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**Maria van der Schaar.** *G. F. Stout and the Psychological Origins of Analytic Philosophy.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 174pp. \$100 Hardcover. ISBN 978-0-230-24978-3.

Reviewed by Consuelo Preti

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**Review: *G. F. Stout and the Psychological Origins of Analytic Philosophy*, by Maria van der Schaar**

Consuelo Preti

The story of the origins of analytic philosophy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has tended to focus heavily on the rejection of idealism by G. E. Moore and by Bertrand Russell as young philosophers at Cambridge. Certainly neo-Hegelian idealism was in its philosophical heyday in Cambridge and Oxford in the waning years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. F. H. Bradley, whose own Absolute idealism reigned in philosophy during this period, was much admired by the young philosophers. In addition, both Moore and Russell, in recollection, cite the idealist J. M. E. McTaggart, one of their undergraduate teachers and a fellow Apostle, as an important influence. Russell went so far as to dedicate his first book to McTaggart; Moore, for his part, claimed that listening to McTaggart deny the existence of Time was a notion so “perfectly monstrous” to him that it (nearly immediately) pressed him even harder to study philosophy.

It turns out, however, that the intellectual context in which analytic philosophy at Cambridge developed was not as uniformly metaphysically idealist, Bradleyan or neo-Hegelian as may have once been thought. What Maria van der Schaar has shown over the course of her work for the past 25 years or so is that the intellectual influences of early analytic philosophy extended beyond Cambridge, beyond England, and beyond—*pace* Dummett (1991)—logic and philosophy of language. This book is one recent product of her work on this subject, which first saw light as a dissertation, then in a series of papers, and now appears in a revised and expanded version of her early work for the *History of Analytic Philosophy* series (edited by

Michael Beaney).

Here van der Schaar argues that the anti-psychologism that she (rightly) notes is an important feature of the context from which early analytic philosophy emerged was related to the developing science of psychology in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. She takes as her focus the work of G. F. Stout, one of Moore’s and Russell’s teachers at Cambridge and a prominent philosopher-psychologist of his day. Stout had been an undergraduate at Cambridge himself, studying classics and moral sciences. He became a Fellow of St. John’s in 1884, and was university lecturer in moral sciences between 1893–1896. His 1896 *Analytic Psychology*, along with his 1899 *Manual of Psychology*, were long held to be classics in the field. (Moore, for instance, used Stout’s *Manual* when he began his career at Cambridge in 1911.) Both Moore and Russell attended Stout’s lectures in the history of philosophy as undergraduates, and both cite him in recollection as an influence. Stout was editor of *Mind* until 1921 (Moore succeeded him). Between 1903 and 1936 Stout was at St. Andrews as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics.

In her first two chapters, van der Schaar shows how Stout’s psychological views could have been influential on Moore and on Russell in the late 1890s. In chapters three and four, she goes on to argue for the centrality and importance of Stout’s work for this early period in the evolution of analytic philosophy, with examinations of Stout on psychologism and error (Stout’s work between 1899–1907); and of his developing views of judgment, propositions, and (what we would now call) propositional attitudes (Stout’s work between 1908–1944). Her last chapter is a discussion of a variety of ways in which Stout’s work has relevance for contemporary philosophy; her emphasis is on Stout’s view of “tropes,” and his theory of predication, to formulate and explain the nature of universals (including relations) and their relation to particulars.

My focus here will be the first two chapters of van der

Schaar's book, in order to address in more detail the interesting claims she makes concerning Stout's influence on Moore and on Russell, and on the foundations of analytic philosophy. According to the usual story, Moore and Russell both came to reject the idealist emphasis on the mind-dependence of reality upon thought, arguing instead for a form of logico-metaphysical realism about propositions in ethics and in mathematics. Moore's 1899 paper "The Nature of Judgment" defended the view that the object of judgment (the proposition) was entirely independent in nature from its being thought. Russell, during his long lifetime, repeatedly and consistently credited Moore with having effected a "rebellion" and a "revolution" from the smothering nature of Bradleyan idealism with this objectivist view; and, as is well-known, lauds it for having prompted the necessary and overdue catalyst for his own philosophy of mathematics.

An important feature in the turn from idealism to analytic philosophy was a form of anti-psychologism or anti-subjectivism about the objects of thought. This notion is sometimes formulated in a sort of shorthand as a distinction between act (of mind) and object (of thought); and it is often claimed that the source of a key influential anti-psychologism in this period was Frege, whose own important discoveries in logic were decidedly non-psychologistic. What van der Schaar's work however solidly confirms is that an important anti-psychologism did indeed influence Cambridge and did come from Germany and Austria; but it was not the anti-psychologism commonly attributed to Frege's logical innovations. Rather, as she argues, we can locate a key element of the relevant anti-psychologism in the ideas of the psychologists on the continent, particularly in Austria.

In his (1991), Michael Dummett claimed that important to the tradition of analytical philosophy as Russell and Moore may have been, "neither was the, or even *a* source of analytical philosophy ... the sources of analytical philosophy were the writ-

ings of philosophers who wrote, principally or exclusively, in the German language" (ix). So far so good: we can agree (as would van der Schaar). But Dummett also asserted that Russell and Moore, though central, "sprang from a very different philosophical milieu" (1). But this was a mistake. What Dummett missed was that Russell and Moore in fact *did* have access to the work and the tradition of thought that he claims as initiating the approach we now call analytical philosophy. Van der Schaar here elucidates a route along which this work could have been transmitted from the continent to Cambridge.

Brentano's conception of intentionality is one notion at the center of these continental influences. It is a commonplace by now that intentionality represents one way in which a fundamental anti-psychologism began to characterize the new philosophy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The (so-called) intentionality thesis is often rendered on Brentano's behalf as the view that mental states are not wholly subjective in that they are directed onto, representational, or "about" their objects. Dummett (1991, 3), for example, even specifically rendered Brentano's intentionality thesis as positing the object of a mental act as "external in the full sense of being part of the objective world independent of the subject."

There are, however, a number of objections to the construal of Brentano's original intentionality claim as involving a directness or aboutness to a specifically non-phenomenal or non-mental object. Brentano's own formulation of the nature of mental states is that they are characterised by what he called the "intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object." The issue thus turns on what Brentano could have meant by his attribution of "intentional inexistence" to psychic phenomena. On the face of it, this does not appear to explicitly introduce a mind-independent ontological object of thought, at least not absent some serious scholarly dispute. Smith (1994), Jacquette (2004), and Crane (2014), for example, who disagree with Dummett's

reading, render “intentional inexistence” with an emphasis on the “in” in “inexistence,” as more faithful to Brentano’s text. Objects of thought are components of thought—they are “in” the thought; as what the thought concerns. But there is no obvious entailment from being an object of thought to being an extra-mental object.

Van der Schaar makes an important scholarly move in the context of this discussion when she argues that disputes on this very issue led to a variety of breaks between Brentano with his students: in particular, between Brentano and Twardowski. Twardowski, she argues, is the real likely ontological source for the relevant view of the non-psychological objectivity of the objects of thought that influenced the philosophers at Cambridge. What van der Schaar argues is that Stout, though greatly sympathetic to Brentanian formulations, nevertheless modified the Brentanian line of argument fairly significantly. In particular, she argues that (i) Stout’s account of the nature of judgment, which makes use of a tripartite scheme of act, object and content, was one that was a significant feature of the criticisms of Twardowski on Brentano’s account of mind and thought; and (ii) this the most likely influence on what she calls the specifically British logical realism of Moore’s (and Russell’s) own approach to the nature of thought.

The best scholarship, of course, raises questions (and then further questions) about which there can be detailed debate. There is little doubt that Stout played a role in the development of Moore’s early views. But there are, I think, a few difficulties in reconstructing exactly how. Neither Brentano, Twardowski nor Stout had an account of the nature of judgment that is a plainly direct forerunner to Moore’s. In Brentano’s account of judgment there is no straightforward sense in which his attribution of “intentional inexistence” (or what today we call “intentionality”) to states of mind is metaphysically realist in the relevant way. Stout’s (and Twardowski’s) tripartite division of

mental phenomena in terms of act, content and object does not feature in Moore’s account of judgment; and there is, in any case, no evidence that Moore read Twardowski before 1897, if at all. Moreover, Moore certainly does not give a well-worked out theory of the nature of mind—let alone intentionality—in his early work. Moore’s formulation of the nature of judgment was, as we would put it today, a prototype Fregean-Russellian one, which he produced with no knowledge of Frege *and* drawing logico-metaphysical conclusions that pitched Russell headlong into producing *Principles of Mathematics*. This does certainly raise a few questions as to how he came to it.

Now as van der Schaar argues, Stout, following both Brentano and Herbart, divided psychology into the synthetic (the “construction of a psychological theory on the basis of certain abstract principles”), and the analytic or descriptive (a taxonomy of the concrete phenomena of mind). He addressed the taxonomy first, in his 1896 *Analytic Psychology*; in 1898–99, he added an account of the theoretical, in his two-volume *Manual of Psychology*. Stout’s *Analytic Psychology* adapted the Brentanian approach to the newly developing science of psychology, and supplied, in particular, an account of the elements of mind of interest to the psychologist. Van der Schaar’s case for Stout’s influence on Moore’s conception of judgment thus turns on the view that Stout was critical of the Brentanian taxonomy in his *Analytic Psychology*. The question we might want to clear up is whether or not his criticism could have supplied the realism—even in part—that might have inspired Moore’s account of the nature of judgment.

There is no easy answer to this, as there is no straightforward way to characterise Stout’s philosophical identity. Stout was celebrated by his contemporaries for the way in which he embraced a variety of philosophical views and positions, and for the way in which he worked them into a whole throughout his career. But, as van der Schaar’s discussion of Stout’s views

makes clear, we can claim that in spite of the heterogeneity of his *philosophical* commitments, Stout was an uncompromisingly common-sense *psychologist*. It is only in his later work that Stout turned his attention deliberately to supplying a metaphysics to complement his earlier descriptive accounts of mentality, as van der Schaar goes on to discuss; but his general approach (especially early on) was never that of a stark raving metaphysical idealist.

Stout's analysis of judgment in *Analytic Psychology* can be seen thus as circumspectly that of a proper contemporary mental scientist: avoiding any commitment, that is, to an ontology of the content or objects of judgment. But it is precisely Moore's ontological account of the nature of the object of judgment that was the innovative step, in this context. Van der Schaar here argues that Twardowski was among the first of Brentano's students to have offered an ontological interpretation of the object of judgment as entirely independent of the act and the content of judgment, and she makes the convincing case that (i) Stout knew of Twardowski's work; (ii) that an anonymous review of it in *Mind* is Stout's; and (iii) that Stout's specific tripartite distinction between act, content, and object in *Analytic Psychology* is an adaptation more directly of Twardowski's than of Brentano's. In fact, as Nasim (2008, 20–21) has argued, Stout himself later claimed that he had independently arrived at the very Twardowskian tripartite distinction in question by 1896. The thorny issue here, however, is just how much explicit ontological mind-independence Stout attributed to the object of thought, having distinguished it from content as well as from act of mind.

Van der Schaar is well aware of this; and she is right to say that we cannot attribute to the early Stout the precise logical realism that turned up in Moore's view of the nature of judgment (73). Moreover van der Schaar does acknowledge that Stout does not give a well-worked out ontology for objects of judgment in *Analytic Psychology*. But we can still make sense of

the line of influence of Stout on early analytic philosophy: that the realism in Stout can be understood as that of the common-sense psychologist of the time, not the metaphysician. Van der Schaar's examination here makes it plausible in Stout's case to argue that the common-sense psychologist of the time could and did take an anti-subjectivist stance about the individuation of a variety of mental states. The way to make sense of this, as van der Schaar's investigation makes convincing, is to take the view that Stout is willing, as a *philosophical* psychologist, to acknowledge the object of thought as not a mental entity; but as a *scientific* psychologist he is indifferent where the chips fall on the question of the existence or non-existence of the object of thought. And this, of course, is because he took the science of psychology to be directed toward the object as we think of it. One thing it is important to emphasize here is that the study of philosophy at Cambridge—and particularly during the late 1890s—was composed of the study of ethics, psychology and metaphysics. And what we see, in van der Schaar's examination of Stout's views, is a diligent balance of metaphysics and psychology that was central to the study of the moral sciences (philosophy) at Cambridge, and also important in terms of understanding philosophy's evolution during this period.

Van der Schaar goes on in her later chapters to explain that after about 1900 Stout began to turn his attention to applying his earlier psychological views and formulations to more ontological applications of those views and formulations. She discusses in detail two significant questions for Stout: (i) how error is possible, and (ii) how the objectivity of thought is possible. I will close here with a glance at one of the most interesting elements of van der Schaar's account of Stout's more ontological and metaphysical evolution.

Stout's view of propositions, according to van der Schaar, is that a proposition (or a judgment) is in effect an answer to a question: to grasp the proposition, we must determine the ques-

tion. This, as van der Schaar explains, is because Stout's view of error, and thus (indirectly) of the bearers of truth and falsity, is that the world does not contain falsehoods—it does not contain non-actual states of affairs which correspond to our false judgments. The objectivity of truth is guaranteed; but what counts as a bearer of truth and falsity, as van der Schaar explains Stout's position, is determined by a mind that makes a distinction between question and answer. We know that one of the issues that plagued Moore's early realism about propositions was how a proposition could be false: a proposition is composed of concepts (it is, in fact, a concept) and their necessary relations. All there is, according to Moore, are these entities—reality consists of concepts and their relations. But then of course it becomes tricky to account for what we would ordinarily call false propositions, since the world does not present itself to our grasp as relations of things that are *not* the case.

Likewise, of course, for Russell's own puzzles concerning denotation. How do we account for expressions that denote nothing? What do they mean? One thought-provoking connection that van der Schaar investigates here (97) is Stout's criticism of Russell's 1905 "On Denoting," which Stout himself refereed for *Mind* (as editor) and was not apparently inclined to publish as it stood. Stout had corresponded with Russell (circa 1903), supplying a criticism of Russell's conception of the denoting concept. Stout remonstrated that a propositional constituent must be apprehended immediately, never via some intermediary. According to van der Schaar, Russell addresses this in the variety of drafts of the work that he ultimately published as "On Denoting." The dispute centred on the difference between them concerning the kind of entities that can be apprehended in this context. Stout took the view that a propositional constituent is just what the proposition is about; if that entity is non-existent, then it is conceived as "possible". According to Stout, not just Russell's theory of denoting concepts, but also his 1905 theory of de-

scriptions (which jettisons the denoting concept) both implicate non-instantiated universals (which can be all the same apprehended directly by us), which Stout took to be incoherent. As van der Schaar explains, there is no need, according to Stout, for a conception of non-instantiated universals. Stout's own solution to the problem of non-denoting definition descriptions (98) introduces his notion of an "objective question". The right way to look at a sentence like "The present King of France is bald," according to Stout, is to claim that it has no truth-value. This is because, on Stout's view, truth and falsity can only arise when there *can be* a distinction between question and answer. So this (by now notorious) sentence, on Stout's view, does not express a proposition at all. To express a proposition, it would have to be an answer to a question; and there is no objective question—no determinate state—as to the baldness of the present King of France.

As van der Schaar notes (97–98), Stout corresponded with Russell in the period 1903–1905, encouraging him (among other things) to consider the logical point of view of the notion of a question conceived in this way. It is of great interest to the scholar of this period to have a further insight into the evolution of Russell's views of denotation and of definite descriptions (among other things), and the connection that van der Schaar makes to Stout's criticisms—and the role he may have played as referee and editor of the journal where "On Denoting" first appeared—is quite novel. The perspective van der Schaar brings here is, as we have noted, a valuable addition to the detailed account of the early development of analytic philosophy at Cambridge. But it is also a good example of the way in which history of philosophy done right can uncover added philosophical and contextual insights relevant to a central and deeply important period in the development of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy.

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