end is nigh (at least for countable infinities like me). For there is still a main piece of the historical puzzle that is missing. How could Moore content himself with Platonic platitudes, while all around him the world was dying and being reborn? How, one might reply, could he do otherwise, and still survive? But if Moore was able to pretend that the 20th century was still the 19th, or that the sun never set on the British empire, or that the more things changed, the more they stayed the same, his contemporaries were neither so gifted nor as placid. John Maynard Keynes has recorded their restlessness and their anomie in his Two Memoirs [intro. David Garnett (London, 1949)], esp. in his long letter (which doubles as a short lecture) My Early Beliefs (1938). We owe Keynes a lot--and a lot more than we realize. As he tells us in so many words, "Moore himself was a puritan and a precisian" (81), yet his effect on the would-be libertines and free thinkers of his day was enormous. How could this be? Perhaps Moore's prissiness was the outlet for their naughtiness, the individual super-ego that allowed them to yield to their collective id. Or it may be even simpler: "we accepted Moore's religion . . . and discarded his morals" (82). By 'religion,' Keynes means Moore's emphasis on beauty and friendship as the highest goods--the aesthetic creed announced in the last chapter of PE (188-89), but turned inside out to become an advance(d) form of narcissism. "Nothing mattered except states of mind . . . chiefly our own" (83). This is not egotism but neurosis; not love of life, but fear of both the known and the unknown; not joyous spirituality but its Paulist antithesis. And it is alive and well, among those of us who have the ministerial misfortune to breathe anglo-saxon air--or any atmosphere that has been poisoned by theology.

From Platonic paradise to morbid Protestant inwardness is but a short journey, though it took nearly 2,000 years to consummate the trek. It is also a primary means of escape from the drudgery of daily life, the imperatives of the struggle for existence, the banality of upper-class evil, and the evil of imperial banality. Keynes knew what the others in his group merely sensed: that the old order had to end, or it would come to a bad end indeed. Whereas he was at the forefront of change, thanks to his role as an economist and political advisor, his old friends and peers at Cambridge were vaguely uneasy about their apathy, and indifferent about diffidence. That's why Moore's credo appealed to them--it gave them the excuse (or rationale) they needed to maintain emotional withdrawal and so,

to keep angst at bay indefinitely--until World War I forced them to be free, committing them to their own slaughter. As Keynes concedes, nodding toward D.H. Lawrence, by 1914 "we were 'done for'" (103), not because the war routed their once-quiet life, but because they didn't know how to live at all, or at least, not outside the confines of their own privileges. Moore's "faith" in "love, beauty and truth" (86) was the perfect gospel for the endless childhood of study and prayer--or study and play. As Thomas Baldwin emphasizes, "Before the First World War this gospel appealed primarily to the artists and intellectuals of Bloomsbury; but in the post-war period, when it seemed to many that politics was irredeemably corrupting, Moore's message . . . had a much wider appeal" [PE, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1993), ed. intro., pp. xxxiii-xxxiv]. That generation, as Keynes observes, never read Moore ("My Early Beliefs," in Two Memoirs, p. 81). Hence their enthusiasm for Moore was directly proportional to their unfamiliarity with his work. Every apostle is an apostate; every disciple is a traitor. Yet at first the master had some direct effect on those who basked in his fame, and traded on his name. "It was all under the influence of Moore's method" (88) that one learned how to make "vague notions clear" by "asking exact questions," much as Socrates did long ago, in the bustling Athenian '*agor*a.'

But whereas Socrates was persecuted, prosecuted and punished for his maieutic 'chutzpah,' Moore lectured to a docile audience, as well as preaching to a converted one. Hence he did not have to worry about the wrath of grown-ups, only the naiveté of adult children, which he shared. [For testimony as to Moore's childlike innocence and naiveté, as well as his lack of vanity, see esp. Levy, Apostles, Epilogue, pp. 293-94]. As Keynes says, with dry wit for which he is justly renowned, "it is remarkable how wholly oblivious he managed to be of the qualities of the life of action and also of the pattern of life as a whole. He was existing in a timeless ecstasy" (92), much like the proprietor of the thought-shop, suspended above the stage (and the world) in [Aristophanes'] The Clouds. Socrates proved more worldly than his critics; but Moore, a member of the elite though by no means a snob or an elitist, had no critics, or none who sent him and his ideals to the gallows, which is why he never had to bring his philosophy down to earth, or make it relevant to anything outside itself.

There is something sad and spiteful about this tragic-comic spectacle. As Lord Keynes concludes, with haughty sarcasm, "the New Testament is a handbook for politicians

compared with the unworldliness of Moore's chapter [VI, in PE] on The Ideal" (94). No wonder the British were "'done for'" (95): with friends like Moore, they didn't need enemies. They were so out of touch with reality that even the roar of bombs could not waken them out of their deep slumber, except to reinter them in the graves that were already awaiting them in Flanders Field. When the war came, it was anti-climactic; the real war had already been fought, and lost, because the best and the brightest fled from themselves, succumbing to the temptations of eternal truth, leaving the rest of us (as Kierkegaard would say) to face the worst. Maybe a bad infinite is worse than none. Just ask Hitler--or his victims.

XII. End of an Era

I'm surprised that Moore's commentators don't sense the sour, ironic, mocking tone of Keynes' comments (Regan, BP 17). His dry wit, coupled with genuine affection for Moore, make it hard to see the indictment for what it is. The epithet "better than Plato" (94) is a stinging barb, not a ringing compliment. So is the sequel: "Moore had a nightmare once in which he could not distinguish propositions from tables. But even when he was awake, he could not distinguish love and beauty from the furniture" (ibid). Thus the philosopher of common sense, the guy who maintains that everything is what it is and not another thing, is both Platonic and surreal. What's more, he doesn't even know it. Like charity, or the examined life, analysis begins at home. If and when Moore wakes up from his dream he'll discover that his real ontological nightmare has just begun: one in which all sacred cows from London to Calcutta and back are black, white, multi-colored, in short, perfectly imperfect beings, living and dying in an absurd yet priceless world.

Of course, I don't expect that to happen any time soon. But (like an Indian sage) I can be patient, wait as long as necessary, or as long as it takes, until the final reincarnation, the karmic cleansing of Moore's merry old oversoul is complete. As the somber poet sings, "Universe, vast universe/if I had been named Eugene/that would not be what I mean/but it would go into verse/faster" ['Seven-Sided Poem,' repr. in Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Traveling in the Family, trans. Thomas Colchie (New York, 1986), p. 3]. Such tranquility is worthy of us beasts of burden, "and after this it is hard to keep chewing away at our truth" ['An Ox Looks at Man,' ibid., p. 103]. Yet chew we must, even when the meal is

indigestible, and the communion of hearts and minds is postponed forever by mutual misunderstanding. The same voice warns us that "all history is remorse" [quoted in Marshall C. Eakin, Brazil: The Once and Future Voice (New York, 1997), p. 159]. So far, so bad. But there is always tomorrow--always another provably unprovable sentence, or sunrise, or even a "supposed existence" (de Andrade, p. 133) that may be Quixotic, Pickwickian, or mere fiction (possible heaven) rather than fact (actual hell). Under the circumstances, "A time comes when death doesn't help/A time comes when life is an order/Just life, without any escapes" ('Your Shoulders Hold Up the World," de Andrade, p. 29). That is the antidote to Moore's Platonic pessimism, which yearns for the infinite yet renounces the infinities around us, just as Moore is the remedy for self-destructive nihilism, including the luxury of an obscene belief in unbelief. Inevitably, the postmodern Bacchanalian debacle continues, as we stagger from one form of decadence to another. The 20th century tried to ignore the past and (as Santayana foresaw) ended up repeating it. The 21st century is already so overloaded with the past that it may not have the courage to begin anew--or to pretend that the past is past, if only to recreate it as we unchain and then rebind ourselves to the wheel of fate. Alas, I keep forgetting that every century is what it is, and not (even in its endless video replay) another century. As American football coach George Allen exhorted, without benefit of Zen, Zeno or St. Augustine, "the future is now." Like Yogi Berra, Allen had a knack for oxymorons-and the oracular. But there is wisdom in his folly, and a jeremiad in his Joycean jest. Can we see it through the mental fog that surrounds and enfolds us? Or are we reduced to Heideggerean ontobabble about unhiddenness (aletheia), from which nothing can hide or enframe itself, not even nothingness? Now there's pious platitudes that give bad infinity a bad name!

Faulkner had it right: "the past isn't over; it isn't even past"(Gavin Stevens' tag line, in Requiem for a Nun [New York, 1951], Act III). Yet (speaking of classical allusions, not to mention delusions, which no amount of ecstatic therapy can cure) when the past unites with the future--not collides, but unites--we will at last dwell in and on the present, in the house of the Lord, at home in the wilderness, for the first and last time. Until then, everything is still up for grabs, just where Moore (the Socratic Platonist) left it. Behind the veil of illusion lies, not the quest for certainty but the certainty of the Sisyphean quest, the cunning of confident self-doubt that turns defeat into victory. Like Socrates, who knew that

he knew nothing, Moore turns history into ahistory through the eternal recurrence of self-annihilating, self-deprecating self-centeredness. For Descartes, who perfected this approach, everything revolves around us, even when it doesn't; the Copernican revolution is really Ptolemaic, insofar as the world cannot exist without me, and only exists thanks to me. What a profoundly playful inversion of divine 'logos' and Biblical chronology (John 1:1), moving as it does from God world and self to self (soul), God and world, authoring a new scripture of self-created self-validated 'I am who am' that makes atheism an afterthought, dualism a corollary of angst, and existential angst a by-product of the divinity of self-contemplation.

That's not what Aristotle had in mind when he posited 'thought thinking itself' Metaphysics Bk. XII (Lambda), 1072b20 ff.], but it's more Gallic than Greek, and marks the difference between self-enclosed worlds and closed self-worlds. One is finite, the other infinite (or unfinished); one is harmonious, the other dissonant. Neither one brings progress, except in measureless misery. The arrogant humility (or humble arrogance) of the '*cogito*' is the "Om" that calls forth first-person linguistic presence (the mantra that keeps me alive, and the universe afloat, so long as I sustain myself by the sheer force of oral or textual repetition) the sole test and token of fitness: a play within never-ending word play, as hypnotically circular as it is self-consciously self-referential. By such *a priori* (=self-fulfilling) standards, it follows that nothing follows, since the self is its own universe, absent God and other minds. The problem of the criterion becomes the criterion of the problem. Moore's epistemology is but a footnote to Cartesian egomania, to the humanist rhetoric of absolute religion run radical rational riot. It names names, names itself, and names the world in its own self-image. In such a tidily disordered situation, Moore's celebrated "Refutation of Idealism" (published, by karmic coincidence, in the same month as PE, and just as the Boston Beantowners [later the RedSox] were winning the very first World Series) is really its last gasp: for the argument of that essay [Mind, vol. 12 (1903), pp. 433-53] is based on the premise that everything is and must be what it is, not what I think or imagine it to be. However, to prove that there are such states of affairs, in short, that the world exists outside me, I must assume the very opposite: for it depends on me to prove its alleged independence, which makes it utterly dependent on my inference to the contrary. QNED. [For a comprehensive account of these issues, see E.D. Klemke, A

Defense of Realism: Reflections on the Metaphysics of G.E. Moore (Amherst, NY, 2000). I am sure that the late Prof. Klemke would not agree with me about this, but I want to register my gratitude to him for a lifetime of friendship and moral support, not to mention the noble example he set for all of us by his magisterial scholarship]. By this last elenchus, idealism is vindicated despite (or thanks to) Moore's protestations. Berkeley was almost right: '*esse est concipere*,' to be is to be conceived; or in this case, to be is to be deceived, as Augustine taught Descartes [cf. Stephen Menn, Descartes and Augustine (Cambridge, 1998),esp. pp. 55, 290, 318] by making Fallibility infallible, nescience omniscient, and vice (= Original Sin) virtuous (the order of self-discovery = the ascent of autarky). What would Bishop Butler think of that, if he 'noused' anything at all? Everything is what it is, but nothing is what it's cracked up to be. Discreet as I am, ain't that the whole truth?

XIII. Concluding Unsemiotic Prescript

If there's anything we can learn from all this, it's that language is far too protean to be confined to prearranged conceptual quarters. Like life, language bursts its bonds and refuses to follow rules. Change is the only constant; failure to adapt spells death, or sheer intellectual irrelevance. But curiously enough, this doesn't mean that Moore is defunct, passé, or cognitively obsolete. On the contrary! Moore stood still while everything (sic) around him changed or went far away. However, since ideas, like planets or galaxies, inevitably revert to their origins, sooner or later even our rebellious last century is bound to return to its source. The more things change, the more they repeat the prodigal rhythm, until they reenter the mental womb and call it home. That is the secret of Moore's endurance, his longevity, his eternal staying power. He will outlast every fad, every burst of novelty, serene and centered amidst flames of revolt and screams of despair. For he knows that he knows nothing, and that by the same token, complete ignorance is self-refuting. For if 'All chance, all love, all logic, you and I,/Exist by grace of the Absurd' [W.H. Auden, 'In Sickness and in Health' [1940], repr. in Collected Poetry of W.H. Auden (New York, 1945)], then quite absurdly, the absurd cannot exist, any more than darkness without light, death without life, or lies without truth. What could be more fitting, more poetic, or more reductive, if not redemptive, than that? There's nothing creative about Moore, except steadfast refusal to destroy himself, or to let philosophy commit verbal

suicide. Even professional nihilists should be grateful for that. But we live among amateurs.

So, like Parmenides, we come back to where we began, though far from unmoved about how we got here. We must accept the fact that we can't accept Moore's ultimate facts, while admitting that there are certain ultimate facts about Moore, which no future revision of our own thought can revise. Moore is what he is, and not what we wish he were. That completes the hermeneutic circle, though not the odyssey. Blanketed by innocent ignorance, ignorant innocence, and the depths of his own shallowness, Moore is everything he is, and not another Moore. But what's the identity in difference, so long as thinking about him makes him so? We will never give up trying to understand him, if only because there is nothing to understand. His century is gone. Ours is upon us. If we hurry, we may yet catch up with him before it's too early. Between fixity and fluidity, ephemerality and finality, words that mean nothing and sighs that mean everything, between test-tube babies and mass murder, pseudo-science and ersatz religion, exclusive and inclusive politics, hedgehogs and foxes, lumpers and splitters, monists and pluralists, rationalists and empiricists, Platonists and Aristotelians, liberals and conservatives, males and females, and the androgynous 'both/and' that must supersede everything that it has already incorporated in one gigantic 'Aufhebung' that must take in all the rest, we will prevail. We will find out who we are by learning who we were, so that we can get from here to there and become what we were meant to be. Bluntly, to eff the ineffable, one must first define the indefinable. That's (what's) good about goodness, or the essence of good, or *the* good--or just the . . . or maybe just *an*, so that at last (as Nietzsche hoped) we can use history instead of abusing it, recover our composure instead of suffering from failure of nerve, and learn to respect our ancestors, even as we topple them from their pedestals and inherit their frail mortality as our own. That would be worth all the effort--and make transcendence a thing of the past. For when we transcend transcendence, immanence is all we need. Then we can stop being Platonic [see Regan in EE, ed. intro., p. xxxii], show the fly the door, and start being ourselves. It may take a century for that to happen. Or even an eternity. The way I figure it, we have all the time we need, and not a moment to lose. What could be more reasonable? But the heart has its reasons, as Pascal deduced with great finesse. Therefore, I'll let another poet (rather than a philosopher) have the last word (sic):

"I speak of new cities and new people./I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes./I tell you yesterday is a wind gone down, a sun dropped in the west./I tell you there is nothing in the world/only an ocean of tomorrows,/a sky of tomorrows./I am a brother of the cornhuskers who say/at sundown:/Tomorrow is a day." [Carl Sandburg, 'Prairie' (Cornhuskers, 1918), repr. in The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg, (1951), rev. ed., intro. Archibald MacLeish (New York, 1970), p. 85]. No one ever said it better, not even old Ecclesiastes—the original plagiarist. Them's fightin' words-words worth dying (and living) for, as long as the fate of humanity remains an open question. To mix metaphorical masters, do not go genteely into that ungood night, 'less you be goin' home, home on the rage, having herd every discouraging word. Go loudly--or by making so much infernal racket that they can no longer pretend not to hear it. In short, any way that wakes up the dead, revives the living, and puts the long-gone future to cacophonous sleep is OK by me. It might even turn Principia Ethica into Leopold Bloomsburied treasure, an ode to human rites, a manifesto of destiny. That'll be the day, pilgrim.