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FIVE DIALOGUES ON KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY.

The University of Texas at Austin, Ph.D.,
1972
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1972

FIVE DIALOGUES on KNOWLEDGE and REALITY

by

Robert Elliott Allinson, A.B.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

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for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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May, 1972

FIVE DIALOGUES ON KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

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FOR IRENE

PREFACE

This dissertation is interested in a plane of reality which is such that it can only be known with the criteria of knowledge given in the dissertation, namely: (i) that it is unchangeable; (ii) that it cannot be mistaken; (iii) that it is identical with its object. The question of the dissertation is what can exist and what cannot exist in solely this sense, and whether anything can exist in this sense.

But prima facie, at least, there appears to be another level of existence, the level of subjects and objects. While, given the above criteria, it may be true that we cannot know this level to exist, we certainly believe that it does. The world of subjects and objects exists on the level of belief.

The question of levels is crucial to an understanding of the dissertation. There is the level of reality, which is the level at which there is knowledge; and, there is the level of the appearance of subjects and objects which is the level at which there is belief. These levels must be kept clearly distinct from each other or else one will be led to absurd conclusions. For example, on the level of reality, all that there is is knowledge. A confusion of the two levels can prompt a question such as this one: "If all that there is is knowledge, why is it that we cannot walk through walls?" The question is asked from one level, the level of the appearance of a subject and an object, and an answer is sought from the other level, the level where there is neither subject nor object. The level of the question is preferentially disposed to the subject. The questioner thinks that the object can be

shown to be an illusion and that the subject can continue to exist in a world without objects. But the level of reality is one which takes us beyond both subjects and objects. So long as there is a belief in the subject there must be a belief in the object as well. So long as there is a subject there must be an object. On the level of subjects and objects, everything remains as before. This world, with all of its rules, must remain intact for the subject. For all practical purposes the subject must obey all the rules of the object world. But the entire world of the appearance of subject and object exists on the level of belief.

The distinction of levels bears on another issue: the evolutionary nature of the dialogues. The questions one asks and the answers that he is given are always reflective of the level he occupies. Answers given by the teacher at the beginning of the dialogues are not necessarily identical with the answers he will give at the end of the dialogues. Propositions stated as truths in the early dialogues are stated so but provisionally. These propositions must themselves be abandoned once the standpoint of reality has been achieved. They are but the rungs on a ladder. Once the ascent has been made the ladder may then be discarded.

But now even this description must be abandoned. For the distinction of levels exists only on the level of appearance. On the level of reality there are not two levels. Reality is non-dual. On the level of appearance there are two levels. But the level of appearance is but a provisional standpoint. It exists as a ladder on which we may ascend to reality. From the standpoint of reality there are not two levels. But one cannot occupy this level until one has made the ascent.

In the summer of 1970, the author travelled to India to see the great sage, Sri Padmanabha Menon, to whom he shall always be deeply indebted.

This dissertation was submitted to the Committee in January of 1972.

FIVE DIALOGUES on KNOWLEDGE and REALITY

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The thesis which is explored is that it is the split between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge which is the source of the unexplained and inexplicable residues in the solutions to epistemological problems which have been propounded by Western philosophers. These residues have been a breeding ground for skepticism, a skepticism which casts doubt on the validity of the philosophic enterprise. It is hoped that this thesis might play some role in indicating a pathway through which faith in the philosophic enterprise may be restored.

The approach taken is a multi-leveled one which is at once transcendental, metaphysical, phenomenological and empirical. It is transcendental in that the question is always how is knowledge possible? It is metaphysical in that the focal point of the inquiry is always that which is, as opposed to that which seems to be. It is phenomenological in that the inquiry is confined to the data of consciousness and makes no attempt to go beyond consciousness. It is empirical in that the final court of appeal for any argument is always pure experience.

It is demonstrated that, given the separation of the subject knower from the object of knowledge, knowledge is an impossibility. Separatist views of knowledge are taken up and analyzed in turn. Some of the views analyzed are: knowledge as caused by objects; knowledge as the knowledge of an object; knowledge as the correspondence between ideas and objects; knowledge as an act; knowledge as a possession. All of these views leave untouched the basic questions of knowledge: what is knowledge; how is the object of knowledge known; how can knowledge arise in the first place.

The object is shown to have no independent existence apart from the subject; the subject is shown to have no independent existence apart from the object. An analysis of experience reveals that no difference between subject and object is ever detected and detectable. The breakdown of experience into subjects and objects is shown to be a purely theoretical interpretation of experience, unjustified and unjustifiable in actual experience.

It is shown that it is impossible to legitimize the birth of the idea of difference, either from the world of objects or from the mind of the subject knower. That there can be an appearance of plurality is demonstrated to rest upon the reality of space and time, existences which prove to be purely ideal.

A re-integration of subject and object into the experience from which they have been dirempted provides an explanation of the possibility of knowledge, knowledge which is at once certain and of the real. An application of the perspective of non-dualism is suggested to offer philosophic solutions to such epistemological impasses as the relation of language and meaning and the universal and the particular. The relevance of an epistemological inquiry for action is indicated in such a way as to bring knowledge and existence into harmony with each other.

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FIRST DIALOGUE

Teacher: Since you have come to me as a student what is it that you wish to know?

Student: I want to know something that is certain and yet is not at the same time a mere tautology, as $A = A$. I want to know something that is certain and is not simply true because of the way words are defined. I want to know something that is certain about what really exists.

Teacher: Indeed, this is a most worthy desire. What has kept you from discovering what it is you desire to know?

Student: One day I talk with one man and I become enamoured with his beliefs. The next day I speak with another man and I find myself brought to exactly the opposite opinion. I am beginning to despair that knowledge does not exist. It seems that everything is in a constant flux and there is nothing that is unchangeable.

Teacher: If everything were in constant flux you would never be aware of it. It is only because there is something which is constant that you can be aware of change at all. Change can be detected only against a background which is unchangeable.

Student: You are saying that there is such a thing as knowledge.

Teacher: Let us not take for granted what I am saying. Let us set out together and prove whatever we may say both to your satisfaction and to mine.

Student: Excellent. I am ready for that.

Teacher: Now, tell me something that you believe.

Student: I believe that you are sitting here in front of me.

Teacher: It could be possible, however, that I am an elaborately constructed marionette whose voice is being operated by remote control.

Student: Yes, that is possible.

Teacher: The belief that you have that I am really here could be proven wrong.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: You would then change your belief that I am really here.

Student: Of course.

Teacher: Belief we may say is changeable. A belief is something about which you may be mistaken.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Now, do you believe that I am really here.

Student: Why, of course.

Teacher: Do you believe that you believe that I am here?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: What, do you mean that you might be mistaken about believing that I am here? Is it possible that you never thought that I was here?

Student: No, that is not possible. I could not be wrong about thinking that you were here. Surely, I thought that you were here whether or not you were actually here.

Teacher: Do you still want to say that you believed that you believed that I was here?

Student: No, I see now that I was mistaken to have said that. For, if I merely believed that I believed that you were here you could convince me that I may never have believed that you were here.

Teacher: Could anything occur to change your mind so that you would say that you did not believe that I was here?

Student: No.

Teacher: You cannot be mistaken, then, that you thought or believed that I was here.

Student: No.

Teacher: A belief is something about which you may be mistaken and which you may change. Here, we have an instance of something in which you cannot be mistaken and which is not subject to change. Would you be willing to name what we have here "knowledge" instead of belief?

Student: Very well.

Teacher: We have discovered two characteristics that distinguish knowledge from belief.¹ Knowledge is that in which you cannot be mistaken and knowledge is unchangeable.² The reason that you have found yourself with changing views up until now is that you have been moving on the level of belief and have not yet come to knowledge.

Student: How do we know that there is such a thing as knowledge?

Teacher: What, have you not proven it yourself? Did you not just tell me you could not be mistaken about thinking that I was here? Did we not agree that although you could be mistaken about what you were thinking, you could not be mistaken about the fact that you were thinking.

Student: I am still not perfectly clear about what you mean.

Teacher: What I mean is that you cannot be mistaken about your consciousness although you may be mistaken in what your consciousness is about.

Student: Are you saying that knowledge and consciousness are the same thing?

¹For the distinction between knowledge and belief cf., Augustine, Of True Religion, XLIX, 96.

²Plato arrives at similar conclusions. cf., Theatetus, C, 152; Republic, V, 477.

Teacher: Yes, the terms 'awareness', 'consciousness', and 'knowledge' may be used interchangeably. We use the expressions this way in our everyday language so why should we not use them in this way in our discussion here? Have you not heard someone say: "I am conscious of a flaw in your argument", or, "I am aware of what you are saying", to mean that, "I am aware that there is a flaw in your argument", or, "I know what you are saying".

Student: Very well, I accept the equivalence of meaning among the terms 'awareness', 'consciousness', and 'knowledge'.

Teacher: And we know that there is knowledge.

Student: I do not know if there is knowledge or not.

Teacher: Do you believe that you do not know if knowledge does or does not exist?

Student: No, you will not catch me up there. I know that I do not know whether or not there is knowledge.³

Teacher: Then you have yourself proved that there is knowledge in virtue of your own possession of it.

Student: Could it not be possible that I am deceived?

Teacher: Would you not have to be conscious in order to be deceived? We do not think of stones as being able to be deceived because we do not attribute consciousness to them.

Student: Yes, you are right, I would have to be conscious in order to be deceived.⁴

³Similar arguments may be found in Augustine. cf., On the Trinity, X, 1, 14; Of True Religion, XXIX, 73.

⁴Augustine says, "...it is certain, that he who is deceived, yet lives." On the Trinity XV, 12. And, Descartes, referring to the possibility of his being deceived by a cunning deceiver: "There is therefore no doubt that I exist, if he deceives me." Meditations, II.

Teacher: And did we not say that consciousness and knowledge are one and the same?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then have we not shown that it is impossible to be deceived about the fact that there is knowledge.

Student: Very well. You have convinced me that there is knowledge. But if what you mean by knowledge is only our immediate awareness then knowledge would not have any content to it. We might very well know that knowledge existed but of the existence of the vast array of phenomena in the world we would remain ignorant. To know only of the existence of knowledge would be to know only a small portion of what exists.

Teacher: What if we were to show that all that there is is knowledge. Then, to know of the existence of knowledge would not be to know of only a small portion of what exists but would be to know all reality. If we could know the existence of knowledge we would have knowledge of all existence.

Student: But it is obvious that knowledge or consciousness is not all that there is. Consciousness cannot exist by itself. All consciousness is the consciousness of something. There are things all around us which are other than our consciousness.

Teacher: Do you know these things as they exist in themselves?

Student: I am not sure of what you mean.

Teacher: Do we ever have knowledge of something as it exists independently of our consciousness, that is to say, do we ever know something as it would exist by itself were we not knowing it?

Student: Since we must always know whatever it is to be known, our only acquaintance with the object is as something known. We do not know what the

object may be in itself since we have no access to the object as it is in itself.

Teacher: Very good. We can never say then that we know what objects are like in themselves but only what they are like for us. We are not conscious of any object existing in itself but only as existing for us.

Student: True.

Teacher: If we cannot know something as it exists independently of our knowing it, how can we say that there are things all around us which are other than our consciousness? All we know is our knowledge of things, not that things exist which are other than our consciousness. If our only access to things is through our knowledge, then that things exist other than our knowledge will forever remain purely an hypothesis to us.

Student: Are we not conscious of things which are other than our consciousness?

Teacher: If we are conscious of things then they are within the field of our consciousness, are they not?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: If knowledge and consciousness are the same, then how can we say that that which we know exists outside of our consciousness? To say that that which we know exists outside of our consciousness would be to say that that which we know exists outside of our knowledge or that which we know is that which we do not know. Surely, that which is outside of our knowledge cannot be that which we know.

Student: I see what you mean. I was wrong to say that we know things which exist outside of our consciousness. But we may infer that there are things which exist outside of our conscious states.

Teacher: How do we have knowledge of things?

Student: Why, we receive our knowledge of things through our senses.

Teacher: Instead of things as they would exist in themselves were we not to know them we know only our sense impressions of things.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And all knowledge of things must come through our senses?

Student: Of course.

Teacher: And we can only know our sense impressions of things.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then how do we know that things exist which correspond to our sense impressions?

Student: I do not know my way out of this dilemma. Since we must always go through our senses we have no way of certifying the existence of things in themselves.

Teacher: How then can you say that you know a thing which is other than your knowledge? The existence of a something which corresponds to your sense impressions can at best be a theoretical existence which lacks any possibility of verification.

Student: But surely there must be something which causes my sense impressions.

Teacher: That there is a something which causes your sense impressions is again purely an hypothesis on your part. Or, do you ever have any direct experience of this causal process?

Student: The best that I can make out of the matter is that the thing as it exists in its own right produces a physical impulse which is transmitted through the air and which upon reception we transform into a mental image. This, of course, is but a bare outline of a very complicated physiological

process.⁵

Teacher: I can understand this description as a summary of a theory of how perception takes place. But now do you have a direct experience of the thing which produces the physical impulse?

Student: No, I have only the resultant mental image.

Teacher: Do you have a direct experience of the physical impulse?

Student: No, I am conscious only of my mental images. But there have been tests made which show that perception takes place as I have described.

Teacher: Are the scientists who have made these tests conscious of the thing which produces the physical stimulus, or of the physical stimulus, or of its reception prior to its transformation into a mental image or a conscious state?

Student: No, the scientists, like everyone else, perceive only the end result of the process which I have described.

Teacher: When scientists look into their instruments and see what they call an electrical impulse they are seeing not an impulse as it would exist in itself but only their mental image which as with any perception must already have been produced, transmitted, and received and transformed.

Student: True.

Teacher: No one then in the history of humanity has ever experienced a thing or an object if we mean by a thing a something which exists outside of our consciousness or whose properties which are other than our consciousness, can be ascertained.

⁵For a full theory of the physical and the physiological basis of perception, see W. Russell Brain, Mind, Perception and Science.

Student: I cannot refute what you say. But there must be something which causes what we do perceive.

Teacher: This is a belief that you possess, but it is nothing for which you can supply any proof.

Student: What of this. Suppose I am eating and I feel the surge of energy that the food gives me. Am I then not experiencing a cause directly?

Teacher: You are only experiencing one thing happening after another which is no proof that the first is the cause of the second. But even on your own theory there can be no direct experience of a cause. For all that you can know is that which you have already transformed. You cannot say that a thing which exists in itself is the cause of your experience for that thing and its causal efficacy cannot be experienced directly. All you can experience is what comes at the end point of the process. You can say nothing about its origins. The theory of perception that you have put forth is, at best, a hypothetical account of how knowledge comes to be.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: What is more, this account is not merely a hypothetical account of perception but an impossible one.

Student: How is that?

Teacher: If we take this theory you have expounded and examine it closely, we will discover that on this theory we could never come to have knowledge of a thing in the first place.

Student: This would be a most amazing consequence of a theory which is designed to explain the possibility of the perception of objects if it were to make the perception of objects impossible.

Teacher: You agree then to draw out the logical consequences of this theory.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: I must issue you fair warning that if we follow our logic rigorously we may come upon a conclusion that you may find difficult to accept. It will require philosophical courage.

Student: I am prepared. Please proceed.

Teacher: According to your theory all consciousness is the consciousness of something. Consciousness cannot be something which exists in itself or by itself.

Student: True. All consciousness is the consciousness of an object. We cannot have a consciousness which is conscious of nothing at all.

Teacher: Now, according to your theory there is no consciousness until there is the production of a physical impulse, the transmission of it through the air, and a transformation of it into an image.

Student: That is quite right. Consciousness of a thing can take place in no other way but this.

Teacher: And it takes time, I presume, for all of this to happen.⁶

Student: Yes, it takes time for all of this to take place for all processes take time. The time span, however, is a very small one. It is so small, in fact, that we are never conscious of any time lapse in perception.

Teacher: I am afraid if it takes any time at all that we should never be conscious in the first place, much less be aware of any object.

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: If in order to become conscious the mind must receive a stimulus

⁶For the argument that a span of time must elapse for perception to take place, see W. Russel Brain, Mind, Perception and Science, 4ff. This admirable book employs arguments from a scientific point of view to establish the conclusion that we do not have direct experience of an external object.

which it then transforms, what is there to receive the stimulus? If consciousness does not come into being until the end point of the process, how can it detect the presence of the stimulus at the beginning? If we are unaware before receiving a stimulus, we must always be unaware for there can be no reception if there is no one on the end of the receiving line. If we cannot become conscious until we receive an impulse how would we ever know when we received one? How would we know to refashion this impulse so as to make it into a conscious state? According to your theory, perception is a re-production. But we cannot say perception is re-production for we have no access to the supposed originals of which our conscious states are supposed to be the re-productions. If knowledge must wait upon a stimulus before it comes into existence we would never have an experience in the first place for nothing would exist to be stimulated. If there were no experience in the first place there would be nothing to reproduce and we would never come to consciousness.

Student: But how can this be? Surely we are conscious. Have we not ourselves established this earlier on?

Teacher: Precisely. It must follow then that consciousness is not a consciousness of objects.

Student: The logic of your arguments is unassailable. But I cannot give up my belief in the existence of objects. There seem to be objects all around us: trees, clouds, flowers. How can you say that these things do not exist?

Teacher: Have you ever dreamed of being in a garden and seeing trees, clouds, and flowers and later awakened to discover that the objects you thought existed did not exist at all?⁷

⁷In a dream it appears as if there are external objects and a perceiver (the subject in the dream) but the perceiver and perceived are only mental creations. Vide, The Mandukyopanisad With Gaudapada's Karika and Sankara's Commentary, Ch. II, 1.

Student: Yes, but I am not dreaming now.

Teacher: How do you know that?

Student: Because this morning I arose and I am not now in my bed.

Teacher: Have you not ever dreamed that you had arisen and later awakened to discover that you had only been dreaming that you had been awake?

Student: Yes, but in those cases I did awaken to make the discovery.

Teacher: And how do you know that you have not yet awakened?

Student: For one thing my dreams are much shorter than my waking experiences. For instance, I have lived eighteen years and can remember when I was a little child while my dreams are of a very short duration. Thus, I know that I am not dreaming now because I would not have a dream that lasted so long.

Teacher: Have you ever had a dream in which the events which took place took up a greater number of hours than the hours which you actually slept?⁸

Student: Yes.

Teacher: You can see how, in principle, it would be possible to have a dream in which the many years have passed.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And in such a dream it may appear that one is living through an entire lifetime.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And so you may be dreaming now.⁹

⁸Ibid., II, 15.

⁹The dilemma is stated as insoluble in the writings of Plato: Socrates. "...what evidence could be appealed to, supposing we were asked at this very moment whether we are asleep or awake--dreaming all that passes through our minds or talking to one another in the waking state." Theatetus. "Indeed, Socrates, I do not see by what evidence it is to be proved; for the two conditions correspond in every circumstance like exact counterparts. The conversation we have just had might equally well be one that we are merely thinking we are carrying on in our sleep..." Theatetus, 158 B, C.

Student: Wait a moment. If I am aware of the two states, waking and dreaming, then must there not be two such states? How could I have a distinction between one experience which was illusory and one which was real unless one of these experiences was, in fact, real and the other illusory? If, as you seem to imply, all life may be but a dream, how would we ever become conscious of this? Does not the idea of dream demand an experience other than dream?

Teacher: Very well thought out. Of course you say this while you are awake. In the waking state there is the idea that the dream state is not real. But this idea does not occur to you when you are dreaming.¹⁰ We have not yet decided if reality is to be found in what we call the waking state.

Student: But I have had dreams where I could fly. Was this not an illusion?

Teacher: While you were dreaming did you find this to be an illusion or could you actually fly in your dream?

Student: In the dream I could fly.

Teacher: How can you say that that was not the reality and now it is an illusion that you cannot fly?¹¹

Student: But I was not really flying then. If someone had been watching at my bedside he would testify that all the while my body had remained horizontal on my bed.

Teacher: Have we established the existence of this someone?

Student: No.

¹⁰Sankara argues that within dreams we make a distinction between the real and the unreal. The subject in the dream can distinguish between what he imagines and what is really happening in the dream. Thus, the distinction between the real and the unreal cannot be used to differentiate the dream state from the waking state. Vide, Op. cit., II, 10.

¹¹Chuang Tze, the Chinese philosopher, once dreamed he was a butterfly. When he awakened he wondered if he were Chuang Tze, who had dreamed he was a butterfly, or if he were a butterfly, who was now dreaming he was Chuang Tze, a Chinese philosopher.

Teacher: And if we did he would see your body in his waking state, would he not?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And we have not yet established that the experiences we have in the waking state are the real ones. If we are not yet certain which experiences are real and which are illusory, it may be that his interpretation is the dream and your experience of the dream the reality.

Student: Let me try one final point. My waking experiences seem to link up more with each other. There is a continuity to them while in a dream, there is rarely, if ever, a remembrance of past dreams or any connection between them.¹²

Teacher: You make this distinction in the waking state, but while you are dreaming you do not think of your dreams as discontinuous. What is more, you beg the question. For the notion that you can distinguish between the waking state and the dream state presupposes that you are awake now. But the distinction between the waking state and the dream state may also be part of the dream.¹³ If you are dreaming now, then the idea that coherence can serve to distinguish the waking state from the dream state will only be a dream illusion.

Student: But it seems to me that you admit the distinction between the waking state and the dream state by using the waking state to say that we have certain notions only in the waking state. Therefore, you contradict yourself because you seem to know that there are two states and which one of them you are in.

Teacher: But it does not follow from my awareness of two states that the

¹²Descartes makes a similar case for the criterion of demarcation between dream and waking being coherence. Vide, Meditations, VI.

¹³It is possible, for example, to dream that you have awakened and later on to awaken and discover that this was part of the dream.

waking state is the reality and the dream state is the illusion.¹⁴ Nor does it follow from the fact that there are two states that I can know which one of them I am in. Besides, what if there were a third state, neither a waking state nor a dream state, which was the reality. If there were such a state then there would be no harm in finding that both the waking state and the dream state contained contradictions.

Student: Yes, that is true. But what would such a state be?

Teacher: Have you not ever experienced a state of sleep in which you have had no dreams?¹⁵

Student: Yes.

Teacher: In dreamless sleep you are not aware of any objects at all whether dream objects or real ones.

Student: True.

Teacher: Can the sleeper be aroused from his dreamless or deep sleep?

Student: Of course.

Teacher: Then we must say that in deep sleep there is consciousness even though we are not conscious of any objects. This deep sleep state proves that there can be consciousness which is not a consciousness of something.

Student: How do we know that this idea is only an idea which we are having

¹⁴Plato finds that he is unable to prove that the waking state is the real and the dream state the illusion: "...and in fact, our time being equally divided between waking and sleeping, in each condition our mind strenuously contends that the convictions of the moment are certainly true; so that for equal times we affirm the reality of the one world and of the other and are just as confident of both." Theatetus, 158 D.

¹⁵The dreamless sleep which is being discussed here and below is the state of sleep wherein the waking ego is latent. As Sankara says: "As in the dream the elephant as well as the mind that perceives the elephant, are not really existent, so also is the case with the mind and its objects of the waking condition." Vide, The Mandukyopanisad With Gaudapada's Karika and Sankara's Commentary, IV, 67.

in the waking state?

Teacher: What you call the waking state may be a dream state.¹⁶

Student: Then we do not know if this idea of a dreamless sleep is real or not.

Teacher: Let us say that we have two states, one which we shall call deep sleep and one which we shall call indifferently either waking or dream. Now, of these two, we can tell which one we are in since we are now aware of there being two states, while in the deep sleep state we would be aware of nothing at all. We must be awake or dreaming. It does not matter which.

Student: I am still troubled over how we can know there is a distinction between the dream and the waking state if we cannot tell when we are awake and when we are dreaming.

Teacher: The distinction between the two states may itself be an illusion. Let us not try to figure this out at this moment. Let us say that there is a distinction between deep sleep or a consciousness in which there is no consciousness of objects and a state which we may call indifferently waking or dream since in both of these states it seems to us that we are conscious of objects. If we understand dreams as a species of thought (we could just as well have done this the other way around) we may refer to these states as deep sleep and waking, understanding dreams to be part of the waking state. Remember, the key distinction is between deep sleep and one other state. The name of this other state we have arbitrarily decided to be the waking state although we could have, with just as much justification, called it the dream state.

¹⁶Just as you can awaken from the dream and find the dream to be unreal then may it not be possible that we can awaken from the waking state and find the waking state to be unreal.

Student: Very well. But where do we go from here? To be quite frank I must express my dissatisfaction with this whole discussion before we proceed any farther. For, if we do not know if we are dreaming or awake, anything we may conclude may be an illusion. I do not even know why we should say there is a deep sleep state since this is only an idea which, for all we know, may turn out to be a dream image and correspond to no reality.

Teacher: Your point is very well taken. However, if this is all but a dream we will not come to any harm will we?

Student: No, but we might be wasting our time.

Teacher: But if we are dreaming we will not worry about the time we are taking up.

Student: True.

Teacher: Now, we are certain of the existence of consciousness, are we not?

Student: Yes, we have established that much for certain.

Teacher: Shall we say that all we can be certain of is the existence of consciousness?

Student: I cannot go that far. What about objects? I cannot give up their existence so readily.

Teacher: Do you know objects as they exist in themselves or do you know of your consciousness of objects?

Student: I know of my consciousness of objects.

Teacher: Can you say that your consciousness is a consciousness of objects?

Student: Why not?

Teacher: To say that you are conscious of objects implies that you can distinguish between your consciousness (which is yours) and the object (which is presumably not you).

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Can you show me how and where we can draw the line between yourself and the object? Can you show me where you stop and the object begins?¹⁷

Student: I am here and the object is over there.

Teacher: Is this "over there" something which exists outside of your consciousness?

Student: No, for we have already seen that we have no knowledge of the existence of anything which exists outside of our consciousness.

Teacher: Then what do you mean by saying that the object is over there?

Student: My body is here and the object is outside of my body.

Teacher: Do you know with your body or with your mind?

Student: With my mind.

Teacher: Is the object outside of your mind?

Student: As the mind is not a physical thing we cannot speak properly of anything being outside of it. The mind has no location. If the mind has no location, then things can have no location with respect to it, whether outside or inside.

Teacher: And you know the object with your mind.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Can you distinguish where the object leaves off and the mind begins?

Student: No.

Teacher: How can you say that you know objects when we can never discover the demarcation line between your mind and the object which your mind supposedly

¹⁷When we hold a cold stone in our hands, can we distinguish between the coldness as belonging to the stone or to the hand? Can we tell if it is the hand or the stone which is cold? Vide, Brain, Mind, Perception and Science, 50.

knows?

Student: I cannot deny the logic of your arguments. But it still seems to me that I see objects. Experientially, there are objects even if logically it makes no sense to speak of objects.

Teacher: I do not think you have been making a close enough examination of your own experience.

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: You think that you, as a subject, by some act you perform, see an object.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: An act of seeing then requires the seer, the act of seeing, and the seen.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Now, if we cannot know the existence of something which is not you (the object), how can we ever be aware of the existence which is you (the subject)?

Student: It would seem that without an object, there would be no concept of the subject.

Teacher: If there is no subject who would perform the act upon the object?

Student: Without a subject the notion of an act is unintelligible. But it seems as if there is an act.

Teacher: Give me an example of such a knowledge act.

Student: There is, for example, the act of hearing.

Teacher: Can hearing exist without sound?

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: Would we ever be conscious of something we call hearing unless

there were something heard. Can there ever be an example of hearing where no sound is heard?

Student: We can listen and yet not hear anything.

Teacher: Listening and hearing are not the same. Can we actually hear anything if there is no sound at all?

Student: No.

Teacher: Could sound exist without hearing? In other words, could a thing such as sound which is never heard exist?

Student: Perhaps, how could I know? Perhaps when a tree falls in a forest there is a sound although no one may be there to hear it.

Teacher: You do not quite understand what I mean. What I mean is can there be the experience of sound without hearing?

Student: No.

Teacher: If sound cannot exist without hearing and hearing cannot exist without sound, how can we say that there is an act of hearing which hears sound or a sound which is heard by an act of hearing. If neither of these exists without the other, how can we say that a sound exists to be heard or that hearing exists to hear sound? How can we say that there is an act which is performed upon something if that something does not exist outside of the act and that act does not exist unless there is the something?¹⁸

¹⁸Sankara argues that the mind exists only if objects exist and objects exist only if the mind exists. Thus, each is dependent on the other. Neither the mind nor the object has an independent existence. But if this is so how can one exist to act on the other, or the other exist to be acted on by the one? The Mandukyopanisad..., IV, 67. Plato also sees the interdependence of sense and object: "...What you call white color has no being as a distinct thing outside your eyes...there is no single thing that is in and by itself." Theatetus, 153 D, E. And a little later on, "One of each pair is something perceived, the other a perception, whose birth always coincides with that of the thing perceived." Ibid., 156 B, C. This is essentially the same point as that of Sankara.

Student: What sense can we make out of the matter then?

Teacher: It is not obvious that there is not a duality in perception whereby one thing senses another, but that all knowledge is free of duality. All we can say that exists is hearingness or soundness; it does not matter which name we choose. We never experience a duality. We never experience a subject acting upon an object or an object which is then acted upon by a subject. This is a purely theoretical model. We never experience a subject, an act, or an object. These are later categories which we employ to explain the possibility of an experience which is not experienced as tripartite. When you say that you as a subject experience an object you are not being attentive enough to that in which your experience really consists.

Student: Why does it appear to me that I am seeing a tree?

Teacher: At the moment of seeing can you distinguish between the seeing, the you, and what is seen?

Student: I am the seer; the seeing is what I do; the seen is what I see.

Teacher: Please concentrate on your experience. At the precise moment that the tree appears are you conscious of yourself? Let us make a test. Close your eyes.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Now open them. At the moment of your seeing the tree are you aware of yourself.

Student: I can distinguish between my physical eye and what I see as the tree.

Teacher: Now you are taking another act of awareness. You have shifted to another awareness. If we take the awareness of the eye, could you make the distinction in your experience of the eye between your seeing and the eye that you see?

Student: But I can experience myself as different from what I see.

Teacher: That is another awareness. In your awareness of yourself can you distinguish in that awareness between yourself as subject knower and as subject known?

Student: If I could distinguish myself as subject knower and myself as subject known, I could not know myself for the me who knows (the subject knower) would not be the same as the me who is known.

Teacher: Excellent. Now let us return to the example of your awareness of the tree. In the moment of vision where there is a tree, can you experience the subject knower as different from the object known?

Student: No. I do not experience this distinction. But it does not follow that this distinction does not exist in reality.

Teacher: Do we know any reality outside of consciousness?

Student: No.

Teacher: What do you experience when you experience the tree?

Student: Does it matter if I say treeness or myselfness, for I cannot distinguish one from the other?

Teacher: It does not matter, does it? We can as easily say that there is treeness, or seeingness, or seerness. These are but different ways of saying the same thing and they are all equally true. All that exists is knowledge, or awareness, or consciousness. We are aware of the existence of no objects or subjects.

Student: You have proven this to me both from the side of logic and from the side of experience.

Teacher: We are certain that there is knowledge.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then to know that there is knowledge is no mere tautology since it

tells us something about our experience.

Student: Quite so.

Teacher: And we know of the existence of nothing else but knowledge.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then when we know that there is knowledge, we know all existence.

Student: That is so.

Teacher: Have I satisfied you by coming upon something that is certain and is, at the same time, about what exists?

Student: Indeed you have. I am deeply grateful to you.

SECOND DIALOGUE

Student: I should like to talk with you again.

Teacher: What, are you not satisfied with certain knowledge of all that exists, in fact, all existence?

Student: I am not sure that what we said had any substance to it. It seems to me now that everything we concluded could merely have been a mental game and have had nothing to do with reality, with what is.

Teacher: You are once again in a state of doubt, of skepticism.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Would you say that you are doubting?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Can you doubt that you are doubting?

Student: Why not?

Teacher: If it were true that you could doubt that you were doubting then your doubting would be dubitable. If your doubting were dubitable then it would be logically possible that you would not be doubting. You might not be doubting after all. But this is contrary to fact because we began with your admission that you were doubting. Doubting is indubitable because the question of its existence can never arise without its actuality. Or, to put the matter even more strongly, the question of its modal existence can never arise without its necessary existence.

Student: But I can say in words that I doubt that I am doubting.

Teacher: Here is an instance where the boundaries of language extend beyond the boundaries of factual reality. It is not the case that you can, in actual

fact, doubt that you are doubting. You can verbally formulate the sentence, "I doubt that I am doubting", but in fact this is an impossibility.

Student: Very well. To follow your lead, "I think, therefore I am".¹⁹

Teacher: Does the knowledge of your existence arise from your thought?²⁰

Student: Why not?

Teacher: If you think something you can be mistaken about what you are thinking. If you think that it is Friday you may be mistaken. It may actually be Saturday. If you have knowledge of something, you cannot be mistaken. If you know it is Friday, then it cannot turn out to be Saturday. If it turns out that it is Saturday, we cannot say that you knew that it was Friday. We would have to say that you thought that it was Friday, but that you were mistaken.

¹⁹"I existed without doubt, by...the mere fact that I thought at all." Descartes, Meditation, II. For Descartes, the existence of thinking proves the existence of a one who thinks. Descartes has discovered something but it is not what he thinks he has discovered. He has discovered the irreducible fact of consciousness. But he has by no means discovered a subject of that consciousness. Indeed, for Nietzsche, rather than the existence of a subject being established only the existence of the thought of a subject is established: "We used to believe in the "soul" as we believed in grammar and the grammatical subject; we used to say that "I" was the condition, "think" the predicate that conditioned, and thinking an activity for which a subject had to be thought of as its cause. But then we tried, with admirable persistence and guile, to see whether the reverse might not perhaps be true. "Think" was now the condition, "I" the thing conditioned, hence "I" only a synthesis which was created by thinking. Kant basically wanted to prove that the subject could not be proved by the subject--nor the object either. The possibility of an illusory existence of the individual subject (the "soul") may not have been a thought foreign to him. It is the same thought which has already existed as an immense power on earth, in the form of Vedanta-philosophy." Beyond Good and Evil, III, 54. (emphasis Nietzsche's).

²⁰Descartes, of course, gives epistemological, not ontological primacy to thought. It is not that he thought that he had thought himself into existence. In fact, he requires the existence of God for his original and continued existence at any moment. (Meditation, III). But he does think that the certain knowledge of his existence is proved by his thought. It is this contention of his that is under dispute.

Student: How does this discussion of different days apply to our thought of existence?

Teacher: Can the proof of our existence be established by thought?

Student: Why not?

Teacher: May I ask you a question?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: Do you think that you are thinking?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If you only think that you are thinking, then as we concluded from our previous discussion, you can be mistaken. The object of thought is always something about which you may be mistaken. In this case the object of your thought (what you thought) was that you were thinking. If you can be mistaken in what you thought, then you might not have been thinking after all.

Student: No, that is impossible. I must be thinking. If I think that I am thinking I must be thinking. I have to think in order to think that I am thinking.

Teacher: Excellent. You cannot be mistaken about the fact that you are thinking. You have to be thinking in order for the question even to arise whether or not you are thinking.

Student: True.

Teacher: Then, you cannot think you are thinking. You know that you are thinking.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: If you know that you are thinking then your (own) existence is not dependent upon thought (which can be mistaken), but is based upon certain knowledge.

Student: I am not certain that I understand.

Teacher: Do you think that you are conscious or do you know that you are conscious?

Student: If I say that I think that I am conscious you will ask me if I can be mistaken. If I could be mistaken about being conscious it could be true that I was not conscious at all. But if I were not conscious at all how could I be mistaken? If I can be mistaken, I must be conscious for I would have to be conscious in order to be mistaken.

Teacher: Very good. You have proven that your existence cannot follow from your thought but must rest upon knowledge.

Student: But I only know this when I am thinking.²¹ When I am not thinking how can I know that I exist?

Teacher: Do you exist when you are asleep?

Student: You can be dreaming when you are asleep and dreams are a kind of thinking.

Teacher: Yes, but is there not also a state of dreamless sleep?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And do you not exist during this state?

Student: I do not know.

Teacher: What would it be like not to exist during dreamless sleep? Think about what this would mean. This would mean that you would have a new existence at the time that you awakened. Of course, since you do not exist during dreamless sleep (as you do not exist when you are not thinking), it is impossible to say that you have awakened. The you who would just come into

²¹"Thinking" is used as a generic term as in the writings of Descartes: "What is a thing that thinks? That is to say, a thing that doubts, perceives, affirms, denies, wills, does not will, that imagines also, and which feels." Meditation, II.

birth at the time of awakening would not have a language or even a name, for it would carry nothing with it that the you who had gone to sleep had learned during the course of its lifetime.

Student: But this is all in the mind, is it not? I mean all these ideas of waking, of sleeping, of consciousness, are these not all thought creations? How do we know they have any reality?

Teacher: What is the mind?

Student: It is that which thinks.

Teacher: Is this "that which thinks" a thing which is known as existing in itself, that is, something which has an independent existence, or is this "that which thinks" a consciousness of ours?

Student: It is the latter.

Teacher: Now, all that we have established for certain is that there is consciousness. What then is this thing which you choose to call the mind?

Student: We have a mind, as distinct from other animals, in that our mind is a consciousness which is conscious of itself.

Teacher: The mind you say is a consciousness which is conscious of itself.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Is the mind and consciousness one and the same thing?

Student: Yes, for if the mind is what is conscious, and what it is conscious of is itself, it follows that consciousness and the mind must be one and the same thing. If the mind and consciousness were different things we could not say that the mind could be conscious of itself.

Teacher: If we proved that consciousness could not be conscious of itself, then what you call the mind would not exist.

Student: Yes, that is so.

Teacher: Very well then. We are certain that there is consciousness. Let

us call this consciousness, consciousness₁.

Student: As you like.

Teacher: We cannot say that this consciousness (consciousness₁) is conscious of itself as "its being conscious of itself" would be another consciousness, consciousness₂. Consciousness₂ is not that existence of which alone we proved we could be certain, namely, consciousness₁.

Student: This seems to be word jugglery to me.

Teacher: Look, all we showed was that we could be certain of consciousness, but we did not show that we could be certain of that of which consciousness were conscious. Therefore, although we can say that there is consciousness we cannot say that this consciousness is conscious of itself.

Student: What do you mean by the 'is' in your last statement?

Teacher: The 'is' is the 'is' of identity. We cannot say that consciousness₁ is identical to that of which it is aware since we can only be certain of consciousness, not of its contents. We are certain only of the existence of consciousness₁, not of its consciousness of itself.

Student: But we continue to speak about it. Surely we must be conscious of our consciousness if we continue to refer to it.

Teacher: But it is not the same consciousness we are talking about. When consciousness is conscious of consciousness it cannot be conscious of itself because its self will have changed. Originally, the term 'itself' stood for consciousness. But the consciousness which is to know itself will no longer be simply consciousness, but will be a consciousness which is attempting to know itself. Thus, when this new consciousness knows, it will not know itself (the consciousness which is attempting to know consciousness), but will know simply consciousness (which will be, from the standpoint of its new identity, not itself but another).

Student: Could consciousness not know itself both as itself and the itself which is trying to know itself?

Teacher: But each attempt at knowing itself requires a fresh act of consciousness. The new act of consciousness, in virtue of being new, cannot know itself; it can only know the old consciousness. Each attempt consciousness makes to know itself always requires a new act of consciousness. Thus, the consciousness which is known is always a past consciousness and not a present consciousness. The present consciousness can never know "itself" since it always knows a past consciousness. You are always looking back upon the time before and not the now. And yet the now is always required to look back upon the time before. Each now that you try to capture becomes the time before which, in turn, needs the now for its illumination. But the now itself cannot be captured.

Student: Why is it that we cannot become aware of our present consciousness with a later consciousness?

Teacher: Then the later consciousness would be our consciousness, would it not?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then consciousness would still not be a consciousness of itself because the later consciousness would be conscious not of itself but of the past consciousness. The past consciousness would not really be consciousness since it is no more, but would be an "object" of consciousness.

Student: It still is not clear to me why consciousness cannot be a consciousness of a past moment of itself. Indeed, you yourself seem to allow that this is possible, but you will not allow that the consciousness of a preceding moment is a consciousness of itself.

Teacher: I take it that the preceding moment no longer exists but has been replaced by another or else we would not refer to it as the preceding moment.

We would not speak of a preceding moment unless there were a moment which came before but is no longer now. And yet, if the preceding moment of consciousness no longer exists how can it be that which consciousness apprehends? If there is a past consciousness, then it is past. How can the present consciousness be conscious of that which is no longer present as consciousness? The past, which in being past can no longer be present as consciousness, could only be known (if it could be known at all) as an "object" of consciousness. Thus, if the past could be known, consciousness would not be conscious of itself.

Student: Why is it that we cannot say that the past consciousness and the present consciousness are the same consciousness and in this way say that consciousness knows itself.

Teacher: If the past consciousness and the present consciousness are identical then nothing has happened to alter the past consciousness. It is still the same as it was before. It begins, presumably, as consciousness. If it stays the same how can it ever become conscious of itself? Consciousness of itselfness is different from consciousness. Indeed, if nothing has happened and consciousness is the same, then knowing has not happened either. But if knowing has not happened, then how has consciousness come to know itself? It would still be itself and not have to come to know itself.

Student: Can we not say that consciousness always knows a past moment of itself and so that it always has been a consciousness of itself and never has been simply consciousness.

Teacher: Now you are saying that all consciousness is consciousness of a past moment of itself.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If all consciousness is a consciousness of a past moment of itself,

then there can be no first consciousness for a first consciousness would be a consciousness which did not have a consciousness which came before it; and hence, would be a consciousness which could not be of a past moment.

Student: True.

Teacher: If there is no first consciousness then consciousness has no beginning.

Student: True.

Teacher: If consciousness has no beginning then there is an infinite number of past moments of consciousness of which consciousness would be conscious.

Student: True.

Teacher: If there were an infinite number of consciousnesses of which consciousness could be conscious can we say that consciousness can come to an end? Can there ever be a last consciousness?

Student: No.

Teacher: Can we say that that which has neither a beginning nor an end is in time?

Student: No, for that which neither comes to be nor passes away cannot be said to be in time.²²

Teacher: If consciousness does not exist in time how can we say that it has a past? And if consciousness has no past how can we say that consciousness is always the consciousness of a past moment of itself?

Student: Very well. I was mistaken to have thought that consciousness is

²²For the Buddhists, consciousness arises. Vide, Stcherbatsky, The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word Dharma", pp. 7, 53. But how can that which is not in time be said to arise? Can something come to be which does not come to be at some particular time?

always the consciousness of a past moment of itself.²³

Teacher: Is there any way in which consciousness can be conscious of itself?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then what you call "mind" cannot exist for "mind" is what you defined as that consciousness which was conscious of itself.

Student: What then is the mind?

Teacher: The mind is but a thought that you are having.²⁴

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: That you have a mind is a concept that you have; it is an idea; it corresponds to no reality. The mind exists solely as a concept. You have the idea that you have a mind. That is all there is to it.

Student: Why could we not just as easily say that it is consciousness which is but an idea of the mind?

Teacher: It was your idea originally that consciousness could know itself.

Student: True.

Teacher: If consciousness can know itself then presumably there must be an "itself" for consciousness to know. This "itself", as we proved above, cannot be a consciousness which is conscious of itself but must simply be

²³This is, in fact, the Buddhists' view of consciousness: "Consciousness in the role corresponding to the place occupied in the system by the senses is the consciousness of the preceding moment." Stcherbatsky, The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word "Dharma", p. 15.

²⁴For Aristotle the mind and thought are identical: "...mind is in a sense potentially whatever is thinkable, though actually it is nothing until it has thought...Mind is itself thinkable in exactly the same way as its objects are. For (a) in the case of objects which involve no matter, what thinks and what is thought is identical: for speculative knowledge and its object are identical." On the Soul, Bk. III, Ch. 4. (I have supplied the emphasis to bring out this singular feature of the Aristotelian concept of the mind. Aristotle does not say that the mind is only a thought. But as the mind falls under the class of objects which involve no matter, how can we distinguish the mind from a thought?)

consciousness. If consciousness could know itself then the object of its knowledge must exist to be known. Simple consciousness must exist before there can be knowledge of it. Consciousness must be before there can be a consciousness of it. Mind, as you defined it, is that consciousness which is conscious of itself. Consciousness, then, cannot be an idea of the mind's for consciousness must exist before such a thing as the mind can exist. While mind can be an idea which appears to be consciousness, it cannot be the case that consciousness is but an idea that appears to the mind.

Student: I can see that consciousness cannot be a creation of the mind because mind, the consciousness of consciousness, cannot exist unless there first exists something of which it can be conscious. Thus, consciousness must precede mind. If consciousness precedes the mind it cannot be that consciousness exists only as a mental creation.

Teacher: Very good. And we can prove this from the side of the subject as well as from the side of the object. For, if the mind is the consciousness which knows itself not only must the object exist to be known, but something must exist to know the object. Consciousness must exist in the first place because it takes consciousness to know consciousness. If there is a consciousness which knows itself then there must first exist the consciousness that knows. There must first be a consciousness to know itself. If there is not a consciousness what would be there to know itself? From the side of the subject as well as the object consciousness must precede consciousness of itselfness. Actually, we have established this point from another argument.

Student: How is that?

Teacher: We proved earlier that consciousness can exist without the mind or thinking when we proved that there must be consciousness in deep sleep

where there are no thoughts.

Student: How did we prove that?

Teacher: Since the sleeper can be awakened there must be consciousness in sleep. The sleeper must be conscious or else how would it be possible to waken him? Now, there is a state of sleep where there are no dreams. Therefore, consciousness can exist without thought. Consciousness does not depend upon thought for its existence.

Student: I am satisfied with the point that the existence of consciousness must precede the existence of mind. But I am not persuaded that the mind has no real existence.

Teacher: Can we ever know that which exists in itself independently of our knowing it?

Student: No.

Teacher: You are conceiving of the mind as though it possessed existence as an entity in itself. But you have no knowledge of the existence of a mind. You have the thought that you have a mind. The mind exists only as a thought you have.

Student: But the mind has a more permanent existence than that. It stretches through time.

Teacher: "Permanent existence" is but a thought that you have.

Student: But it seems to me that I can remember what happened before. For memory to be possible I must be the same being as the one who knew before. Therefore, there is an existence which lasts through time.

Teacher: That you can remember is but a thought that you are having.

Student: But I can remember what happened before.²⁵

Teacher: When are you remembering the before?

Student: Now.

Teacher: Where then is the before? It exists only in the now.

Student: The mind then is only a thought that we are having in the present.

Teacher: Yes.

Student: Why did you say then that consciousness must come before the mind?

Teacher: On the hypothesis that there is a mind it can be shown that consciousness can exist without the mind. To say that consciousness comes before the mind is only a way of indicating that consciousness is a reality and the mind is but a thought. If we take the hypothesis that the mind is a consciousness which is conscious of itself, then consciousness must precede the mind or else there is neither anything to be aware nor anything of which the mind can be aware. If the mind is not real, however, there is no point in trying to understand any literal meaning in the statement that consciousness comes before the mind. It is only one way of indicating the real status of consciousness and the hypothetical (I was almost minded to say mental) status of mind.

Student: I find it difficult to accept that the mind is only a thought.

Teacher: Can you ever come into contact with the mind as something which is other than a thought?

Student: What do you mean?

²⁵The use of memory as a proof for the existence of mind is a petitio principii since to assume the existence of memory is to assume the existence of mind. The argument from memory is only valid as the memory under question. Even the validity of memory as a source of knowledge extends only to its proper object of knowledge, the past. Memory, by its very definition, knows only the past. Here again there is a begging of the question because we do not know if the past exists. And, if it does, then all that memory can establish is what is true of the past, and its conclusions extend in no way to the present.

Teacher: Do you ever come into physical contact with the mind? Can you take it out and look at it? Can you smell it? Can you touch it? Can you hear it? Can you taste it?

Student: Are there not tests whereby scientists can, by placing electrodes in the brain, produce certain sensations such as taste, smell, and so on?²⁶ In addition, whenever we sense something, concomitant variations in the patterns of the brain waves can be detected.

Teacher: Are these brain waves or the physical location of the area of the brain from which certain sensations can be produced identical to the sensation which is sensed?

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: Is the segment of the brain which is being analyzed by the scientists the same thing as the smell of a flower (supposing this could be so produced) that is produced by placing the electrode on this segment of the brain?

Student: By no means. The smell of the flower is one thing; the physical area of the brain another.

Teacher: Is the brain wave or its fluctuation the same as the scent of a flower?

Student: No, one is the pattern which is traced by a needle on a screen. This is something which is visible; it is seen through the eyes. The scent of a flower is a quality which is smelled through the nose.

Teacher: Very good. Is there any way to reproduce a mental state except by

²⁶"...a very wide range of sensations, including sight, smell, taste, touch, and others, can all be reproduced by exciting the appropriate area of the cortex, some of them even by the surgeon using an electrical stimulus on the conscious patient." Vide, Russell Brain, Mind, Perception and Science, p. 52.

experiencing that particular mental state, whatever it may be, directly?

Student: No.

Teacher: If someone has never smelled a rose before, can you convey to him what a rose smells like without his smelling a rose?

Student: No, that would be quite impossible.

Teacher: Now, do you ever come across this entity which you call a mind except as a thought that you have a mind?

Student: No.

Teacher: You have a strictly mental acquaintance with your mind, do you not?

Student: Yes, that is so.

Teacher: Does your mind exist when you are not thinking?

Student: Surely it does.

Teacher: What of our sensations, do they exist when we are not sensing?

When you are not tasting the taste of wine would you say that there are tastes lying about in a heaven of tastes waiting for you to taste them? Do tastes exist apart from your sense of taste?

Student: By no means, for when we talked earlier we established that a sense perception has no existence apart from the appropriate sense organ through which it is sensed.²⁷

Teacher: How about touches. If you are not touching something now, would a touch exist in itself waiting for you to touch it? Are the touches lying around waiting your touch?

Student: No, touches exist only for my sense of touch. It makes no sense to

²⁷The language of sensation reveals in at least three cases (that of taste, touch, and smell) an initial identification of sense act and sense object. The sense verb (to smell, to taste, to touch) is identical to the sense object (a smell, a taste, a touch). The existence of an identity between active verb and acted upon object reveals that in these cases we can make no distinction between the act of sensing and a what that is sensed.

think of touches existing independently of me. Where would they reside?

What would be their address?

Teacher: What of our thoughts, do they exist when we are not thinking?

What about the thought that there are marshmallows which are pink and which float above our heads. When we are not having this thought does this thought lie around existing in a thought world somewhere waiting for us to think it?

Student: No, that would be an incredible idea. Thoughts do not have a separate existence in themselves apart from our thinking them.

Teacher: What about the time when you are not having the thought that you possess a mind? Where is your mind then?

Student: It seems that it does not exist. What, however, of the body.

Surely the body is real. I do not have to think that I have a body. I can feel by body directly.

Teacher: What do you refer to by this word 'body'?

Student: The 'body' is a word which stands for the totality of my physical existence, that is, my existence which is extended, has weight, bleeds, and so on.

Teacher: This is an idea or a concept. Ideas we sometimes say are in the mind. But we have shown that the mind is but an idea. Can an idea have an idea?

Student: I do not have to think the concept 'body'. I can feel my body directly.

Teacher: And where do you feel your body?

Student: Why, everywhere on the body. My entire body feels itself anywhere on its surface, whether on the outside or the inside.

Teacher: You feel the body with the body.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And I suppose you feel whatever part of your body you are feeling with the area that is in the same location as the part that you are feeling. I mean, if you feel your hand directly, it is the hand itself which feels itself. If you feel your leg, then it is the leg that you feel which is the source of the feeling itself.

Student: Yes, but where is all of this leading?

Teacher: Have you not heard of victims of accidents who have lost a leg who, nonetheless, can feel the absent member when the physical leg is no longer there? They can feel pain in the same area where they would, had the leg actually been there. But they can feel this pain in that area when the leg is not there. How can they do this if the part of the body that feels itself is the physical region which is at the same time what is felt and the source of the feeling that is felt. How can it be the physical body which feels itself when the physical body is no longer there?

Student: I do not know what to make of that. It seems that my feeling of body cannot be a physical feeling. The source of my feeling cannot be the physical body.

Teacher: Where is the source of your feelings then?

Student: I do not quite know how to answer you. Perhaps the feeling is in my head.

Teacher: Come now, when you are feeling happy do you mean to say that you feel your happiness as located in the physical region above the neck as when we have an insect bite on a finger, the itch is felt only in that finger?

Student: No, it seems that feelings as well as thoughts have no physical place of residence.

Teacher: Does a feeling of joy exist in some special realm awaiting your

perception?

Student: No, feelings only exist for my perception of them.

Teacher: What of the feeling of body, then. Does the feeling of body exist somewhere waiting for you to feel it?

Student: But surely the body exists.

Teacher: How are you aware of the existence of the body? Did you not say that it was directly felt?

Student: I did.

Teacher: Your awareness of the body, then, is a felt perception of the body.

Student: True.

Teacher: When you are not feeling sad, does sadness exist in itself awaiting your perception of it as felt?

Student: No.

Teacher: If the consciousness of the body is a feeling, then does the feeling of body exist when you are not feeling it?

Student: No.

Teacher: Can you distinguish your body from your feeling of body?

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: Do you ever have knowledge of the body apart from your feeling of body?

Student: No.

Teacher: And in your feeling awareness of body do you know the body as a thing which exists independently of your feeling awareness of it?

Student: No.

Teacher: Is there any way we can distinguish between "body" and our consciousness of body?

Student: It would seem not. It seems that all that we have is our

consciousness of body.

Teacher: Very good. Now, if we can never discover what "body" is as something other than our consciousness of it does it make sense to speak of our consciousness of body as a consciousness of a something? Is there something other than consciousness which we know when we are conscious of the body?

Student: It would seem not.

Teacher: What is there then?

Student: It follows that there is only consciousness. But surely I exist.

Teacher: Are you conscious of this "I" as a thing existing apart from your consciousness of it?

Student: No.

Teacher: Are you conscious of yourself as something distinct from the consciousness that you are having? Can you distinguish between yourself and your consciousness? Can you tell me what properties belong to which, independently of the other?

Student: No.

Teacher: We know that there is consciousness. We do not know that there is a "you".

Student: But surely I exist.

Teacher: To what reality does the expression "I" refer?

Student: To consciousness, what else?

Teacher: Very good, then you are consciousness.

Student: This certainly seems to follow. But one thing troubles me.

Teacher: What is that?

Student: The arguments establish that I am consciousness. But we have shown that consciousness cannot know itself. Therefore, I cannot know myself. But how can I be knowledge and not know myself?

Teacher: Consciousness does not have to know itself to be knowledge.

Student: How can that be?

Teacher: Consciousness can perhaps best be understood through the analogy of light. For example, when it is daylight we can see objects such as trees, flowers, and the like. Yet, do we need to see the source of light, the sun, in order to see the objects?

Student: By no means.

Teacher: Likewise with consciousness or, if you will, the inner light, we need not see the inner light in order for it to function.

Student: I do not quite see why we need to have an inner light in addition to the outer one.

Teacher: Will you venture upon a little experiment with me?

Student: Gladly.

Teacher: Would you be good enough to close your eyes.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Now, tell me what you see.

Student: I do not see any outer objects. I see, as it were, only a vast space of blackness.

Teacher: Could you see the image of a person should you care to imagine one.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Just as we need an outer light in order to see outer objects shall we not say that we need an inner light in order to see inner objects?ⁿ You understand that we speak metaphorically.

Student: But I do not quite see why we need the metaphor of the inner light.

Teacher: Light is the condition for seeing, for without light the visible would not be visible. Without the outer light we could not see outer objects.

ⁿCf. St. Augustine, De Magistro, xii, pp. 39-40.

Student: True.

Teacher: We can see, as it were, with an inner eye as well. We see in dreams, for example, when our eyes are closed. Does it not make equal sense to say that we need an inner light to make our inner objects visible to us? We even use the language of vision when we refer to consciousness. You yourself said that you did not quite see why we needed the metaphor of the inner light to mean that you did not quite understand why we needed the metaphor of the inner light.

Student: True.

Teacher: Now, we do not have to see the outer light, as the sun, in order to see. Why do you think that we would have to see the inner light in order to know?

Student: But we can see the outer light should we so choose. Yet we cannot, as we have established earlier, ever be conscious of consciousness.

Teacher: To keep the metaphor parallel it is the sun which cannot see itself and yet affords light for seeing. But in any case we cannot actually see the outer light either. What we do see is some definite shade of color whether white or yellow or whatever,²⁸ line or figure, (figures being lines which are

²⁸For the Buddhists what we see are colors and shapes, but light is not included among the objects of vision: "This, O Brahmin, is the origin of vision; it is a door through which to see colors and shapes." Quoted by Stcherbatsky in The Central Conception of Buddhism..., p. 52. Aristotle says that "...it is only in light that the color of a thing is seen." On the Soul, Bk. III, Ch. 7, 418 64-5. But it seems that Aristotle thinks that light itself can be seen for he says, "light is as it were the proper color of what is transparent and exists whenever the potentially transparent is excited to actuality by the influence of fire..." Ibid., 418a29. If light is a color and color is what is visible, then light is visible. Berkeley makes the same error: "You will further inform me, whether we immediately perceive by sight anything beside light, and colors, and figures..." Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous, In Opposition to Sceptics and Atheists, First Dialogue. Actually, all that is seen is color. Lines or figures are divisions within or extensions of color. Division and extension are acts of the mind.

bounded). The outer light is what enables us to see. We never really see outer light at all. Likewise, the inner light is what enables us to see and is itself never seen.

Student: I still do not quite see the ultimate significance of the metaphor of light.

Teacher: We want to understand how there can be knowledge. We can come to an understanding of how knowledge can be through an understanding of how light can be. Light is because it is a source of itself. Light does not require something else in order to be; it is itself its own condition for being. Knowledge is itself its own source. It does not arise from something else. Just as light, it supplies itself out of its own being. The very nature of light is to be self-luminous; it does not need to be lighted by another. The very nature of knowledge is to be self-revealing; it does not have to be known by another.

Student: Can you give me an example of light as a source?

Teacher: Surely. When we turn on the lamp in this room we can see the objects in the room. Now, do we need to turn on another lamp in order to see by the light of the lighted lamp?

Student: No.

Teacher: The reason we do not need another lighted lamp to see by the light of the lighted lamp is because the lamp itself is a source of light. It does not have to be illuminated by something else. It has already provided the condition which enables us to see.

Student: This is quite clear to me now.

Teacher: You understand, then, what is meant by a source.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Now, do we need another inner light to see by the light of our

inner light?

Student: No, for the idea of light implies that it is a source of light. If we needed another inner light then the first inner light would not be a source of light. In any case the postulation of another inner light would be of no use to us. For the same question can be asked of it: can we see by its light or does it need to be illumined by another? If we always need another light to see by the light of light then how would light ever be provided by which we were to see? For, if an addition to the first light were required, then another light would be required in addition to that light and it would require an infinite number of these inner lights in order to see. Even an infinite number of lights would be of no use, for an infinite number of lights, no one of which provided illumination, would still leave us in the dark. Somewhere along the line a light must itself provide the condition for seeing. That is what we mean by a light. A light that provides the condition for seeing need not be illumined by another light.

Teacher: Excellent reasoning. You understand, then, how we can be knowledge without our being able to know knowledge. Consciousness must precede self-consciousness. Knowledge must precede mind.

Student: I see now that I can be knowledge without having to know myself. But if I am knowledge do I not know that I am knowledge? And yet, if I know that I am knowledge, I must then know myself.

Teacher: You know that you are knowledge, but you cannot know yourself as knowledge. You can never know knowledge; you can never know yourself. But you can know that you must be knowledge in order for knowledge to be possible at all.

Student: How is that?

Teacher: Old theories of knowledge held that there were minds on the one

hand and objects on the other and that knowledge was a correspondence between an idea that the mind possessed and the object. But this view is flawed in several key respects. First of all, it is already assumed that one has knowledge of the concept on the one and the object on the other. But if all knowledge is correspondence how could we first know the separate terms which are then to correspond with each other? If each term is itself to be known in terms of a concept and an object then this must perforce lead to an infinite regress and we would never come to knowledge at all. Further, even if knowledge of the terms to be matched were possible under the correspondence theory how is the correspondence known? It is assumed that the concept and the object match up. But how is this "matching" known? Is the matching known also through the seen correspondence between a concept and an object? How can we tell if the concept and the object match up? If we must have recourse to another concept, we will again be lost in an infinite regress and we would never come to knowledge at all. Or, if the matching were known in some other way, then that other way would be what was knowledge; and, the definition of knowledge as the correspondence between a concept and an object would be parasitic upon a previous and other kind of knowledge.

Student: Yes, these are flaws to be sure.

Teacher: And, there are others. The theory of correspondence as knowledge must always remain on the level of conjecture since we can never have access to the objects save through the ideas or images the mind has and therefore we have no way of even knowing that there are objects, much less a correspondence between the objects and the ideas the mind has of them. And, further, the theory of correspondence cannot explain how it is possible for the mind even to know its own ideas.

Student: Could you go into some detail on this last point?

Teacher: Gladly. Would you perform a little thought experiment with me?

Imagine, if you will, a bear.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Now, how do you know your imagination?

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: You have one image of a bear do you not?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Now, do you need another image of the bear in order to compare the image of the bear that you have in order to know the image of the bear that you have?

Student: No, for if that were true I would then need yet another image of bear to know that image and yet another image to know that one. I would need an infinite series of bear images in order to know the one. But if I need an infinite series of bear images how can I know any one of them to be a bear image?

Teacher: How do you know the bear image then?

Student: I know it immediately.

Teacher: Do you first form the image of bear in your mind and then see it? In other words, is knowledge a special kind of act like the act of seeing that is performed upon an already existent object?

Student: No, I did not perform any special act of knowledge upon my image. I did not have to see my image. Indeed, how could I ever have had the image in the first place if I could not know it without performing some act of knowledge upon it? How would I know upon what to perform my knowledge act?

Teacher: Your imaging of bear, then, was identical to your knowing it?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Is there a difference between what you know (the bear), you

(the one who knows the bear), and the act of your knowing of the bear?

Student: No.

Teacher: In seeing how imagination and knowledge are one and the same you can understand how you and knowledge must be one and the same.

Student: Yes, could you provide me with another example to make it more clear to me that we can only make sense out of the fact that there is knowledge by being knowledge?²⁹

Teacher: Surely. How do you know that you are angry?

Student: I know I am angry when I am angry and that is an end to it.

Teacher: You do not require a further act of knowledge that you perform upon yourself in order to know that you are angry?

Student: No, I know immediately that I am angry when I am angry.

Teacher: You know that you are angry when you are angry. Your knowledge of anger can only come from your being angry.³⁰

Student: I understand this very well now.

Teacher: How do you know when you are hungry?

Student: I know that I am hungry when I am hungry. My knowledge comes from my being.

Teacher: Very good. Do you understand now why it is that only by being knowledge can knowledge be possible at all? If there is a separation between knowledge and the known then how can knowledge ever know the known? Once subject and object have been split there is no way of ever getting them

²⁹ For Aristotle knowledge consists in becoming one with the object known. This is true of sense knowledge (On the Soul, Bk. II, Ch. 12) and intellectual knowledge (Bk. III, Ch. 4). Cf. above, n. 24, p. 33.

³⁰ Aristotle says, "Actual knowledge is identical with its object." On the Soul, Bk. III, Ch. 5 430a20 and Ch. 6 431a1.

back together again. Knowledge has been construed as an event which comes into being through the interaction between a subject and an object. But if there were subjects and objects there could never be knowledge in the first place. A subject can never know an object; there is no object which is to be known by the subject.

Student: If there is no object and no subject how can we call what there is knowledge? It seems to me that the term 'knowledge' only makes sense if there is a knower and a known. Why do we use the name 'knowledge' to describe what there is?

Teacher: A very good question. All names are bound to be false because 'name' implies a duality between the name and the thing which is named. A name is a way in which we signify reality. But reality is not signified in itself. Reality is not even significant in itself. Therefore, any name that we choose will necessarily be a falsification of reality. Reality is unnameable.

Student: Is 'unnameable' a name for reality?

Teacher: It is a name only for us. In itself reality is neither nameable nor unnameable.

Student: What justification then is there for choosing the name 'knowledge'?

Teacher: We are trying to point to reality, are we not?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: What attributes must reality possess?

Student: How can we speak of reality as possessing attributes? Surely, the "possession of attributes" is only a way in which we conceive reality and is not descriptive of the nature of reality itself.

Teacher: We are only speaking metaphorically when we speak of reality as possessing attributes. But that should not stop us. Indeed, "reality" is

only a category of ours. What is is not real in itself. We call it 'reality' but it does not call itself 'reality'. But if we are to speak about reality, what attributes will we say that it must possess?

Student: The real is what has being and what can be known with certainty to exist. What is real must exist in itself and in no way depend upon our knowing it for its existence. It must include all existence within it and leave nothing out.

Teacher: Very good. Should we not also include among the characteristics that reality must possess that it must be the condition for the knowledge of all existence.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Should we not also say that we cannot know reality, for if reality is what exists in itself it cannot be known since what is known is not what exists in itself but what exists for us.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Now, the name we will choose to designate reality will be the one which names that which bears the best analogue to reality. That which bears the best analogue to reality will be that which shares these traits.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Will what we designate by the name 'knowledge' satisfy the above requirements? Let us examine knowledge and see if it shares in all the above named traits. Shall we begin?

Student: Please do.

Teacher: Very well. Can we say that knowledge has being?

Student: Yes, for knowledge only is by being.

Teacher: Do we know with certainty that knowledge exists?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Do we know of any existence outside of knowledge?

Student: No.

Teacher: If we know of no existence outside of knowledge then when we know that knowledge is, do we know all existence?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then knowledge includes all existence within it and leaves nothing out.

Student: True.

Teacher: Does knowledge exist in itself?

Student: Yes, we have established this through the example of deep sleep and through the argument for the possibility of knowledge.

Teacher: Is knowledge the condition for the knowledge of all existence?

Student: Yes, for if knowledge does not exist we cannot know anything to exist.

Teacher: And, finally, can we know knowledge?

Student: No, for we have shown that knowledge can never be known.

Teacher: Then what better definition of reality will you have? We have in knowledge that which has being, that which we know with certainty to exist, that which exists in itself, that which includes all existence within it, and that which is itself unknowable. It is not clear to you now that our discussion of knowledge is at once a discussion of reality and is by no means a mere mental game by which we are amusing ourselves?

Student: Yes, that is abundantly clear to me now.

THIRD DIALOGUE

Student: Despite our two talks, or, perhaps because of them, some matters remain to trouble me.

Teacher: What are they? It is best to state them out in the open so that we can discuss them rather than holding them inside yourself.

Student: I was afraid that you would think it foolish of me, or perhaps a sign of intransigence, if I kept raising difficulties.

Teacher: By no means. How should we ever realize the validity of what we say unless we expose it to all the possible criticism we can muster? Please tell me what difficulties you see, for if we cannot give an adequate response to your difficulties we must revise what we have been saying. And, if we can respond to your difficulties, it should make our perspective all the stronger for we can illustrate how it can meet and withstand criticism.

Student: Very well, since you give me encouragement I will state what I have been feeling. It seems to me that the view you have been expressing makes light of all the differences in the world, that is to say, it makes it impossible that one thing be different from another. But surely there are differences in the world.

Teacher: Do you think that difference is something real?

Student: Why, yes.

Teacher: Is difference something which is perceived in itself or do we always perceive x to be different from y ?

Student: We always perceive x to be different from y .

Teacher: And where do we perceive this difference? Is it in x or in y?

Student: It is in neither. It is a judgment which I make upon seeing x and y.

Teacher: Where does this difference come from? If it is not in either object alone, it is not in them taken together. Where is it then?

Student: It is in my mind. If x is hotter than y, I feel x affecting me differently than y; x feels hotter.

Teacher: The difference is not in x alone.

Student: No.

Teacher: Nor in y alone.

Student: No.

Teacher: If it is in neither alone, then it is not in both together.

What is altogether absent in each taken severally cannot suddenly be present when the same two are taken together.

Student: It would seem not.

Teacher: Then, can we say that difference lies solely in your mind.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then, why are you so quick to affirm that difference is something real?

Student: Perhaps I was too quick to say that difference is solely in the mind. After all, why do different objects affect us differently? If we feel one object to be hotter than another, it must be something in the object itself that is different.

Teacher: You want to say now that difference is in the object itself?

Student: Yes, for if difference is something real it must somehow exist in the nature of an object; it cannot arise out of nothing. If difference arises out of nothing, then differences would be made up of nothing. But

we cannot say that that which is made up of nothing can itself be something.

Teacher: Does difference exist in the object as it exists in itself?

Or, must we bring the object into relation with other objects before we predicate difference of it?

Student: Suppose we say that difference is in the object itself.

Teacher: Is it true of each object that it possesses its difference in itself?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If it is true of each object that it possesses its "difference in itself", then how will any one object be different from any other? Will not all objects be alike, rather than being different, in that all objects will possess the characteristic of being different in themselves?

Student: I think now that I was mistaken to have said that difference exists as a property inherent in each object taken by itself, for then we could point to no characteristic by means of which one object could be said to be different from another. There is no property of difference in itself. Difference arises only from a comparison of two objects taken together. Without a comparison the idea of difference cannot even arise for there can be difference only if there is two.

Teacher: How does the idea of difference arise?

Student: One object may possess the quality of heat and another the quality of cold. When we compare the object possessing the heat with the object possessing the cold we say that the one object is different from the other. Difference is not a separate quality in itself as is heat or cold. We are conscious of a perception of heat or cold, but we are never conscious of a perception of difference. That heat differs from cold is a judgment we

form upon perceiving heat and cold and comparing them one to the other.

Teacher: When we compare two objects, one of which possesses the quality of redness and the other of which possesses the quality of greenness, do we say that they are different from each other?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: Is the difference between redness and greenness different from the difference between heat and cold?

Student: By no means. There is no difference between or among differences. If there were a difference between individual differences, how could we then call them all by the same name?

Teacher: But if there is no difference between differences then every object differs from every other object in precisely the same way. But if every object differs from every other object in precisely the same way, then how can we say that any one object is different from any other?

Student: I think now that I was incorrect in saying that there is no difference between cases of difference. It now seems to me that every case of difference is unique unto itself.

Teacher: If each case of difference is unique unto itself then no case may be compared with any other case. For what is unique unto itself is incomparable. But if no case can be compared with any other case then the idea of difference cannot even arise, for did we not agree that difference can arise only through the comparison of objects and has no existence in itself.

Student: Perhaps I ought not to have said that difference has no existence in itself. It now seems to be that we must have reference to a concept of difference in itself apart from objects. For, did we not say that there is no difference between cases of difference?

Teacher: Yes.

Student: And yet, how can we say that there is no difference between cases of difference unless we have access to a conception of difference in itself? How can we compare one case of difference (that between red and green) to another case of difference (that between cold and hot) and judge that they are not different from each other unless we have access to an idea of difference which is different from the difference between red and green and the difference between heat and cold. Indeed, how can we judge that these are cases of difference unless we have reference to a conception of difference in itself which the two cases of difference share in common with each other. If there can be more than one case of difference then there must be a difference between the particular cases of difference and that of which they are cases, namely, difference.

Teacher: You are now saying, if I understand you rightly, that there is such a thing as difference in itself. Difference in itself exists as a conception or an idea that you have.

Student: Difference is not merely an idea that I have. If it were merely an idea that I possess you would ask me how it arises. Difference exists as a standard by which we can judge that there is more than one case of difference, that one case of difference is not different from another case of difference, and that one object is different from another.

Teacher: You are now saying that it is through reference to an idea of difference that you can determine that objects are different from one another.

Student: Yes. It is only if I know what difference is that I can say that one object is different from another.

Teacher: Are the differences between all things included within the idea of difference? Does the idea of difference contain within itself the difference between red and green, cold and hot, and so on?

Student: No, for if the idea of difference must include within it all the differences that there are, we would have to know all individual differences before we could know what difference was. But how could we know all the differences before we knew what difference was? We could not recognize a case of difference unless we knew that for which we were looking. If we do not know what difference is, how can we know that we have before us an individual case of difference? Moreover, if we had to know individual cases of difference before we knew what difference was, this would be contrary to the hypothesis that it was through an idea of difference that we could recognize individual cases of difference. In any event, the idea of difference cannot arise from examining individual cases of difference for, if cases of difference do not differ, then the idea of difference cannot arise from the cases.

Teacher: The idea of difference, then, not including within its conception individual differences, must be but an empty idea. Actually, if there is no difference between individual cases of difference then they are all the same. Thus, even if the idea of difference included within itself all the individual cases of difference that there were, it would contain no more cases of difference than an idea which included no cases of difference within it; for, if all individual cases of difference are the same, there is not a single case of difference. And so in either case, whether the idea of difference contains within itself individual differences or not, the idea of difference is devoid of content.

Student: So it seems.

Teacher: But if an idea has no content in it how can we know it? What can we say that we are knowing when we are knowing it? And, if we cannot know it, how can we employ it as a standard of judgment? If the idea of difference

contains no individual differences within it, how can it be employed to enable us to judge that there is more than one case of difference, that one case of difference is not different from another case of difference, or that one object is different from another?

Student: These are formidable difficulties that you present. But I cannot give up my belief that we have reference to a conception of difference in itself apart from objects.

Teacher: Is this idea of difference different from cases of difference?

Student: To be sure. For, no one case of difference differs from any other case of difference qua being a case of difference. But if there is no difference between or among cases of difference, then the idea of difference cannot be identical to cases of difference. If the idea of difference were no different from cases of difference, it would be an idea of sameness, not difference. What is more, you could not even ask if the case of difference were different from the idea of difference unless you made reference to an idea of difference which was different from the case of difference and the idea of difference you were comparing.

Teacher: If the idea of difference is different from individual differences, how is it known to be different? Must you have recourse to another idea of difference in order to judge that the idea of difference is different from individual differences?

Student: No, that cannot be. For, if I must have recourse to another idea of difference in order to judge that my first idea of difference differed from difference, I could never know that there was a difference between difference and an idea of difference. For, if in order to judge the difference between difference and an idea of difference I must always refer to another idea of difference, I must then of necessity refer to an infinite

number of ideas of difference.³¹ Since I cannot complete an infinite series, I could never come to know that the idea of difference differed from difference. Indeed, even an infinite number of ideas of difference will not be of the slightest help in informing me that any of the ideas that I possess are ideas of difference. If I know difference at all, it cannot be that I know difference through ideas.

Teacher: How, then, do you come to know difference?

Student: Could it be that the idea of difference is formed from our experience of individual differences, as those between red and green, cold and hot, and so on? It seems that difference can only be known either from encountering differences in our experience and then forming the idea, or from first understanding the idea of difference and then imposing it upon our experience.

Teacher: We have agreed that there is no difference between cases of difference. Thus, all cases of difference are identical. And yet, if all cases of difference are identical, there can be no individual differences.

³¹Aristotle suggests this line of argument in his criticism of Plato's theory of Ideas: "And if the Ideas and the particulars that share in them have the same form, there will be something common to these..." Metaphysics, Bk 1, Ch. 9, 991a 2-3. Plato brings the argument up himself in much greater detail in his dialogue Parmenides in which he imagines a discourse between Socrates and Parmenides: "But now take Largeness itself and the other things which are large. Suppose you look at all these in the same way in your mind's eye, will not yet another unity make its appearance--a Largeness by virtue of which they all appear large? So it would seem.

If so, a second Form of Largeness will present itself, over and above Largeness itself and the things that share in it and again, covering all these, yet another, which will make all of them large. So each of your Forms will no longer be one, but an indefinite number." Parmenides, 132 AB. Cf. also Parmenides, 132C-133A.

The idea of difference can certainly not arise from cases of difference, as we said earlier, where there is no difference between cases of difference, there is not a single case of difference from which the idea of difference could arise. But neither can we have reference to an idea of difference existing in itself, apart from objects for difference arises always through comparison and is never known in itself. And, even if we could make reference to an idea of difference in itself how would we know if the case of difference we had before us were a case of difference. As we said earlier, we would have to compare our case of difference and our idea of difference to a further idea of difference. This would lead to an infinite regress. Since we can never complete an infinite series, it follows that we can never come to a knowledge of difference. It is impossible to know differences whether we say that our knowledge of difference arises from empirical examples or from ideas.

Student: I think now that the mistake I have made throughout this discussion is in having construed difference as something other than the object itself, whether as a property of the object, a judgment formed from the comparison of objects, or an idea existing apart from the object. Difference is not something other than the object itself. When we know what the object is in itself, then we know that this object is not some other object. We know what red is. We know what green is. We know that red is different from green simply in that red is not green. All difference lies simply in one object not being another. Whatever makes the object what it is is precisely what makes it different from other objects. The positive quality which makes the object the object that it is is what constitutes its difference.

Teacher: You are saying now that whatever it is that makes the object itself is what makes it not being another.

Student: Exactly.

Teacher: What it is to be a table for example, is what makes it not to be a chair; and, what it is to be a chair is what makes it not be a table. But if this is so, we can have neither table nor chair. For, if a chair's being is identical to its difference from table, then to be a chair is not to be a table. But if chair only means not being a table and table only means not being a chair, how can there be either table or chair? If each means the non-existence of the other, there will be no existence to be non-existent in the other. If all the object is is identical to its not being another, then no object will have any content and there will be no objects to be either the same as or different from any other.³²

Student: I do not quite see how this follows.

Teacher: If what makes the object itself is what makes it different, then the same object is both the same as itself and different from itself. But how can an object be both the same as itself and different from itself? What makes it the same as itself will make it different than itself. Its self-identity will make it something other than itself. But plainly it is self-contradictory for the identity of a thing to be something other than the thing that it is.

Student: What makes the object the same as itself is what makes it different from another, not different from itself.

Teacher: It works out the same in the end. Now follow the argument carefully. If table is not being a chair, and chair is not being a table, then there is no other, chair or table, which the one chair or table is not. If there is no other which the one is not, then not being a chair means not

³²For arguments of a similar nature regarding the nature of difference, Vide, Surendranath Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, pp. 130-132.

being a table. The expressions may be substituted for each other. Being a table means not being a table, which, of course, is contradictory. The meaning of an object, what it is to be the object that it is, cannot be not to be the object that it is.³³

Student: Why do you say that a chair is only not being a table? Is there not a positive quality of "chairness" as well?

Teacher: A chair cannot mean "being a chair" as something different from "not being a table" since on the hypothesis with which we began, the object is not something different from the character of difference. We began with the hypothesis that what makes the thing the thing that it is is what makes it different from other things. You stated that difference is the positive quality which makes the thing what it is and is not a special property all of its own. If "not being a table" is different from "being a chair", then difference and the thing cannot be the same. But this is contrary to the hypothesis.

Student: This is a most difficult matter to make out. It seems that difference cannot be the same as the object itself and yet it must, in some sense, be in the object if it is to be real. Perhaps difference is part of what it means to be something, but not the whole of it.

Teacher: If how something differed from everything else were part of what it meant to be the thing that it is, then we could never come to identify any particular thing to be what it is. If we could not perceive this chair to be a chair unless we perceived as part of its being as chair its

³³Ibid, Vol. I, pp. 462-464.

difference from every other object, how could we ever come to a perception of chair in the first place?

Student: Do you mean that we would have to know every object before we could know any object, and, therefore, we would never come to the knowledge of the one since it is impossible for us to know all.

Teacher: Yes, for obviously we must first go through the one before we can reach the all. And, if we need the all before we can know the one, we could never come to perceive an object in the first place. But there is another reason as well why difference cannot be part of what it means to be an object.

Student: What is that?

Teacher: If difference existed in the nature of an object, then in the essence of every object its difference from every other object would be included. If this is true, then no one thing would be different from any other thing since the concept of all things is included in each thing. It will be true of everything that part of its nature would be identical to all other things. But if all things are included within the nature of each thing, what means do we have for differentiating one thing from another? If no one thing can be identified as different from any other thing, how could we ever recognize anything to be the particular thing that it is? Indeed, if we cannot distinguish one thing from another thing, could we even say that we ever perceived an individual thing? For, if all things are alike, would we even be conscious of an individual thing?

Student: It seems that difference cannot even be part of what it means to be an object.

Teacher: True. In fact, we can apply the same dialectic we applied to the notion that the difference of an object is the same as its identity to the

notion that the difference of an object is a partial identity of the object.

Student: Could I trouble you to show how the same dialectic which applies to the whole applies to the part?

Teacher: Surely. If part of what a thing is is to be different from something else, then part of what a table is is to be different from a chair, and part of what a chair is is to be different from a table. Now, the part of what it means to be a table (not being a chair) requires for its "table-ness" not being a chair. By the same token, the part of what it means to be a chair (not being a table) requires for its being a chair that it not be a table. If each meaning requires itself in the other before it can be in itself, there can be no meaning in itself, and a fortiori, no meaning in the other.

Student: I now see that I was mistaken to say that what makes the object the object that it is is identical, whether in whole or in part, to what makes the object different. What makes the object different is different from the object.

Teacher: How do you detect this difference? If it is a character of difference to which you appeal that is shared in common, then it will be of no use in distinguishing one object from another. If what makes the object different is different from the object as a character which is unique in every case, then how would we even know to call it by the same name? What is more, if the character of difference were different in every case then all objects would be the same in this respect and no one case of difference (each being unique) would be different from any other.

Student: It seems to me now that difference is not a positive quality

which exists in itself but is simply the absence of a quality in a thing.³⁴

Teacher: If a table is different from chair simply because the quality of chair is absent from table then, in order to be a table, it is necessary not to be everything else; for, to be the thing that it is, all other positive qualities must be absent from it. It will be part of the meaning of everything to be void of the qualities of everything else and no positive qualities will exist to be absent in anything. For, if before we can have a thing it must not be other things, then this must be true of all things. But if it is true of all things, then how can the qualities come into being which must be absent in other things? Hence, there will be no positive content to be experienced and we will never experience anything. Further, if difference is but absence, then there is no difference between not being a table and not being a closet. If difference is but the absence of something, there is no quality present to distinguish not being a table from not being a closet. If there is no difference between differences, they all become identical. But if all differences are identical, by what right do we call them differences?

Student: Perhaps I was mistaken to say that difference was only absence. I think now that difference is not merely the absence of a positive quality, but is an absence which is a positive quality in itself.

Teacher: Do you mean to say that there is a difference between not being a closet and not being a chair? This reminds me of the subsidy given in this country to farmers for not raising crops on their land. One farmer wrote in to inquire what kinds of crops were best for not raising and which

³⁴For arguments similar to those given above, Vide, Ibid., Vol. I, p. 464.

crop would yield the highest subsidy not to raise.

Student: I do not know what to say. Each rendering of difference that I put forth you seem to dissemble and yet, I cannot escape from the belief that things are different from one another.

Teacher: Shall we review the hypotheses you have advanced?

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Is difference something which is perceived in itself?

Student: No, difference is always perceived as a result of the comparison between two objects.

Teacher: Is the difference which is perceived upon the comparison of two objects actually existent in the objects or only in the mind?

Student: If it is only in the mind, then it cannot be real. But we have seen that difference cannot exist in the object either.

Teacher: Is every case of difference unique unto itself?

Student: No.

Teacher: Is there a difference between differences? Is one different in terms of being a difference from another difference?

Student: No, that cannot be.

Teacher: Do we have reference to an abstract idea of difference in itself apart from objects?

Student: No.

Teacher: Is difference part of the meaning of an object?

Student: No.

Teacher: If difference is not identical to the object, is it different from the object?

Student: It seems that although we have shown that difference cannot be the same as the object, we cannot say that it is different from the object either;

for, to say that difference is different from the object, we must have reference to a concept of difference apart from the object, but this we have shown to be impossible. Is it not strange that we cannot say that difference is either the same as or different from the object?

Teacher: And there are stranger things to come. Can we say that difference is but absence, whether as the absence of a positive quality or as an absence which is a positive quality in itself?

Student: No.

Teacher: And earlier we demonstrated, did we not, that difference was not a positive quality which could be experienced in itself.

Student: That we did.

Teacher: And so in difference we have a phenomenon, each case of which is neither unique unto itself, the same as any other case, nor different from any other case, which can neither be the presence of a positive quality nor the absence of a positive quality nor an absence as a positive quality, which cannot exist in itself as an idea, which cannot exist in the mind, and which is neither identical to the object whether in whole or in part, nor different from the object.

Student: Our examination of the idea of difference seems to have led us to contradictory conclusions.

Teacher: This should come as no surprise to us for from a false premise, any number of conclusions, including contradictory ones, may follow.

Student: What is the false premise with which we have begun?

Teacher: The false premise is the assumption of the reality of difference. It is only if we assume that difference is something real that we would attempt to say something about it as whether it is in the object or in the mind, whether it has positive existence or is the absence of positive

existence, whether it exists in our experience or only in idea, or whether it is the same as the object or different from the object. It is because difference does not really exist that we are able to predicate anything we please of it, including properties which contradict one another.

Student: I have one more difficulty.

Teacher: What is it?

Student: If there is no difference then how can there be sameness? If we cannot perceive difference, then how can we perceive self-identity? If one thing does not differ from any other thing, how could we even have one thing? If there is no other which differs from the one, how would we even have a one?

Teacher: You are quite right. Without difference there can be no sameness. But you should not let this be of concern. Sameness and difference only make sense if there are things. But if there are no things, there is no comparison between them; and, if there is no comparison, there is neither sameness nor difference.

Student: Why is there then no cause for concern?

Teacher: Identity and difference are categories which can have meaning only with reference to things or objects. Identity and difference can be meaningful to us only if that to which they have reference (objects) really exists. But, as we have established earlier, that there are objects is only an hypothesis. It should not surprise us then that the categories which are designed to describe that which has no existence in itself (the object) will themselves have no existence in themselves.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Are you satisfied now that difference does not stand for anything that is real?

Student: Yes, the logic of the arguments has established that conclusively.

Teacher: We should not be concerned then if the view we are advancing does not account for the differences between things. If difference is not anything real, we should be more surprised to discover that it existed. If the terms of a relation do not exist (things) then, a fortiori, the relations between those terms cannot exist (sameness and difference).

FOURTH DIALOGUE

Student: One thing still troubles me.

Teacher: What is that?

Student: If there is just knowledge or being or experience, why is there the appearance of plurality?

Teacher: Under what conditions may there be the appearance of more than one?

Student: I do not know.

Teacher: If we could state the only conditions under which there can be plurality and these conditions themselves turn out not to be real, then will plurality be anything real?

Student: Assuredly not.

Teacher: There are only two ways in which it is possible that there can be an appearance of more than one.

Student: What are they?

Teacher: Why, space and time. Space is the way in which we can have more than one existence at the same time. Time is the way in which we can have more than one existence in the same space.

Student: Could you explain this to me?

Teacher: Of course. How can you have more than one at the same time? You can have more than one at the same time only if you put your existences next to each other in space--either in the space of your imagination or in what we may call outer space. Can you think of any other way to have more than one at the same time except than by placing the existences alongside of each other or in some other spatial relationship?

Student: No.

Teacher: You can see then how space is the only condition under which we can have a plurality at the same time.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Now, is space something that is real?

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: Does space have an existence in itself apart from you?

Student: I do not know.

Teacher: How do you know that there is something outside of you in the first place?

Student: I see it as outside.

Teacher: You see it as outside of what?

Student: I see whatever it is I see as outside of me, as outside of my body.

Teacher: Good. The body, then, is the orientation point for space. If there were no body we could not say that certain things were outside and others inside of us (as our internal organs).

Student: What you say seems to be correct.

Teacher: We do not have to leave this at the level of seeming. Without the body as an orientation point could you say that something, x, was to the right of something else, y?

Student: No, for all directions are taken with reference to the body.

Originally, I suppose someone chose the word 'right' to stand for one hand and the word 'left' to stand for the other hand. Since that time everything that is either left or right can be traced back to that original starting point.

Teacher: Excellent. And so whatever stands on your right hand is to the

right and whatever stands on your left hand is to the left.

Student: True.

Teacher: It is your body, then, that is the orientation point for rightness and leftness. What is right is right of your body; what is left is left of your body.

Student: Correct.

Teacher: Without your body would there be either left or right?

Student: I do not see how that would be possible.

Teacher: Without your body could you say that things in themselves are outside of you?

Student: If there is no body surely we could not say that things were outside of us, but would they still not be outside of one another?

Teacher: How is it that one object can be outside of another object?

Student: If I drop a stone in the water I may say that the stone is inside of the ripples it creates and the ripples are outside of the stone.

Teacher: But how can you say that the stone is inside the ripples unless you imaginatively project yourself as a body in the place of the stone. Is it still not with reference to your body that you say that objects are inside or outside of one another? It is only in these cases that the process is a step further removed from when we say that these objects are either inside or outside of our bodies.

Student: Yes, what you say is right. But could we not say that objects are external to one another?³⁵

³⁵For Hegel, what is meant by nature is the world in which existences are external to one another. R. G. Collingwood attributes this view to Hegel: "Nature, then, is the realm of outwardness; it is a world (or rather the world) in which things are outside each other." R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature, p. 126.

Teacher: What do you mean by the word 'external'?

Student: Why, we say that objects are external to one another when they are next to one another or when one object is between two other objects.

Teacher: When we say that one object is next to another object do we not always imaginatively portray our bodies as alongside one of these objects? We say that x is next to y because we have projected ourselves as next to y. Actually, the "next to" is next to our bodies but it is only at some steps further removed. When we say that one object is between two other objects we always imaginatively place our bodies between x and z in order to say that y is between x and z. All spatial relationships must ultimately be brought back to my body if they are to exist at all.³⁶

Student: I understand what you mean now, and I see that what you say is correct.

Teacher: Without my body then can we say that things are external to one another?

Student: By no means.

Teacher: What about above and below. Can we say that some things are above other things or below other things?

Student: Above and below can only exist if ultimately they are brought into relation with my body.

Teacher: What of right side up and upside down?

Student: The same would hold of that.

Teacher: And farther away and nearer to?

³⁶The 'my' is symbolic of any subject's body.

Student: The same.

Teacher: Is there any kind of spatial relationship that would be possible without reference to my body?

Student: No, I do not see how any would be possible at all. Wait a moment. Is it not true that we can picture two men standing next to each other within our imaginations?

Teacher: Must we not imaginatively project our bodies as alongside these two men even here in order to say that they are next to each other? We first imagine these two men as next to us and then, and only then, as next to each other. It is just that the force of habit has caused us to suppress the major premise and to say simply that the men are next to each other.

Student; Very well.

Teacher: Would you agree now that no spatial relationship can exist without reference to my body.

Student: Yes, I quite agree.

Teacher: Shall we not say then that my body is the condition for the existence of space. For if it were not for my body, could space exist at all?

Student: Are you equating space with spatial relationships?

Teacher: Do you think that space is a something which exists in itself?

Student: I am not certain.

Teacher: Do you ever see space in itself or do you always see space as a relationship between objects?

Student: I never see space in itself. It is true that I only see space as a relationship between objects.

Teacher: Very good. If we were to say that space was a something that existed in itself, we would be saying that space is itself a magnitude existing in itself.

Student: Yes, that is so.

Teacher: And if space is itself a magnitude then what about objects? Are objects also magnitudes³⁷ in themselves in addition to space or are they magnitudes which are made up of the magnitude which is space?

Student: They cannot be separate magnitudes or else we should have two magnitudes which are taking up the same space. But that is impossible. It must be that either space itself is a magnitude and objects are not magnitudes, or objects are magnitudes and space itself is not a magnitude. But it cannot be that objects possess no magnitude. It must be that space is not a magnitude in itself, but is made up of objects which possess magnitude.

Teacher: You are saying that only objects have magnitude and space has no magnitude.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If space has no magnitude can we say that it has any extent?

Student: Why not?

Teacher: If space has no magnitude in itself then it cannot be divided.

Student: True.

Teacher: If space has no magnitude in itself then neither can it be added to.

Student: Quite right.

Teacher: Can we say that that which can neither be divided nor added to has any extension? Can we say that that which has no magnitude is of any length?

Student: No.

³⁷The term 'magnitude' is used in the sense of quantity. Spatial quantities or magnitudes are measured in terms of extension. Temporal quantities or magnitudes are measured in terms of duration.

Teacher: Can we say that that which is without length is of any extent?

Student: No.

Teacher: Can that which has no magnitude or extent be said to be farther away, or nearer than, or between, or next to, or beneath, or above, to the left of, or to the right of?

Student: No, I do not see how that would be possible.

Teacher: Then all of these spatial relationships must be comprised of the objects which are in them, I suppose.

Student: Yes, for relationships can exist only between objects. Relationships have no existence in themselves apart from objects.

Teacher: And it is the objects which are filled with magnitude.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And space itself is devoid of objects.

Student: True.

Teacher: How is it that an empty space can be filled up with objects which have magnitude?

Student: No, that will not do. It must be that space itself is a magnitude and what we call objects are in fact divisions within that space.

Teacher: Objects then are made up of the magnitude which is space.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If space is a magnitude it can be subdivided.

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: Can it be subdivided infinitely or is there a smallest part of space?

Student: For whatever part we say is the smallest it can always be divided.

Teacher: If space can be divided infinitely it must possess an infinite magnitude.

Teacher: How can there be objects then which are of finite magnitudes? How can there be a finite magnitude which is made up of an infinite magnitude?

Student: That seems to be impossible to me. To tell you the truth I can make no sense of this.

Teacher: Can we make any sense out of space as an existence in itself except as construing it either as a magnitude existing in itself or as empty and having its magnitude made up of objects which are of certain magnitudes?

Student: No, I can think of no other alternatives than these.

Teacher: Then perhaps we were wrong to think of space as an existence in itself. What if we were to say that space has no existence in itself but consists entirely of a relationship between objects.

Student: Yes, that sounds like it will help us out of these difficulties.

Teacher: Now, all spatial relationships between objects are ultimately traceable and reducible to relationships between my body and its objects, are they not? For to have any spatial relation must I not always imaginatively identify my body with one of the objects in relation? The spatial relationship then is always a relationship between my body and an object, is it not?

Student: Let us imagine that this is true for the moment.

Teacher: Now, which is the orientation point, the object or my body?

Student: Why, my body.

Teacher: Excellent. The relationship, then, is one which is from us. We create the relationship. The relationship would not exist if it were not for the fact that my body serves as the orientation point.

Student: True.

Teacher: Shall we say, then, that if it were not for my body space could

not exist. For, if space is nothing but a relationship between objects and all relationships between objects are relationships between my body and objects, unless my body has existence, space cannot have existence.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Now, is my body real?

Student: You are asking me if I know my body as an existence which exists in itself.

Teacher: Yes.

Student: No, for my own knowledge of my body is a feeling awareness that I have.

Teacher: And when there is no feeling awareness, where is my body?

Student: Why can say?

Teacher: We cannot say, then, that my body is real.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: Now, you asked me why it was that there was an appearance of plurality even though in reality plurality did not exist, did you not?

Student: I did indeed.

Teacher: It appears that we can see, touch, smell, hear, taste, imagine, remember, understand more than one thing at a time because we set whatever it is to be cognized alongside whatever else there is to be cognized next to it in space, whether in outer space or in the space of our imagination.

Student: Could you give me an example of this?

Teacher: Gladly. We think we can hear two sounds at once because we imaginatively arrange these sounds in two separate places. How can we hear two sounds at once? It seems that we can hear one sound in one place and another sound in another place. If we did not set the sounds in two separate spaces we would never say that we could hear two sounds at once.

Can you hear two sounds at the same time if you think of them as occupying the same space?

Student: By no means.

Teacher: Can you appear to touch two things at the same time unless they occupy two separate places?

Student: No, for how would they be two unless they occupied different places in space?

Teacher: Can it seem that you can see more than one thing at a time unless these things occupy different places in space? Can it seem that you can taste two things at a time unless the two things at a time unless the two things are in different places in space?

Student: No. For space is the only way in which there can be more than one existence at the same time.

Teacher: Quite right. Now, can there be different places in space if it is not for my body?

Student: Can there not be different places in space without my body?

Teacher: What do you mean by a different place? Can there be an abstract place or must not all places be either next to, on top of, on the bottom of, and so on?

Student: You are quite right. It makes no sense to think of a place in itself. Every place must exist in some spatial relation to some other place.

Teacher: And by place I take it you mean object, for did you not say that space was no existence in itself but rather was nothing more than a relationship between objects?

Student: Yes, that is right.

Teacher: Can we say then that there are different places in space without my body?

Student: No, we cannot say that.

Teacher: Now, can we be aware of a plurality if it is not for space?

Can it seem as if we can see, hear, touch, smell, taste more than one thing at a time if it were not for space?

Student: I do not see how.

Teacher: Space, then, is the condition for plurality.

Student: True.

Teacher: If it were not for my body, would there be space? If all space is a relationship between the body and objects and it is a relationship that exists from the perspective of my body, can space exist if my body does not exist?

Student: No.

Teacher: Is my body something that has existence in itself?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then how can plurality have any real existence? If all plurality depends upon space and all space depends upon my body and my body has no existence in itself,³⁸ why should we think that plurality has any existence in itself?

Student: I can see that we must think of space as real if we are to attribute reality to plurality. If space is a perspective which exists from the point of view of my body, then that more than one object can exist at a time is also a projection on our parts and has no reality in itself.

Teacher: Indeed, we could have taken a shorter road than this.

Student: How so?

³⁸Vide, p. 78. Vide, also Second Dialogue, p. 42.

Teacher: Did we not say that space was not a something that existed in itself but was a relation between my body and objects.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And have we not shown that objects have no existence in themselves.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And have we not also shown that my body has no existence in itself.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If space is a relationship between my body and the object and neither term of the relationship can exist, how can the relationship exist?

Student: It cannot. But space is not the only form in which plurality comes to us. Did you not yourself say that time is the way in which we can have more than one existence in one and the same space?

Teacher: You are quite right to remind me of this. We must now show that time is not something real if we are to say that all forms of plurality are not real.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Very well. Do you hold that time is a magnitude which exists in itself or is it made up of the events which come to pass.

Student: Suppose I say that it is a magnitude in itself.

Teacher: If time is a magnitude which exists in itself, then are the events which come to pass also temporal magnitudes which exist in themselves?

Student: No, for if time were a magnitude in itself and events also possessed temporal magnitudes in themselves, there would then be two times at once. But the only way in which there can be a plurality in time is if one is before and the other after. But if one is before and the other after, the "two" do not exist at once. Any plurality in time must be the result of divisions within one and the same time. We could not make sense of the

"before" and the "after" unless the "before" and the "after" were parts of the same time.

Teacher: Very good. I suppose that the events which come to be are made up of the magnitude that is time.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Is there a smallest possible unit of time?

Student: No, for any unit of time that we have can always be divided.

Teacher: And, if time can always be divided then there must be something there to be so divided. And what is there is time.

Student: Yes, or else why would we say that it is time which³⁹ is capable of an infinite divisibility.

Teacher: Time then is an infinite magnitude.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If time is an infinite magnitude and the events which come to be are made up of the magnitude that is time, then how is it that any event would pass? If any event is made up of an infinite magnitude, then it would require an infinite time to pass. But if it required an infinite time to pass no event would ever pass.

Student: I was wrong to say that time was a magnitude in itself and events were made up of the magnitude that is time. It must rather be that time itself is empty and is made up of events which are, in themselves, temporal magnitudes.

Teacher: But we can apply the same dialectic to events as well. Is there

³⁹The Saravastivadin school of Buddhism thought it could determine the duration of a moment which nonetheless would be the smallest imaginable particle of time: "The Saravastivadin school makes an attempt mathematically to determine the duration of a moment. It, nevertheless, admittedly represents the smallest particle of time imaginable." But is this not impossible? For any chosen duration, no matter how small, can we not always imagine its subdivision? Central Concept..., p. 32.

a smallest possible event?

Student: No. Any temporal unit can always be sub-divided further.

Teacher: If any temporal unit can always be divided then there must be something there to be so divided. What this something is is time. Time, then, is an infinite magnitude. But how can a finite event be made up of an infinite magnitude?

Student: I do not know what to make of this. It seems that time can neither be a magnitude in itself nor can it be made up of events which are made up of temporal magnitudes.

Teacher: Why do you think of time as an existence in itself? May it not be that time is a way which we have of grouping events, but has no existence in itself.

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: I mean that the fact that events take up time or occur one after the other in time has nothing to do with the event but rather has to do with us. Time has a meaning only in relation to us. Events have no temporal relation among themselves.

Student: If time has no existence in itself, then time is not something which is real. But I cannot believe that time is unreal.⁴⁰

Teacher: But what do you mean by the reality of time?

Student: I mean that all of our experience is in time.

Teacher: If I could show you that, on the contrary, none of our experience was in time, would you give up your belief in the reality of time?

⁴⁰ According to Sankhya-Yoga, time is unreal: "Time is an idea without reality, an empty construction of the mind." Central Concept..., p. 37.

Student: If you could show that none of our experience was in time that would certainly give me pause to think.

Teacher: Very well, then. Now, to say that our experience is in time is to say that it takes time to experience, is it not?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If it takes time to experience we may say that a time span t must elapse before an experience can take place.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: It requires the entire time span t for an experience to take place.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And time span t is made up of time is it not?

Student: Yes, or else why should we call it a time span?

Teacher: So time span t is of a certain magnitude.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Can time span t be sub-divided?

Student: Yes, for any magnitude of time may be made smaller.

Teacher: Is there any limit to this divisibility?

Student: No.

Teacher: If something can be divided into an infinite number of parts it itself must be infinite must it not? Or else we would not speak of dividing a something infinitely.

Student: That is true.

Teacher: Then time span t must be infinite in temporal magnitude.

Student: So it seems.

Teacher: If time span t is an infinite magnitude and time span t must elapse before experience can take place, we should never come to

experience for we must first wait upon the passage of an infinite lapse of time.

Student: I was wrong to say that a time span t must elapse before an experience can take place. We experience directly over certain spans of time.

Teacher: I see that you are not lacking in ingenuity. What are we to make of this? By saying that we can experience directly over a certain span of time I presume you mean that all of our experience is direct and none of it is remembered experience.

Student: Yes, that is what I mean.

Teacher: Is the entire time span t required in order that there be an experience?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Does our experience come into being all at once at the end of this time span or does it come into being a little at a time during the duration of this time span?

Student: It cannot be that it comes into being all at once at the end of the time span for if it came into being all at once, we could not say that our experience was in time. What would be happening during the earlier part of the time span if our experience came into being all at once at the end? It must be if the entire time span t is required in order to have experience that our experience comes into being a little at a time.

Teacher: Is time span t of some measurable length?

Student: Yes, if it is a temporal magnitude it can be measured.

Teacher: If it is of some measure may we not sub-divide it so that if we represent time span t by t we may represent its division by $t_1 \dots t_{10}$ where the numerical sequence stands for the chronological sequence.

Student: Yes, we may do this if you like.

Teacher: How do I distinguish between one part of the time span and another? Can I, as with a candy bar, simply cut the time span in half and by looking at the two halves distinguish which is the first part of the span from the second?

Student: By no means. In order that there can be a second part of the time span, one part must replace the other. For there to be a second or later part the first part must disappear and its place be taken by the second. We can identify the later as later only if t_1 has already passed away.

Teacher: Very good. Within any time span t , t_{10} comes into being only because it has replaced $t_1 \dots t_9$ which have already passed away. T_{10} can come into being only if $t_1 \dots t_9$ have passed away.

Student: True.

Teacher: Our hypothesis is that the entire time span t is necessary for there to be experience and that our experience comes into being a little at a time. But if this is so, our experience cannot be direct but must be in part remembered experience. For, at t_{10} we no longer have t_1 to directly experience. At t_{10} all that we can experience directly is, so to speak, t_{10} . All of the earlier parts have already passed away. If our experience comes into being a little at a time, then only a small part of our experience can be said to be experience; the rest of it will be memory. The hypothesis was, however, that we could experience directly over certain time spans.

Student: Suppose that is true. Some of our experience is remembered. What follows from that?

Teacher: I will ask you about any part of the time span what I asked you about all of it. I may ask about t_1 . Is some of our experience of t_1

remembered?

Student: And suppose it were?

Teacher: If t_1 is in part experience, in part memory, then we may analyze t_1 . T_1 is part of t which is of some magnitude, and if t is of some magnitude and t_1 is part of it, then t_1 is of some magnitude. T_1 may be represented as being itself made up of $t_1 \dots t_x$ and the question reappears, is some of the experience of t_1 comprised of memory?

Student: And suppose it were?

Teacher: How should we ever have experience in the first place? We must first have an experience before we can remember it. There is no memory unless there is an experience to be remembered. Memory does not precede experience; it must follow it. But on this account we can never begin with experience. For, if experience takes time we can never have an experience in the first place to remember.

Student: I am not sure that I understand.

Teacher: Experience takes time does it not?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And experience comes into being a little at a time.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: To have an experience, a time span t must elapse for that is what we mean when we say that experience takes time. To form any part of time span t (t_1) a certain time must pass. But for time to pass certain units of time must pass into the past and be replaced by others. If an experience is made up of parts which take time, and in order for there to be any one part a certain time must pass, then how could we ever have an experience in the first place? At best we would have a memory of what happened before. But we would not even have this because in order to have a memory, there

must be an experience to be remembered. But on the hypothesis that an experience comes into being over a time, there would never be an opportunity for an experience to form. Therefore, if experience takes time we would not ever have an experience in the first place.

Student: But this is to assume that for there to be direct experience all experience must be experience of the present. Why is it that we cannot have a direct experience of the past?

Teacher: How do you know that it is the past that you are experiencing? Is it the past itself that is present? When you remember now that you were once five years old, are you presently five years old?

Student: No.

Teacher: How can you distinguish the present from the past?

Student: The past itself is not present. What we mean by calling it the past is that it has passed; it is gone.

Teacher: What is it that you remember?

Student: I remember an image of the past.

Teacher: How do you know that? How do you know that your memory is an image of the past? Do you have the past itself available to compare your memory image to it?

Student: No.

Teacher: We cannot say that memory is an image of the past.

Student: I see that I was wrong to say that each time span is itself comprised of smaller temporal units. I see now that each time span must be, as it were, instantaneous for our experience to be direct. It is in this way that we will have direct experience, not of the past, but of the present.

Teacher: You are saying now that a time span is not made up of units of time.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If each time span is not itself made up of time then we cannot say that a time span is of any magnitude at all, for we cannot reach a temporal magnitude by adding together units which are not themselves made up of magnitude.

Student: True.

Teacher: How then can we say that our experience is temporal? If it is made up of non-temporal units these cannot be added together so as to yield a temporal experience. If, in order to have a direct experience of the present moment the moment must be instantaneous, then we cannot include a moment which is made up of no time in the time order. But if our experience is not in the time order, what sense does it make to speak of it as temporal?

Student: I am not sure that I understand this last point.

Teacher: Look here. If there is experience at any moment, we must say that it comes after a previous moment and before the next moment. We can give each moment a temporal location in the series.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: But if each moment is, as you say, not supposed to take up any time, how could we locate any moment with respect to any other moment? If each moment is timeless, then it cannot be part of a time order, for a temporal period cannot be constituted by non-temporal units. But if a moment is not part of the time order, how can we say that any moment is before or after any other moment? But if we cannot place any moment in the series how can we speak of our experience as coming to us in a sequence $t_1 \dots t_{10}$?

Student: Why is it that a timeless moment cannot be placed within a temporal series?

Teacher: If a moment is timeless then it cannot be said to happen before or after another moment. But if it cannot be said to be either before or after, how can we say that it is part of a series?

Student: It seems that we cannot experience directly over certain time spans, for that would be to have a time span which itself is made up of moments which are not in time. But as we have said before, we cannot have a time span which is made up of timeless moments. We must reject the analysis of time into moments and say that the entire time span is required for an experience to come into being. Experience does not come into being a little at a time.

Teacher: Does experience come into being all at once at the end of a time span?

Student: No, for we could then perform the same analysis upon this experience as "coming at the end". If the experience comes into being all at once or instantaneously it must take no time. But if it takes no time, how can we place it in a series as at the end or the beginning or any place at all? Or, if it is timeless then how can we say that it is part of a time span (whether the end or any other part) which is of temporal duration?

Teacher: Very good.

Student: It must be that it is over the entire time span itself that we have direct experience.

Teacher: If it is over the entire time span itself that we have direct experience and experience does not come to be as some at the first, more at the middle, and the rest at the end, then how do we fit this experience into a temporal relation with other experiences. Over this time span t no time has elapsed since time passes only when certain moments recede into the past and are replaced by other moments. To experience directly over the

length of t is to say that there is no time passage within t , for to experience directly is to experience not the past but the present. For there to be a past there must be a time passage, but then we would not have a direct experience but a memory. A memory is not a direct experience because we must first have an experience before we can remember it. On the hypothesis, however, we are having direct experience. A direct experience during which no time passes cannot be said to be temporal. But an experience which is not temporal cannot be placed within the time order. If the entire time span t takes up no time, we cannot say that time span t comes before time span r and after time span s . To say that we experience directly over certain temporal spans is to say that there is no temporal order to our experience. We reach this conclusion by extending the analysis of the time moment in relation to the time span to the time span in relation to the time order. To say that we can experience directly over a time span is to say that our experience cannot be ranked in a time order. But when we say that our experience is in time, we mean that we can say that an experience b can be said to occur before c and after a . If we cannot say when an experience occurs, what sense does it make to say that it is in time?

Student: What you say seems undeniable. We cannot experience the past directly or else it would not be past. If we have a direct experience it cannot be of the past. We can have no experience of the present, for to do so would be to experience a present which was not in time and, thus, could not be located as present. We cannot experience the present as becoming over a span of time for it would then no longer be present but would already be past.

Teacher: It must follow, does it not, that our experience is not in time.

Student: In terms of the logic of the arguments presented the conclusion is inescapable. And yet it seems to me that I experience time.

Teacher: Let us attend then to your experience. In order for there to be time there must be a past, must there not?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: Do you ever experience the past?

Student: Yes, in memory.

Teacher: And where is your proof that what you remember is what happened before. Is it not true that all you have is the now?

Student: May I ask you a few questions?

Teacher: Why not?

Student: All we can be certain of, I suppose, is that everything is in the moment, or, the moment is all that there is.

Teacher: Very well.

Student: Can the moment be short or long?

Teacher: What do you mean?

Student: Suppose I say, "shhhh!"

Teacher: Yes.

Student: When I said "shhhhh" I could have said "shh" or "shhhhhhh". Thus, the moment can be shorter or longer.

Teacher: From the present moment you look back and compare a longer with a shorter moment. But where are your longer and shorter moments? Is it not true that all you can have is the present moment?

Student: Do we not have a sense that "shh" is shorter than "shhhhhhhhh"?

Teacher: Have you not sometimes thought that you saw an object, reached out for it and discovered that it was but a mirage?

Student: We are speaking only of the moment.

Teacher: In this moment, "shh!" Is there length?

Student: It seems that I can feel the moment with one eye, as it were, and

with another eye, at the same time notice its duration.

Teacher: You are already in a different moment. Is the one whose duration you are noticing the same as the one whose presence you felt?

Student: You are saying that we are not really going back and forth but are always aware of something new.

Teacher: Yes.

Student: It still seems to me that "shh" is shorter than the earlier "shhhhhh".

Teacher: You are intent upon bringing in the past. How do you know that the "shhhhhh" you just now mentioned is the past that you remember? Are you saying that it is the past itself that you remember?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If it were the past itself we would still be saying "shhhhhh"! We would never have come to the place where we are now in thinking that we remember the "shhhhhh".

Student: You are right. It is not the past itself that I remember. For if we were still in the past we could not remember it as passed. It is an image or symbol of the past that I have when I say, "shhhhhh". I, in thinking of this "shhhhhh" can use it as a sign to refer back to that previous experience "shhhhhhhh."

Teacher: And how do you know that it is a sign of that previous experience when you no longer have the previous experience with which to compare it?

Student: If we have no knowledge of the past, but all knowledge is in the present, how can we speak of the present? All we have then is the moment.

Teacher: We should not even say 'moment' for moment makes sense only in time and the concept of time requires that there be a plurality of moments.

Student: Is the moment instantaneous or is it an eternity?

Teacher: What is the difference between eternity and a moment?⁴¹

Student: Suddenly, I understand now.

Teacher: Can you apply your present understanding to our previous discussion?

Student: I see now that my question whether a moment was long or short was asked without my being in the moment. For a moment there can be no time.

Teacher: Excellent. Have you come to experience the truth that in experience there is no time?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then we have shown both through argument and through experience that time is not anything which exists in itself.

Student: Could you go over once more why it is that time has no existence in itself, using as a reference point the moment?

Teacher: Very well. If a moment were made up of time, we would never come to experience it in the first place.

Student: How is that?

Teacher: Suppose a moment were made of time. How much time would there be in a moment?

Student: Suppose we said about 1/10th of a second.

Teacher: What of that unit? Is it made up of time?

Student: If I say no, you will ask me how time can be made up of that which is of no time. It would be as if a cup of water were to be made up of drops, but in each drop there were no water.

⁴¹Aquinas appears to be making the same point: "The now of time is not time, the now of eternity is really the same as eternity." (emphasis his) Commentary, I, Sentences, ixix, ii. 2. Vide, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Philosophical Texts, selected and translated by Thomas Gilby, p. 84.

Teacher: Very good. You see that in order to have a cup of water there must be water in each droplet. Each moment, then, is made up of time.

Student: That must be.

Teacher: If each moment is of some duration, then is there a smallest possible moment?

Student: No, for any duration there can always be a shorter period.

Teacher: If something can be divided, I presume that there must be something which can be so divided. If a pound can be divided into sixteen ounces, then there must exist a pound to be so divided.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If something can be divided infinitely, then there must be something of infinite magnitude to admit of such division.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: There must be an infinity of time, then, in each moment.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: How can we get from moment to moment? If there is an infinity of time in each moment, then an infinity of time is required for the moment to elapse. In that case we would not even have one moment, for we have not yet used up an infinity of time.

Student: I am satisfied. I can see that a moment can neither be made up of time nor can it be timeless. There is no moment. Therefore, there is no time.

Teacher: Do you still hold that time is something that is real?

Student: It now seems that time cannot be real. But, what then is time?

Teacher: If time is not anything that is real, how can you expect me to tell you what it is?

Student: If time is nothing that is real, why do we think that there is

time?

Teacher: Time is nothing more than memory. The belief in the reality of memory is the belief in the reality of time. We have proved that memory cannot exist, have we not? For, if we have no knowledge of the past, then the word 'memory' cannot refer to anything that is real. If memory is not anything real, how can there be time?

Student: How is it that memory does not exist?

Teacher: Your difficulty stems from your objectification. You are making a thing, an entity, out of memory. Are you acquainted with the memory as a thing which exists in itself?

Student: No.

Teacher: What way is it that you are acquainted with what you call the memory?

Student: I remember this discussion with reference to the mind. The answer must be the same here. Memory is a mental acquaintance.

Teacher: What you call the memory, then, is a thought that you are having.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Now, where is the memory when you are not thinking of it?

Student: But I have a capacity for remembering that I can draw upon.

Teacher: "Your capacity for remembering that I can draw upon" is also a thought that you are having now.

Student: True.

Teacher: When are you having the thought?

Student: Now.

Teacher: What proof then is there of the memory?

Student: But we have just spoken of the memory again which means that it was there before and, therefore, that time exists.

Teacher: "Again!" What proof do you have of the "again" except now? All that you are aware of is the now. What you call the past is a theoretical object. Actually, the phrase 'theoretical object' is redundant since all objects are theoretical.

Student: Just a moment. The recollection of the past exists now. But that is not wiping out the past. That is bringing it up to the present and making it exist in the present.

Teacher: If our knowledge of the past exists only now, how can we say that there is such a thing as the past? The only proof we have of the past is the present. The past is never here to bear witness to itself. It is only a hypothetical object of the present.

Student: What about the future. Does the future exist?

Teacher: Our anticipation of the future exists. Our anticipation exists now. The future exists only as the present. The future as future is never present.

Student: All that there is is the present.

Teacher: The future is never present; the past is never present. If there is no past and no future, can there be a present?

Student: Yes, that is all that there is, the present.

Teacher: Can you be aware of that?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: When are you aware of that? Now?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Are you aware of it now?

Student: In a sense I must be even to answer, "No". I must have an awareness of whatever it is I am saying I am no longer aware of.

Teacher: This awareness that you have, is it an awareness you have now,

or one you had then?

Student: One that I have now.

Teacher: It is a "now" awareness saying that it is aware of a "then" awareness.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: But the awareness is in the now.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: To call it a "then awareness" is only a hypothesis since we can never have a "then" awareness.

Student: How can we even have the word 'then', if all we have is the now?

Teacher: Can we even have the now? Are you aware of that now, now?

Student: No.

Teacher: What can we say then that is not false?

Student: I do not know since every reference to the present is false. I thought you were driving me to say that all we were aware of was the present moment, but I can now see that we cannot even be aware of it.

Teacher: We cannot be aware of the present. We are in the present. If we could be aware of the present, it would be to say that awareness could be aware of itself. But we have shown that this is impossible.

Student: If there is no past and no present and no future, then there is no time.

Teacher: Quite right.

Student: And if there is no time, then there is no way in which there can be more than one existence in the same space.

Teacher: Yes.

Student: It seems that plurality cannot exist. For there are only two ways of being two. There can be two existences at the same time (which is space).

There can be two existences in the same space (which is time). But we have shown that space and time do not have any existence in themselves. It follows that there is no way in which plurality can exist.

Teacher: Excellent!

Student: But it still seems to me that I exist on the one side and objects exist on the other.

Teacher: What is the "I"?

Student: It is that existence which lasts through time.

Teacher: Do you have any knowledge of the "I" apart from your experience?

Student: No.

Teacher: If your experience is not in time, what can we say about the "I"?

Student: The "I" is never experienced for the "I" is that existence which lasts through time.

Teacher: Does anything exist outside of our experience?

Student: Anything outside of our experience can have only a hypothetical existence for us.

Teacher: And if there is no "I", can there be that which is other than "I", the object?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then there is neither subject nor object.

Student: What is there, then?

Teacher: Is there not experience?

Student: But is our experience of anything that is real?

Teacher: What word best describes the state of nontemporality?

Student: 'Being'.

Teacher: Shall we say then that all we can experience is that which is.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Are we ever not at a moment of experience?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then are we ever not experiencing that which is?

Student: No.

Teacher: If we are always experiencing that which is, can our experience be of anything other than reality itself?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then we are always experiencing reality.

Student: Then why is there the appearance of plurality?

Teacher: Plurality can only appear in space or time. Space exists only in relation to the body; time exists only in relation to the mind. So long as I think that my body is as an independent existence, there will be space and there will be objects outside of me. So long as I think that my mind is a permanent existing substance in itself, there will be time and objects such as the past and the future will exist.

Student: Why do I think that my mind and my body exist in themselves?

Teacher: The answer is in the question.

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: If all that there is is reality, then it is the raising of the question which creates the circumstance of there being something other than reality.

Student: Can you explain more?

Teacher: You cannot keep asking for further explanations, for explanation itself creates duality. Where there is an answer there must be a question. Instead of asking for the meaning of what I am saying as something additional to what I say, you must try to experience just what it is that I do say. I attempt descriptions of reality. Every description, being a description,

is removed from reality, since a description implies a dichotomy between that which is and the description of it. You must not look for reality in the description. Rather, you must look upon the description as a way of looking for reality. The description leads you to reality. To ask for further descriptions only leads you back away from it. The description 'Being' is perhaps the best description since it at once summons up the connotation of reality and, at the same time, is empty of any particular qualities. In its emptiness of any specific qualitative reference, it is the least misleading description of reality since we will not be misled into thinking that reality can be specified by any particular name.⁴²

Student: Thank you. That was a very helpful "explanation".

Teacher: You can see why questions must come to an end, for every question is itself a creation of dualism.

Student: Could you say just a little bit more about this?

Teacher: So long as you have questions, I will have answers. You want to know why it is that every answer is contained within its question.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: When you ask, "Why?", you are asking a causal question. You are asking the question what is the cause of x. You have one phenomenon, one state, and you are asking what other state or phenomenon is responsible for the existence of the first.

⁴²For Hegel, Being is the emptiest category: "But if when we view the whole world we can only say that everything is, and nothing more, we are neglecting all specialty and, instead of absolute plenitude, we have absolute emptiness." The Logic of Hegel, Ch. VII, A, 87, translated by William Wallace from The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Hegel, p. 163.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: The question creates duality because a causal question demands a causal answer. If I say, "x is the cause of duality," I have not only admitted to the existence of duality, I have created it, for I admit there is a problem and a cause of that problem. Duality then becomes impossible to remove for you can ask, "Why?" for whatever explanation I give. If I give legitimacy to the form of the causal answer by employing it myself, I help to perpetuate the dualistic situation. There is no end to the question, "Why?", once we admit it in the first place. The answer to the question, "Why do we think there is duality?", is in the question because the question demands an answer, which creates the dualistic situation of question and answer. Without the question there would be no answer. If you truly want an answer to the question, "Why do we think there is duality?" where else could it be but in the question? The only answer which does not create a dualism is one which turns back the question.

Student: I keep thinking that there must be a cause for the appearance of duality.

Teacher: If you insist that duality has a cause we may say that it is ignorance for ignorance is something which is not anything real in itself. Ignorance is the absence of knowledge. Ignorance is not a positive state which exists in itself. Ignorance is like darkness which is not a positive state which exists in itself, but is only the absence of light. If we say that the cause of the appearance of duality is ignorance, then the answer to our question will dissolve the question, for ignorance disappears when there is knowledge. Just as darkness disappears into light so does ignorance disappear into knowledge.

Student: What do you mean by saying that ignorance disappears when there

is knowledge?

Teacher: When we turn on the outer lamp where is the darkness?

Student: It is no more.

Teacher: When we turn on the inner lamp, where is the darkness?

Student: It is no more. But how is it possible that it no longer exists?

Teacher: You must not think of darkness or ignorance as real states.

Darkness depends upon light; ignorance upon knowledge. When there is light, light takes the place of darkness. When there is knowledge, knowledge takes the place of ignorance. It is in this way that the question is dissolved.

Student: But I can keep questioning.

Teacher: Do you think that questions are infinite?

Student: It seems that they are.

Teacher: If you think that questions are infinite, then why are we talking together? If questions are infinite, then we can never come up with an answer. If we have no hope of an answer, then why should we carry on any further?

Student: You are quite right. If questioning is an infinite process then this inquiry would be a futile one.

Teacher: But we have already shown that questions are not infinite.

Student: How is that?

Teacher: Have we not found out some things that are certain?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If we have found out something that is certain, then questions cannot be infinite.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: We know, for example, that we know.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And if we know we cannot be ignorant.

Student: Quite right.

Teacher: And only ignorance is the cause of thinking that there is duality.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Is ignorance a real state on its own or is it a lack of knowledge?

Student: It is a lack of knowledge.

Teacher: Questions come only when we do not know.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Questions can only be prompted by ignorance.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: When we know, there will be no more questions.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Do we know?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Then how can there be any questions?

Student: If there are no questions, then there are no answers.

Teacher: Yes. This is the situation that we desire. For, if we are left with an answer we are still in duality. We want to arrive at a place where there is neither question nor answer. If there is an "answer" then there must be a "question".

Student: I think that I understand now what you meant by your delphic utterance that the answer to the question, "Why do we think there is duality?" is to be found in the question. But I cannot keep the question from arising.

Teacher: Do not be disturbed by the fact that you keep raising the question, "Why?". The existence of questions points beyond itself to the existence of that which is beyond questions.

Student: How is this possible?

Teacher: All questions ask what is the cause of x. Questions, then, are indications that there are events which have causes. Now, we have shown that questions are not infinite. If questions are not infinite, then causes are not infinite either. What does it mean to say that causes are not infinite? To say that causes are not infinite is to say that the chain of causes has a beginning. For the chain of causes to have a beginning, there must be a cause which is itself uncaused. The existence of the caused or conditioned proves the existence of the uncaused or unconditioned.

Student: I do not see the need for postulating the existence of the unconditioned. It seems to me that all existence is conditioned existence.

Teacher: All existence cannot be conditioned existence. If all existence were conditioned existence then everything that existed would be an effect. But it is impossible that everything be an effect. For, if everything is an effect, no causes will exist to produce the effects. If there are no causes then neither can there be any effects. Therefore, everything that exists cannot be an effect.⁴³ The unconditioned must be actual if the conditioned is to be possible.

Student: Why is it that that which is an effect cannot also be a cause? An event 'b' may be the effect of event 'a' and still be the cause of event 'c'. I see no reason why we must come to that existence which is absolutely unconditioned.

⁴³ A similar argument is made by Aquinas in his proof from motion: "If that which sets in motion is itself in motion then it also must be set in motion by another, and that in its turn by another again. But here we cannot proceed to infinity, otherwise there would be no first mover unless they be moved by a former mover, as stick by hand. Therefore, we are bound to arrive at the first mover set in motion by no other, and this everyone understands to be God." Summa Theologica, I. a. 11. 3. Saint Thomas Aquinas Philosophical Texts, translated by Thomas Gilby, p. 49. Cf. also St. Thomas Aquinas,

Teacher: If there is nothing which is absolutely unconditioned, there will be no first cause, for every cause being conditioned will be caused by another. Thus, for the explanation of any event we must specify an infinite series of conditions. But the specification of an infinite series of conditions is no explanation, for we must then explain the existence of the infinite series of conditions. We will have compounded the problem. Instead of one unexplained condition, we now have an infinite number.

Student: Suppose no explanation is ever final. I do not see how it follows from this that we have no explanation at all.

Teacher: Let us choose a concrete example of a caused event, say, the movement of my arm. Now, if it is true as you say that there are no uncaused causes, it must be that an infinite set of conditions must take place before I can move my arm. If an infinite number of conditions must take place then no condition may be left out, for to say that there exists a condition which is not included is to limit the set of conditions. But ex hypothesi, the set of conditions is infinite. Thus, we may say that I cannot move my arm unless some gentleman in China takes a sip of tea.

Student: Surely you must not understand what I am saying to draw such absurd consequences from what I am saying. All I am saying is that there is nothing which is unconditioned. It does not follow from the fact that there is no unconditioned existence that each event requires for its taking place every other event. All that follows is that we cannot single out any event which does not have some other event as the condition for its existence. From the fact that some other event is required for the existence of an event it does

not follow that every other event is a condition for its existence.

Teacher: Even if I should grant you the truth of this argument, it will be to no avail. If every event, as you say, may be both cause and effect, then there is no beginning to any sequence of events. For, any cause which we may choose as the origin of a sequence of events will itself have been caused by another. And since, as you say, there is no uncaused cause, every cause will require for its existence an infinite number of predecessors. If an infinite number of causes must act before there can be any one cause, then how shall the action of any one cause exist? For, the action of an infinite number of causes will require the passage of an infinite span of time. But an infinite span of time cannot be traversed. Therefore, no cause can ever begin to act. But if no cause can act there can be no causal efficacy and, hence, no conditioned existence.⁴⁴

Student: It seems to me that you are always seeking a determinate something which is the cause of an effect. But this need not be the case. There need not be a definite something which exists which is responsible for the existence of a something else. Everything which happens simply follows upon an earlier moment.⁴⁵

⁴⁴This seems to be the substance of the argument of Kant's thesis in the First Antinomy of Pure Reason: "If we assume that the world has no beginning in time, then up to every given moment an eternity has elapsed, and there has passed away in the world an infinite series of successive states of things. Now the infinity of a series consists in the fact that it can never be completed through successive synthesis. It thus follows that it is impossible for an infinite world-series to have passed away, and that a beginning of the world is therefore a necessary condition of the world's existence." Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Kemp Smith, B 454.

⁴⁵This seems to be the Buddhists' view of causality: "A cause for the Buddhists was not a real cause but a preceding moment, which likewise arose out of nothing in order to disappear into nothing." Central Concept..., p. 32. And again, "A force...should not be regarded as a real influence of something extending beyond its own existence in order to penetrate into another..but simply as a condition, a fact, upon which another fact arises...", Central Concept..., p. 18.

It is not that that which happens after is the effect of a specific event which has preceded it. It is simply that that which happens after must always be preceded by an earlier condition or state of things. It is in this sense that we may say that every event has a cause. I do not mean that for each specific occurrence there is a determinate existence without the particular existence of which, what follows would not exist. What I mean is that no matter what event you single out it must follow upon "something else". The "something else" need not have any determinate character.

Teacher: But even to say that there must always be a preceding moment will lead us to impossible consequences. For if everything that occurs follows from a preceding moment we would have no conception of "following". For, if there is never a first moment, the series of moments must be infinite. But if the series of moments is infinite it must be without both beginning and end. For that which either begins to be or comes to an end cannot be said to be infinite. Now, can that which has no beginning or end be said to have a middle?

Student: No, for if we do not know the starting point and the finishing point, we certainly cannot say where the mid-point would fall.⁴⁶

Teacher: Now, to say that something begins to be is to say that we can locate its occurrence in a temporal sequence as before z and after x.

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: If there is no beginning, no middle, and no end, how can we say which moment comes before and which after? And yet, if we cannot say which moment comes before and which after, we cannot say one moment precedes

⁴⁶The Mandukyopanisad With Gaudapada's Karika and Sankara's Commentary, IV, 31.

another moment or that one moment follows another moment.

Student: Perhaps in an absolute sense we cannot say which moment follows from which. But this has no practical consequences. For all practical purposes we can choose one moment as the "before" and another as the "after".

Teacher: Actually, we could not even do this. For, we could not select any moment as coming "after" unless it occurred after a time during which it was not. Otherwise, we would not see it as coming "after" any other moment but as always having been.

Student: True.

Teacher: But if our series of preceding moments has no beginning, then it stretches back infinitely. If there is an infinite series of preceding moments then there is no time during which there is no preceding moment. All preceding moments must exist. For, if there is a time during which a moment does not exist, we could not say that the series was an infinite series for it would lack the existence of one moment. Thus, the moments after which we can say that something comes to be, always were. If the conditions for the occurrence of something always are, then the conditioned always is. For if all the conditions for the conditioned exist then the conditioned must exist as well. And yet, if the conditioned always exists, we cannot say that it follows or comes after a preceding moment for "following" or "coming after" is true only for that which comes into being after a moment before which it was not. But the conditioned always is. Therefore, it cannot be said to "follow" or "come after".⁴⁷

⁴⁷In the Prolegomena, Kant arrives at the same conclusion from a different line of argument: "As appearance every effect is an event, or something that happens in time; it must, according to the universal law of nature, be preceded by a determination of the causality of its cause (a state), which follows according to a constant law. But this

Student: I am persuaded that all existence cannot be conditioned existence. Indeed, you have proved that to me beyond any doubt. But it still is not clear to me why we must posit the existence of the absolutely unconditioned. It seems sufficient to me that there be an unconditioned condition relative to a certain set of events. Thus, what is the unconditioned condition for one set of conditioned events may be a conditioned existence relative to another condition. I see no necessity in postulating the existence of that which is unconditioned in an absolute sense.

Teacher: Your suggestion is that what is a condition from a certain point of view may be a conditioned from another point of view.

Student: Yes, that is my meaning exactly.

Teacher: There is no condition, then, which is self-dependent. Every condition is dependent.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If every condition is dependent, then there is no condition which must exist. All conditions will have but contingent existence.

Student: True.

Teacher: Is it necessary that all existence is contingent?

Student: No, for if there is no necessary existence, I cannot maintain that it is necessary that only contingent existence exists.

determination of the causality must likewise be something that takes place or happens; the cause must have begun to act, otherwise no succession between it and the effect could be conceived. Otherwise the effect, as well as the causality of the cause, would have always existed." Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics, III, 2, 53. Kant, however, says that an event can be causally determined (as appearance) and free (in itself): "Nature therefore and freedom can without contradiction be attributed to the very same thing, but in different relations--on one side as a phenomenon, on the other as a thing in itself". III, 2, 53, Translated by Paul Carus. But what is said above is that even on the level of appearance it is impossible that all appearances be effects. If every cause always is, then its effect always would be, and hence could not appear as an effect.

Teacher: Then it may be that there is necessary existence.

Student: Yes, I must allow that this is a possibility.

Teacher: But we cannot say that the necessary is possible. For, to say that the necessary is possible is to say that it may or may not exist. But that which may or may not exist cannot be that which is necessary. The necessary cannot have a possible existence. Either it is necessary or it is impossible. Possibility cannot be a modality of the existence of the necessary. Either it is actual or it is impossible. To say that necessity cannot possibly be (is impossible) is to say that it is, for that which is not a possibility must either be actual or necessary. You cannot avoid necessary existence, for either to disclaim its existence or to make no claim on its existence (to say that it is possible) is to proclaim its existence.

Student: It seems true that, as in the ancient Greek tragedies, there is no escape from necessity.

Teacher: Have we come to an end of our discussion, then?

Student: One more question. What is necessary, I take it, is unconditioned existence.

Teacher: Yes, for all conditioned existence may or may not be.

Student: Do we still not have to explain necessary existence?

Teacher: No, for what exists of necessity is uncaused. Only dependent existence needs an explanation. If an existence is not caused by another and exists of necessity, it follows that it must be self-caused. What exists of necessity is the cause of itself.

Student: True.

Teacher: Are you satisfied, then, that the unconditioned must exist?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Is there anything more that needs to be explained?

Student: No, for the conditioned is explained by the unconditioned, and the unconditioned explains itself.

Teacher: Then nothing more needs to be said.

FIFTH DIALOGUE

Student: There are some questions which have long restricted my attempts at solution. Do you think that the fruits of our discussion can be of use to us?

Teacher: I should hope so. What are the questions?

Student: There are several.

Teacher: Well, let us take them up one at a time.

Student: Very well. I have never been able to understand the relationship between language and meaning. On the one hand it seems that no meaning can be taught without the use of language. On the other hand, this seems to be an impossibility for we could not have a language, that is, a sign system, unless we were acquainted with the realities for which the signs were the signs.

Teacher: Could you give me an example of what you mean?

Student: Surely. How does one come to know that the word 'hungry' stands for the state of needing food?

Teacher: The mother says the word 'hungry' and points to the stomach and then the mouth or some such way, I suppose.

Student: But this pointing, you see, is itself a sign system. The pointing must itself be understood to stand for these states. Without the pointing, we have no way of communicating meaning from one person to another.

But how can language be learned if language is required for teaching? How can the baby know that this pointing is to mean some reality unless the baby is already acquainted with the reality? How can the baby know that

'father' is to mean father unless the baby is already acquainted with father? But how can the baby be acquainted with the meaning of 'father' except as it is taught by means of a language, whether a verbal language or another type of sign system such as pointing? A language or set of signs cannot exist unless the meaning exists first. A sign for a meaning is not understood unless there is already an understanding of the reality for which the sign is a sign. But there can be no understanding of realities except through the use of signs. It seems that language and meaning are each required as a necessary condition of the other. But this cannot be or neither of them could have come into being. If neither could have come into being without the other, how is it that we have both? We have both language and meaning. And yet it seems impossible that we should have either one.⁴⁸

Teacher: Why do you think of language as a sign system? It is the conception of language as a sign system that is the cause of your difficulties. Actually, the conception of language as a sign system is derivative from the object theory of knowledge. We think that what we know is the object. Whether the object is conceived as a physical object existing independently of the human mind or as an object which is in part constituted by the operations of the human mind, it is still something other than the subject; it is still the object which is what is known. But the question is never answered,

⁴⁸This problem is posed by St. Augustine. Vide, De Magistro, x, 30, x, 33-36, Medieval Philosophy, edited by Herman Sharpire, p. 30, pp. 32-34. His solution, however, is that we learn not by words but from "...the things themselves which inwardly God has made manifest..." De Magistro, xii, 40, Medieval Philosophy, p. 36. But the question still remains, what is the relationship between words and knowledge? So long as words and knowledge are considered as two, the question of their relationship must always arise. If ultimately there is a relation between words and knowledge, how is this relationship known?

indeed is never asked: how is the object known? If the object is something other than knowledge, something which knowledge knows, then language, which is a sign of this object (meaning), is something other than knowledge or meaning as well. We then have the problem if language is something other than meaning and we can only learn through language, how can we ever learn what meaning is in the first place, and if language is other than knowledge, how is language ever learned in the first place.

Student: If you do not have the view that language is a sign system, what other view of language do you have?

Teacher: Language is not a sign of what is known but is what is known.⁴⁹

We call what is known language when we look at knowledge in its expressive aspect.

Student: This is somewhat dark to me.

Teacher: Can you think of an example of knowledge which is without an image or some other sign or its presence?

Student: No.

Teacher: Why is that?

Student: An image is a necessary condition for knowledge.

Teacher: If you go back to the language of conditions, you will be left with the paradox with which you began. How will you have one without the other

⁴⁹At times Augustine seems very close to suggesting that there is no distinction between language and knowledge: "Men are wrong when they call those teachers who are not. But because very often there is no interval between the moment of speaking and the moment of knowing, and because they inwardly learn immediately after the speaker has given admonition, they suppose that they have been taught in an external fashion by him who gave the admonition." (emphasis mine). For the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, intuition and expression are one and the same: It is impossible to distinguish intuition from expression in...(the) cognitive process. The one appears with the other at the same instant, because they are not two, but one." Aesthetic, Ch. I. Translated by Douglas Ainslie.

and, if you must have both before you can have either one, how can you have either one in the first place. If you simply say that an image of some kind is a necessary condition for knowledge or a necessary accompaniment of knowledge, you will leave yourself no way to relate the image to knowledge or knowledge to the image. The relationship between the two will be inexplicable for the explanandum will be required for the explanans.

Student: But it is true that there is no example of knowledge which is imageless.

Teacher: That is because the image or the sign and knowledge are one and the same thing looked at in different ways.

Student: How can this be? Is there not a difference between knowledge and its expression?

Teacher: After the fact of knowledge we take the expression of knowledge and call it by the name 'language'. But at the moment of knowing there is neither an experience of a what which is known (to which a label is then affixed) nor is there language. There is only knowingness. What we call language is only knowledge itself viewed after the fact. Language is as it were the calling card of experience; it tells us that knowledge has deigned to pay us a visit.

Student: Are you now saying that first there is meaning and language comes afterwards?

Teacher: We can never say which comes first, meaning or words because neither meaning nor words stand for anything which is real. The word "first" is itself a falsification. During experience there is no first or second. These words come afterwards as an attempt to categorize an experience.

Student: I think I am beginning to follow what you mean. Is what you say with regard to the relationship between language and meaning applicable to

the relationship between form and content?

Teacher: Yes, the distinction between form and content is itself a pseudo-distinction. That is why the relationship between form and content has never been understood. It has never been made intelligible what it would mean to have a form without matter or a matter without form. The usual solution to the problem of how a formless matter and a matterless form can be related is simply to say that they must always be in conjunction with one another. But to say that they must always be in conjunction is to imply that there are two separate existences, one of which is formal and the other of which is material. The formal is understood to be that which makes whatever it is intelligible; the matter has been taken to be that stuff which individuates the thing. But if matter is unintelligible on its own, what positive content does it add to the cognoscendum? If form is empty, how can it apply to a concrete situation? All attempts to wed form and matter in a mechanical synthesis are doomed to failure since two unintelligibles cannot make an intelligible.

Student: Why do you say that the synthesis is a mechanical one?

Teacher: All synthesis must be mechanical for the idea of synthesis presupposes two prior self-dependent elements which are then brought together. But their "bringing together" is left unexplained and their relationship upon being together is left inexplicable.

Student: How do the perspectives of form and matter come about?

Teacher: Form is a perspective which waits until knowledge is, separates out its generalizable aspect, and calls this the intelligible aspect. Form is parasitic because it must always wait upon the knowledge situation to perform its theft. The perspective of matter comes into being because it is realized that what is understood with the mind cannot be all that there

is to a knowledge situation. It is the separation out of elements and hypostatizing of these elements that gives rise to all of our difficulties. If we realized that form and matter did not have any real existence in the first place, we should not be vexed with the question of how they can be brought into relation with each other.

Student: But how else are we to explain the knowledge situation? It seems to me that there must be a sensible component and an intellectual component in every act of knowledge.

Teacher: Why do you think that knowledge is an "act"? Perhaps if we explored the notion of knowledge as an act we can more fruitfully return to the question of the formal and the material in knowledge.

Student: Very well.

Teacher: If knowledge is an act then there is an agent (the actor), an instrumentality through which he acts, and a something upon which the action is performed. But we have seen that there is no object and no subject.

Student: It still seems that knowledge is something that you do.

Teacher: But the analogy of doing will not explain knowing. Take walking, for example. That is an action.

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: But you still have to know that you are walking. The action of walking is not sufficient to the knowledge of it. Doing and knowing are not the same. If knowledge were a kind of doing, that would still have to be known, just as walking as a kind of doing, still has to be known. The source of all of our difficulties is the belief that there are subjects and there are objects. If we could see through this interpretation of experience we would have a clearer insight into the source of our problems and the way out of our difficulties. It is the separation of ourselves from

our experience that gives rise to the notion of the separate existence of subjects and objects.

Student: Can you think of a way, different from the ways that you have already attempted, to bring me closer to the realization that there are not subjects and objects?

Teacher: Think of a mother's hearing a baby's cry. Can the baby's cry exist without the mother's hearing?

Student: You are giving me the old argument that if a tree falls in a forest where there is no one to hear it, that there will be no sound. But there can be sound. It is just that there will be no one there to hear it.

Teacher: How do you know that there will be sound?

Student: Why, a machine can be left in the forest on which the sounds can be recorded.

Teacher: If there is no one to hear the machine, how can you say that there is sound?

Student: Are there not sound waves which can be recorded on the machine?

Teacher: Do you mean to say that the sound waves that the machine records are the same as the sensed quality of the sound which is heard?

Student: No.

Teacher: We are back at the same question. Can there be sound without hearing?

Student: It would seem not. At least we have no proof of its independent existence.

Teacher: Is the existence of something which we can never experience of any interest to us?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then let us concern ourselves with our experience. It is our

experience that we are trying to interpret. Can we say that there is an object, the sound, unless there is a mother who hears?

Student: No.

Teacher: Would the baby utter a cry unless there were something wrong with him?

Student: No, the utterance of a cry is always a sign of some discomfort.

Teacher: Did the baby begin to cry of his own volition?

Student: I am not sure of what you mean.

Teacher: Would the baby cry unless he were in pain?

Student: No.

Teacher: Did the baby choose to cry?

Student: This is a difficult matter to make out.

Teacher: Could we say it was the baby who was the author of the cry or should we say that it was the pain that was the author of the cry?

Student: I do not know what to say.

Teacher: Suppose there were no atmosphere to carry the sound waves from the baby to the mother. If there were no air, no medium through which the sound waves could travel, could the mother hear the baby's cry? Or, could we even say that there was a cry if the medium of air did not exist?

Student: If there were no medium we could not say that such a thing as the cry existed. For after all, where does the existence of the cry begin and where does it end? Can it be said to exist if the baby's lips move and no sound is uttered?

Teacher: Very good. You are getting to the point. Suppose now that the mother is not a mother after all but only a visiting lady friend. Is it not likely that she will not hear the cry at all.

Student: Yes, that is quite likely. It is commonplace for a baby's mother

to hear the child cry out while others who are not related to the child will hear nothing.

Teacher: Then can we say that it was the mother who heard the cry? If the woman were not mother of this baby would she hear the cry? Can we say then that it is she as an individual who hears the cry? Or is the fact that she hears the cry more justifiably attributed to the biological link that exists between her and the child?

Student: We cannot say that it is this woman as an independent agent who hears the cry, but rather this woman as the mother of the child who cries out.

Teacher: Are you getting the point of the example?

Student: Yes. At the outset it appeared that there were subjects and objects existing independently of each other. It was through the action of subjects upon objects that an event came to pass. But a close examination of the case proved that we could not really decipher the author of the action. We could not really say that it was the baby who cried. In a way it was the pain which was making itself known through the medium of the baby's throat. The baby did not decide to cry of his own accord. Who then uttered the cry?

Teacher: Excellent.

Student: It appeared at the first that there was an object, the sound, which existed independently of baby and mother. But we cannot speak of the existence of the sound unless there is air to carry the sound and mother to hear the sound. There cannot be object without environment. We cannot speak of the physical existence of the sound without the atmosphere and we cannot speak of the phenomenological existence of the sound except through the existence of the mother. We cannot speak of the object as existing in itself either as a physical existence or as a sensed quality. What right then do

we have to think of the object as a something which exists in its own right?

Teacher: Very well said.

Student: Finally, we cannot speak of the woman as hearing the sound because it was not the woman qua woman who heard the sound but the woman as the mother of the child. The woman was not (in this context) responsible for being the mother of the child. We cannot say that it was the mother who heard the sound anymore than we can say that the mother cat is responsible for running to the kitten when the kitten cries out. We may with more justice say that it is mother nature or instinct that caused the cry to be heard. It is instinct that caused the cry to be issued. And it is mother nature who caused the cry to be carried. No one of the elements involved can exist without the others. How then can we speak of subjects when we can discover no agent responsible for the event? How can we speak of objects when we can find no object existing without an environment and a subject?

Teacher: Wonderful! I think you understand the point very well now. We cannot speak of subjects and objects as if there were subjects responsible for acts and objects existing independently of subjects waiting to be acted upon. We cannot conceive of the world as made up of separate existences. It is a whole from which the separate existences are our own abstractions which do not in reality have any existence in themselves. It should be clear to you now why it is a falsification of reality to think of knowledge as an action an agent performs upon an object.

Student: Yes, that is quite clear to me now. Why is it, however, that we should not take knowledge to be a possession? We often talk this way. We say, for example, that "I have knowledge".

Teacher: We say, "I have knowledge" in the same way as in the German language it is said, "Ich habe hunger". Knowledge is not something apart from us that we possess. If it were, how would we know it? We still have to know other things that we possess, such as, automobiles, houses. How do we know what we have? To say that knowledge is something we have is not to solve any problem. The solution is only pushed back one step further.

Student: But ideas are something that we have. Our knowledge comes from our ideas, does it not?

Teacher: How can knowledge come from our ideas? An idea is nothing but a thought, is it not?

Student: Yes, the word 'idea' and the word 'thought' stand for one and the same thing.

Teacher: And thoughts come and go, do they not? I mean one moment we are thinking about one thing and the next moment about something else.

Student: True.

Teacher: But knowledge cannot come and go.

Student: Why not?

Teacher: If knowledge came to an end, how could it start up again? If knowledge came to an end there would be no continuity between the sequence of ideas that came to an end and the new sequence. Actually, there could not even be an "end". An end must always be an end within knowledge. Or else how would we know that there was an end? Beginning and ending are only ideas. In order for there to be a starting point or a finishing point knowledge must be there before the starting point and after the finishing point. Otherwise, how could we know that there was either a beginning or an end?

Student: What you are saying, if I understand you rightly, is that we can

never experience a division of consciousness.⁵⁰ Any consciousness is always complete.⁵¹

Teacher: Very good. Indeed, to understand that consciousness can never be divided is to understand that plurality can never be experienced.

Student: How does it follow from the fact that consciousness cannot be divided that we can never experience a plurality?

Teacher: A plurality implies a separation between objects, does it not?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: And did we not establish in our first two conversations that all there is is consciousness?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If all that there is is consciousness, a separation can only be a separation of consciousness. But this, as we have shown above, is impossible.

Student: Very well, I am quite satisfied that knowledge cannot be divided, but I cannot escape from the belief that our knowledge has arisen from the ideas that we have.

⁵⁰Aristotle holds that consciousness, in certain cases, is complete: "Seeing seems to be at any moment complete, for it does not lack anything which comes into being later will complete its form; and pleasure also seems to be of this nature." Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. X, Ch. 3, 1174a14-17. But why would this not be true of all forms of consciousness?

⁵¹For Descartes, mind is entirely indivisible. Vide, Meditations, VI. Kant seems to extend this analysis to every consciousness: "...each representation, in so far as it is contained in a single moment, can never be anything but absolute unity." (emphasis his), Critique of Pure Reason, A99, translated by Kemp Smith, p. 131. It would appear that Kant qualifies his notion of the indivisibility of intuition with the suggestion that there can be more than one moment of consciousness. But any plurality must again be contained within a unitary consciousness: "There can be in us no modes of knowledge, without that unity of consciousness which preceded all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception." (emphasis his), Critique of Pure Reason, A 107, translated by Kemp Smith, p. 136. Cf. also A113n.

Teacher: But how could it? If knowledge must be there both before and after our ideas, how could it be that our ~~knowledge came from~~ our ideas?

How do we know that we have a thought or an idea? Is it not in knowledge or consciousness that ideas come to us? It is in knowledge that ideas come.

Student: But I have always thought that it was ideas that give us knowledge.

Teacher: But I can prove it to you, if you like, that ideas cannot give us knowledge.

Student: Yes, I would like that very much. And perhaps in this context you will make good on an earlier promise.

Teacher: What is that?

Student: You will make clear the difficulties involved in distinguishing between formal and material elements of knowledge and indicate the solution to these difficulties afforded by the viewpoint you are advancing.

Teacher: I will do my best. Let us take the example of the idea of a triangle. Would you say that you understood the idea of a triangle?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Does your understanding consist of the figure you may imagine in your mind or in the figure you may choose to draw?

Student: I am not certain of what you are asking.

Teacher: My meaning is very plain and when I explain it to you you will see what an absurd idea I had in mind. What I mean is: does your understanding of the idea of triangle consist of the particular little triangle you may picture in your mind?

Student: You are asking me if what I understand by the idea of triangle consists of an image I may conjure up, say perhaps of an isosceles triangle of about one inch in height and the same in width.

Teacher: Yes, that is exactly what I am asking you.

Student: The answer is no. Although I could have pictured just what I described, what I did, in fact, imagine was a much larger scalene triangle of about six inches along the hypoteneuse, five inches in height, and around seven inches along the base.

Teacher: But in either case you would have had an equally good understanding of triangle.

Student: Of course. What could we possibly mean by the idea of triangle if it did not hold for each and every instance of triangle that we may imagine, no matter how much each one might vary from each other in terms of its sensuous determination.

Teacher: Your idea of triangle is not at all limited to any particular sensuous determination.

Student: Of course not. If it were, how could it function in enabling me to pick out any triangle that I see as a triangle. If it were limited to a particular image, it could function to enable me to recognize only those images as triangles and no others. Our idea of triangle transcends any image of triangle that we may choose to imagine.

Teacher: Your idea of triangle has no determinate, sensuous characteristics at all?

Student: That is right. An infinite number of varieties of images of triangles can all equally well be triangles.

Teacher: If your idea of triangle has about it no sensible characteristics at all, how can it be of any use in selecting out which images are triangles as opposed to squares or circles? If your idea of triangle is devoid of any sensible traits, how can it enable you to pick out any particular image you see to be a triangle?

Student: We may choose a representative image arbitrarily to stand for the

idea of triangle. It is by means of this representative image that all other images are known.

Teacher: If you do not have an idea of triangle of which this image is supposed to be the representation, how do you choose the representative image in the first place and where does it reside? And yet the idea has no clue in it which aids you in selecting out an image which can match it. Further, even if you selected one image to be the representative image, I fail to see how you can recognize by this image other images visibly different from the representative image unless you had access to an idea which transcended both of these images. And if you had access to a transcendent idea, of what use is the representative image?

Student: Is it not possible that the memory we have of all the images we have seen in the past coupled with the capacity of our imagination accounts for our understanding of triangle?

Teacher: How could that be? A man powered with an infinite power of memory and an infinite power of imagination would still have to have an idea of triangle to know what it was he was remembering or imagining. How could he know what it was he was to remember or imagine in the first place if he did not possess an idea of triangle?

Student: What of this. Suppose our imaginary man was possessed of an infinite supply of images. Could he not examine his stock of images and by matching up what he came upon with one of his store recognize what he came upon to be a triangle?

Teacher: You remind me of the man who when asked to explain night without referring to day said that night was the absence of day. How would our hypothetical man judge that any two of the images that he paired matched up? Must he not refer these two images to another idea, perhaps the idea of

matched images, to see whether or not they were matching? With the infinite set of images that this hypothetical man has in his mind and the infinite set of images that it is possible for him to meet up with in the world, he would need an equally infinite set of ideas of matched images to match up the two infinite sets.

Student: My mind is growing dizzy at the thought of all of these triangles.

Teacher: Perhaps you are beginning to see the difficulties inherent in the thesis that it is from our ideas that we have knowledge.

Student: But surely it must be in reference to an idea that we can know triangles that we see to be triangles. I realize now that it cannot be in reference to an image at all whether a representative image or an infinite supply of images. It must simply be in reference to an abstract idea of triangle that we have in mind that we can judge which images we see to be triangles. If the images we find fit the idea of triangle that we have, then we say they are triangles. If the images do not fit the idea that we have, we say they are not triangles.

Teacher: How do you know that any particular triangle fits under your idea of triangle? Do you need to have reference to another idea to which you compare the image you find with the first idea of triangle that you have in order to judge whether or not the image that you find fits under your idea of triangle? If so, how do you know that your first idea of triangle and the image that you find fit under this new idea? Do you need yet a further idea to know that? If so, you will need another idea to know this new relationship and another idea beyond that until you will need to have recourse to an infinite number of ideas in order to come to know that a triangle is a triangle. But if you must have recourse to an infinite number of ideas you would never have come to know a triangle in the first place.

You would, in fact, still be searching through the infinite series of ideas of triangle as the examination of an infinite number of triangles would require an infinite span of time. We have not passed through an infinite span of time since more time can always be taken. Hence, an infinite span of time can never be passed through. Thus, you would still be looking to see among your ideas if you had in fact come across a triangle. But the fact of the matter is that you have already come to know a triangle. Therefore, it cannot have been that you reached this knowledge by means of ideas.

Student: Just a moment. I do not need to look through all of those ideas. I can simply see with my eyes that a figure is a triangle and that is an end to it.

Teacher: Now, you have moved from your thesis that our knowledge comes to us through our ideas. You realize that if at any step of the process an idea is required for knowledge, then an idea must be required for knowledge at all steps. But this makes knowledge an impossibility. Therefore, an idea is never required for knowledge in the first place.

Student: Yes, that is what I am saying now. We do not need this myriad of ideas. Once we admit that we need ideas for knowledge at any step along the way, how can we say that a step will come where we do not need ideas for knowledge. If we do not need ideas for knowledge at one juncture, then we do not need them at any juncture.

Teacher: Then you simply see that a triangle is a triangle.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Can you really see that an image is a triangle? What, after all, is your idea of a triangle?

Student: My idea of a triangle is of a figure enclosed by three straight

lines in two dimensional space the sum of the internal angles of which are equal to 180 degrees.

Teacher: Can you see three straight lines?

Student: I must acknowledge that I cannot see three straight lines. The idea of straight can only be more or less approximated by the images which I do see.

Teacher: Then how do you know that the figure you do see is, in fact, a triangle?

Student: The figure I see corresponds closely enough with the idea of triangle that I have in order that I may judge it to be an instance of the idea that I have.

Teacher: How can you tell that this image corresponds to an idea if your idea is one for which you can never have an image? If you never picture in your mind or draw an image which corresponds with the idea that you have, how can you judge by means of this idea whether or not an image corresponds closely enough to this idea to be an instance of this idea? If you can never have an ideal image, how can you use it to judge whether images approximate it at all, whether closely or not closely. If you can never have one of the terms of a relation, how can the relation exist? What is more, need I remark that you have all too quickly retreated to the position that ideas are needed for knowledge.

Student: I do not know how to reply to what you say. It does seem that I have embraced my previous position again that ideas necessary for knowledge. And your objection here seems to be a very potent one. How can I judge by means of an idea if I never have an example of this idea? Perhaps it is not exactly an idea which I use. Perhaps the word 'definition' best explains the matter. I am taught from early childhood to give the name

'triangle' to any figure in a two dimensional space which is bounded by three straight lines.

Teacher: Does not the same problem reappear? You must still judge if the figure you see fits the definition of triangle.

Student: But I can see that a figure fits the definition.

Teacher: How is this possible? Do you have an ideal image in your mind to which you refer in order to check your visible image against it, to see if it is a triangle?

Student: No, for an ideal image will be of no use. An ideal image (an image which can have no sensuous determinations) is a contradiction in terms. There can be no such thing. Any image must have some sensuous form. An ideal image is not to have any image at all. What is more, you will ask me how I know my ideal image to be a triangle and we will be lost in an infinite regress of ideal images or ideas. I am led to the conclusion that I do not know an image to be a triangle. A triangle is simply defined in this way.

Teacher: But this will not help us. We must still be able to judge if an image comes under the definition.

Student: A definition is a general rule for recognition. I do not have to have a general idea but only a rule for finding triangles. Whatever has three straight lines in a two dimensional plane and which encloses a space is to be called a triangle. It is not really a problem of knowledge at all.

Teacher: What a fine thing this rule of yours is. You do not know what an instance of the rule is unless you apply the rule, for what else could a rule for finding triangles be? What I want to know is when you know to apply the rule and when you know not to.

Student: You apply the rule whenever you have an instance of the rule.

Teacher: But in order to know if you have an instance of the rule you

must already have applied the rule.

Student: Why is it that we cannot simply see a triangle and bring it under the rule?

Teacher: See a what? It does not become a triangle for you until it has been brought under the rule. That is the function of the rule.

Student: Why is it that we cannot see a something which upon bringing under a rule we discover is a triangle.

Teacher: How will you know under what rule to bring this something unless you already know that it is a triangle. And, if you already knew it to be a triangle, you would not need to bring it under any general rule.

Student: Could we not just see a something and judge it as fitting under a rule?

Teacher: If nothing else, you are persistent. How do we judge that this is a case that fits under the rule? Do we need to apply another rule that this is a case that fits under the first rule? And, how would we know that this case of fitting under the rule fits under the rule for fitting cases of that sort of rule under that rule? We would need still another rule until we had an infinity of rules. But if we had to apply an infinite number of rules before we could come to judgment, we would never come to judgment in the first place. Furthermore, these notions of applying rules to cases are not only deficient on the side of the case (how do we know that this is a case that fits under the rule), but also they are deficient on the side of the rule as well. For, how do we know which rule to apply? This cannot come from the case for we do not know the case to be a case of the rule until we have applied the rule to it.

Student: I am at a loss. It seems that we cannot make any sense out of recognizing even such a simple object as a triangle.

Teacher: We cannot make sense out of recognizing triangles under the analogy of applying rules to cases. You desired that we bring out in full the implications of holding that form and matter were too self-dependent terms which then could be brought into relation. It is clear that a form devoid of all sensible determination can be of no use in aiding us to know that which has sensible determinations. It is equally clear that if there were such a thing as formless matter, there would be no way of picking it out as an instance of such and such form. There is no way of getting these two together in the first place even if they could exist independently of each other. It is clear that it is not through rules that you have knowledge. A rule only helps you to group, to classify. You must already know what it is you are grouping. Your knowledge of what it is you are grouping cannot be supplied by the rule. Whatever rule, formula, definition you may have, you must know the reality these rules, formulas, definitions are rules for finding. If you know that a triangle is a figure bounded by three straight lines in a two-dimensional space, you must already know what a triangle is in order to know if this definition is a satisfactory one, or even to know that this is a definition of a triangle. If what a triangle is is purely made up, purely conventional, then we must still know that. We must know the definition. Knowledge of the definition cannot be supplied by the definition.

Student: How is knowledge possible at all? How can we see that an image is an image of a triangle? We do not do so through reference to a general idea since a general idea as general cannot include within its definition that this particular image is a triangle. Our general idea is not an image at all. How can we go from an idea which is not an image to something which is an image. How knowledge is possible at all is beyond my

comprehension.

Teacher: It is quite right that this should be beyond your comprehension. The problem is that we are trying to solve a crime by inventing non-existent culprits and then asking how they were accomplices to the act. We are assuming that there is, on the one hand, such a thing as an image, and on the other, such a thing as an idea and that judgment, that the particular is a universal, comes about by fitting one (the image) under (the idea). But idea and image are abstractions which do not exist in reality. There is no such thing as a pure (non-sensuous) idea or a sensuous image which is itself unintelligible and takes on its intelligibility only from an idea which is imposed upon it from without. What exists in reality is knowledge. Knowledge cannot be classified into two elements, one of which is an understood intellectual abstraction and the other of which is a sensed concrete particular. We are trying to translate what we know by resorting to sense and intellection and then trying to figure out how they can be brought into a meaningful relation. The truth of the matter is that they were never separated in the first place and that knowledge does not come into being by some mysterious (unexplained and inexplicable) fitting together of the two.

Student: What, then, is knowledge?

Teacher: Are you asking me for a definition of knowledge or for the reality of knowledge?

Student: I realize that you cannot give me the reality which is knowledge since what you say will be in words and knowledge is not something which can be encapsuled in words. Knowledge is a reality, not a string of words. You cannot give me this reality. But perhaps you can give me a definition of knowledge.

Teacher: But if I were to give you a definition of knowledge, you would still have to know whether the definition I gave you were of knowledge. Knowledge must be undefinable, because if we could define it, how could we know the definition? The reality of knowledge which enables us to know the definition must exist outside of the definition. The ultimate term of analysis is neither sense nor understanding but knowledge. We have a prejudice that the ultimate term of explanation is either sensation of a concrete particular or understanding of an intellectual meaning. We attempt to reduce every act of knowledge to one of these two terms. We take what is actually farthest away from us, sensed images and understood ideas, and try to conceive of them as what is most real. What is closest to us, what we do not see at all, is knowledge. Knowledge is what is most real. But because it is closest to us, we cannot see it at all. We take abstractions from what is real to be real and do not see that which alone is real, knowledge, which cannot be reduced to either sense or understanding.

Student: Why do the perspectives of idea and image, form and matter, appear in the first place?

Teacher: The problem appears because we think that there are two. We think that there is an idea on the one side and an image on the other. We then imagine the problem to be how can we judge if this image falls under that idea. We think what we are doing is recognizing images, seeing them to be instances of ideas. What is actually happening is that these images are not at all what we know. We are knowing that which is neither idea nor image. But all that we have left with us after the actual fact of knowledge is an abstraction--the image or the idea. At the moment of knowledge there is neither idea nor image but knowledge: a state which cannot be reduced to either because it transcends both. After the fact of knowledge, analysis

takes place. We analyse out two elements and ask of them what is their relation. What we must remember is that these two elements never existed in knowledge; they only exist ex post facto. We make an existence out of our own abstractions. Properly speaking, we do not have ideas at all. We never have ideas. What we call 'ideas' are only period stops in knowledge. The period stop itself is knowledge. Ideas do not exist; they are reflections of knowledge.

Student: What do you mean by saying that ideas are reflections of knowledge?

Teacher: We think ideas give us knowledge just as when we look into a reflecting pool we think we are seeing our faces when in fact we are seeing our own reflections. The reflections we see in the water reveal that we have knowledge, but they are not themselves knowledge. Ideas reveal that we have knowledge but they are not themselves the sources of our knowledge but only its reflection. Knowledge is the reality; idea the reflection. You have to know if ideas bear any resemblance to truth. How can you know this unless knowledge is something different from ideas. What we call an 'idea' is a trace or footprint of knowledge. Then we try to reduce knowledge to the idea. But the idea is not the source of knowledge; it is only the revelation that we have knowledge.

Student: What is knowledge?

Teacher: What knowledge is cannot be stated because knowledge does not lie in propositions. Knowledge is not a property of ideas, or definitions, or facts, or relations between these. As soon as a relation is posited, then that relation must be known and a relation cannot be known by a relation. Knowledge must be, and not simply be known, or else there will be a gap forever between knowledge and reality. If there were a gap between knowledge and reality, what is real could not be known, which would make

knowledge impossible for knowledge can only be of what is real.

Student: Perhaps what we call 'knowledge' is only an idea that we have.

Perhaps reality, too, is only an idea.

Teacher: An idea can be thought, can it not?

Student: Of course.

Teacher: Can reality be thought?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then how can reality be an idea?

Student: What I mean is that perhaps there is no such thing as reality.

Teacher: Is there a difference between the concept of experience and experience?

Student: To be sure.

Teacher: Can you have the idea of experience if you have no experience?

Can you have the concept of experience without experience?

Student: By no means.

Teacher: Is there a difference between the idea of reality and reality?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Can you have the idea of reality if there were no reality?

Student: No.

Teacher: Then reality must be.

Student: What of knowledge?

Teacher: If reality and knowledge are the same and there is knowledge, there must be reality.

Student: Is knowledge unlimited or are there limits to knowledge?

Teacher: What do you think?

Student: I think that knowledge is limited.

Teacher: But to know that knowledge is limited you must be beyond those

limits. Otherwise, you would not be aware of the limits as limits.⁵²

Student: Could you explain more?

Teacher: Suppose a small boy were inside a room and he were told that the universe was constituted by the walls of his room. How could he know that there is nothing more to the universe unless he could open a door and look out? If he cannot see out, he cannot know that the walls make up the outer limit of the universe. He can only know this if he can look out and see that there is nothing beyond the walls. But to see outside of the walls, the walls cannot be the outer boundary. One must see beyond in order to know that which is limited. Only the unlimited can know the limited. Only the infinite can know the finite. If you must be beyond the limits in order to know the limits as limits, then of course, they are no longer your limits.

Student: You are saying that there are no limits to knowledge.

Teacher: To be aware that knowledge is limited you must be aware beyond those limits. But if you are aware beyond those limits, then you cannot know that knowledge is limited. Indeed, if knowledge is all there is, what could limit it?

Student: If there are no limits to knowledge, then we cannot distinguish the object of knowledge from knowledge.

Teacher: Excellent.

⁵²This is, in fact, the substance of Hegel's criticism of Kant's view that we can know knowledge to be limited without being beyond those limits: "No one knows, or even feels, that anything is a limit or defect, until he is at the same time above and beyond it...A very little consideration might show, that to call a thing finite or limited proves by implication the very presence of the infinite and unlimited, and that our knowledge of a limit can only be when the unlimited is on this side in consciousness." (emphasis Hegel's). Science of Logic, IV, ii, 60. Translated from The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, by William Wallace, pp. 116-117.

Student: If there are no limits to knowledge, then we cannot distinguish between knowledge and being.

Teacher: Quite right.

Student: Did you not say that knowledge cannot know itself? Is this not to set a limit to knowledge?

Teacher: Your cleverness is laudable. Now watch me closely here and make sure that you can follow me.

Student: I will keep a close watch. You may be sure of that.

Teacher: Knowledge is unlimited.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Knowledge cannot know itself.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: If knowledge knew itself there would be two: knowledge and the itself which it knew. But did we not say that knowledge was all that there is?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: For knowledge not to know itself is not to set a limit to knowledge, for knowledge is all that there is. If knowledge is all that there is, what could limit knowledge? Knowledge cannot limit itself because only the unlimited can set limits. For the unlimited there is nothing to know. The unlimited is everything that there is.

Student: But the idea of the unlimited requires the idea of the limited.

Teacher: But the idea of the unlimited and the unlimited are not one and the same. We may have an idea of the unlimited, but the unlimited is not contained in an idea.

Student: If what is is unlimited, then everything must be included in it. Nothing must be left out. All possibilities must be contained within it.

If all possibilities must be contained within reality, then it is possible that reality is not. It is possible that nothing is.

Teacher: Possibility is not contained within reality because possibility is not something real. It is what might be real. It is not what is real. Everything that has positive existence is contained within reality.

Possibility has no positive existence. Hence, there is no possibility in reality. Reality does leave out what is not. But what is not has no existence. Thus, reality leaves nothing out.

Student: I do not find myself altogether convinced.

Teacher: Then let me convince you on your own terms. If you like, we may show that everything cannot be possible.

Student: Yes, I would like that very much.

Teacher: Very well. If everything is possible then possibility is infinite. It is possible that something is actual. Therefore, everything cannot only be possible.

Student: But it is equipossible that something is not actual.

Teacher: If it is equipossible that something is and that it is not, then these two cancel each other out. One of the two possibilities cannot be. Therefore, possibility cannot be infinite. If possibility is not infinite, it must be limited. It can be limited only by what is possible, what is impossible, what is actual, or what is necessary. The possible cannot be limited by the impossible for the impossible is what is not and what is not has no being. That which has no being is nothing, and nothing cannot limit being. For if there is nothing to limit being, how can we say that being, in this case the being of possibility, is limited. The possible cannot be limited by the possible for then possibility would limit itself. If possibility limits itself, then possibility is limited and not everything is possible.

If possibility is limited then possibility is not infinite. But only that which is infinite can set limits. Therefore, if possibility is limited, it must be limited not by itself but by another. The possible must be limited by the necessary or the actual. Thus, either something is or something must be. If the possible is limited by the actual then something is. If the possible is limited by the necessary then it is necessary that something is. In either case, something exists. If something is, then we have shown that everything cannot be possible.

Student: Is it not possible that nothing is?

Teacher: It cannot be that nothing is, for if nothing is, then there cannot even be nothing. Or, if nothing is, then there is something. In either case, something is.

Student: And what is is reality and reality is what is.

Teacher: Yes.

Student: And reality is unlimited.

Teacher: The language of 'limited' and 'unlimited' is only meaningful for us. Reality itself is not unlimited to itself. What is is. It is beyond description. We have no terms adequate to the description of reality itself. Whatever we say about reality is bound to be inadequate since whatever we say about reality is not the same as reality. It is helpful to know that whatever we say about reality will be inadequate. For it is an early warning signal that our words and reality are not identical. Knowing this will help to keep us from getting too caught up in our words. We must use language since one person is attempting to describe something to another person. All language is thus on the subject-object level. But we try to use the subject-object language to take us beyond both subjects and objects.

Student: What about knowledge?

Teacher: Knowledge is above the subject-object level. Plato fastened upon the problem of participation as the proper problem but he applied it wrongly. He thought the problem was how do objects participate in universal forms. The verb is the right one: It is a question of participation. However, it is a question not of knowing the truth, but of being the truth. Knowledge is not something that you know or something that you have. It is what you are. Knowledge and being are one.

EPILOGUE

Student: What you said at the end of our last talk about knowledge and being is finally beginning to make sense to me. It was very difficult for me to understand how knowledge and being can be one. But now I think I understand. What I want to know is why did we participate in what seemed to be intellectual discussions?

Teacher: It was my purpose to show that there is no disjunction between the realms of logic and experience. I wanted to show that we can show through reason what we can discover by experience. Reason alone cannot assure us of the truth of what we discover, but if there is no duality, there should be no contradiction between the findings of reason and the findings of experience. There is no discontinuity between what the intellect can find and what there is. Knowledge and reality are one. The truth is one. Indeed, if there were two truths, how could we know them both to be true? For both to be true there must be one truth.

Student: Why can there not be a distinction between what follows from a logical analysis and what is revealed in experience?

Teacher: In reality there is no plurality. One can make distinctions only when there is more than one. If there are no distinctions in reality, how can there be a distinction between the findings of logic and the findings of experience?

Student: If there are no distinctions in reality, then the knowledge of reality is identical to reality.

Teacher: Yes, how could it be otherwise? If all that there is is knowledge, how could the knowledge of reality be anything other than reality? When we come to knowledge we know that all that there is is knowledge. The knowledge of reality is identical to reality.

Student: If all that there is is a unity, then why are there so many different names?

Teacher: We have seen that there is no plurality in reality.

Student: True.

Teacher: Is it not clear that being, knowledge, experience, reality all equally are?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: How can all of these equally be if there is no plurality in reality? Must it not be that these are all but different names for reality? If each one is, and, with no plurality there are not two to be different from one another, then all must be the same. But there cannot be an "all" if there is no plurality. The "all" can only refer to the different names which do not exist in reality. Therefore, 'knowledge', 'being', 'unity', 'experience', and even 'reality' can only be different names which stand for one and the same reality. 'Being', 'unity', 'knowledge', 'experience', 'reality' all are convertible terms. Even the name 'reality' is only a name for us. Reality does not call itself 'reality'. Reality is not real to itself. It is real to us.

Student: For itself, it just is.

Teacher: That, too, is another description. We really cannot say anything about what it is in itself.

Student: I cannot find fault with your logic. But it seems to me that you are describing a realm which is far beyond our grasp. What is the purpose

of describing this other world? Is it to take us beyond this world, to escape from its evils and from suffering?

Teacher: I am not describing another world. There are not two worlds. I am describing the reality of this world. This reality is not beyond your experience. It is only because you are removed from your own experience that you think what I say is about some other world. It is only when we separate ourselves from our experience that we make it appear that it is a many. In our fear of experience we divide it up and categorize it so that we can control it. I am only trying to call your attention to your own experience. There is nothing I can say which you will not find to be true in your own experience.

Student: What are we to make of our thinking that there is duality?

Teacher: When you have a dream and during the dream you see objects, and then later when you awaken you see that the objects that you had thought you had seen are not there; what do you make of those objects?

Student: We say that they are not real.

Teacher: Might not the world of duality be like a dream object which upon awakening we will see to be unreal?

Student: What is the relationship between the reality and the unreality? Is the relationship real or unreal? Is it part of the reality or part of the illusion?

Teacher: Relationship can exist only if there are two. Relationship is part of the seeming. In reality there is no relationship.

Student: But did you not say that this world of objects may be likened to a dream world?

Teacher: Yes.

Student: Have you not created a relationship between reality and dream?

Teacher: If you saw this world as a dream world, then this world of objects would have no existence. All there would be would be yourself.

Student: What do you mean?

Teacher: In the dream there is no difference between the object and yourself.

Student: I do not understand.

Teacher: When you are dreaming, do your dream objects really exist?

Student: No.

Teacher: The lion, the castle, the princess that you dream are really your own creations. They are projections of your imagination. In this sense they are all really yourself. They have no other existence.

Student: True.

Teacher: All that really exists in the dream is yourself.

Student: Yes, that is so.

Teacher: If you saw this world as a dream world, then all there would be would be yourself.

Student: If all that exists is the self, then each man will be out for himself alone. No man will help any other man. This would be a terrible case of affairs.

Teacher: But if there is nothing but the self, then the "other" will be seen as the self as well. The drive to provide for the "self" will, by no means, be limited to your own person. If the self is all that there is, then self-love is universal love.

Student: By the same token, no man will do any harm to any other, for if there is nothing but the self, then to do harm to another is to do harm to oneself.

Teacher: Yes. We must remember that this talk of self and other is but a metaphor. We are trying to stretch language beyond its limits. We are

trying to describe the state which is beyond self and other in terms of self and other. If there is nothing but yourself, there is not really a concept of "yourself"; because if there is nothing but yourself, you would not see "yourself" as distinct from "another".

Student: What you are describing is a perfect state of love between men. What is the point of describing that which is beyond our capacity to realize?

Teacher: But we have been talking about nothing but reality. Reality is a state in which there is no division between subject and object. Our natural state is one of love. It is only because we are removed from our own real nature that we do not exist in a state of love. We are alienated from our real nature because we are so heavy laden with false conceptions of ourselves and reality. The only point of our discussion is to dispossess ourselves of some of the false conceptions of ourselves so that we will be more open to experience. It is only the false conceptions of reality that keep us from our real nature. What better ideality is there than reality? What better philosophy is there than one which describes the unity between oneself, one's knowledge, and what there is. But all of this talk is, of course, useless, unless it helps us to live. We must become what we are. Philosophy, talk about reality, only exists to take us beyond philosophy. Talk about reality only exists to take us to reality. The test of philosophy is life. If philosophy helps us to live, then it is true philosophy.

Student: Thank you. I shall try to put into action what we have discussed.

PREFACE TO APPENDICES

The purpose of the appendices is to indicate if and how the objections of certain contemporary philosophers to idealism apply to the position which is developed in the dissertation, and what critical reply can be made to these philosophers. These appendices do not pretend to be exhaustive expositions of the criticisms of each philosopher vis-a-vis idealism. But between them all they attempt to cover what seems to lie at the core of the criticisms of idealism offered by these contemporary philosophers.

G. E. Moore's early essay, 'The Refutation of Idealism' is treated because of its immense historical importance, even though the later Moore no longer subscribes to its basic tenets.⁵³ In order to account for this, however, the position of the later Moore is treated as it appears in his 'A Reply To My Critics'.⁵⁴ The criticisms of Bertrand Russell are discussed as they appear in the title essay of his book, Our Knowledge of the External World.⁵⁵ Last, there is an appendix on

⁵³G. E. Moore, Philosophical Studies, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1922), pp. 1-30. In the preface to this work, Moore says of his early paper: "This paper now appears to me to be very confused, as well as to embody a good many down-right mistakes." Ibid., also the appendix on The Later Moore, p. 161.

⁵⁴Paul Schlipp, ed., The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, IV (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1942), pp. 653-660.

⁵⁵Bertrand Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, (New York: The New American Library, 1960), pp. 54-80.

the famous criticism of Ralph Barton Perry as it appears in his chapter, 'The Cardinal Principle of Idealism' in his work, Present Philosophical Tendencies.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Ralph Barton Perry, Present Philosophical Tendencies, (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), pp. 113-134.

APPENDIX I

G. E. MOORE, 'THE REFUTATION OF IDEALISM'

Professor Moore begins his now classical essay with the statement that Modern Idealism asserts that the universe is spiritual. One of the meanings he ascribes to this statement is: "Chairs and tables and mountains seem to be very different from us; but when the whole universe is declared to be spiritual, it is certainly meant to assert that they are far more like us than we think."⁵⁷ Here, Professor Moore takes for granted the existence of the subject and assumes that the Idealist argues that the object is in reality like the subject. The possibility that is not contemplated by Moore is a view of reality which transcends the subject-object duality altogether. Under this view neither object nor subject are ultimately real so that neither one exists to be either like or unlike the other. Since Professor Moore does not contemplate this possibility his arguments are directed against dualistic positions which are other than the position taken in the dissertation. Essentially, Professor Moore's criticisms do not touch upon the position taken in the dissertation.

Professor Moore holds that for Idealism the universe, "...has what we recognize in ourselves as the higher forms of consciousness."⁵⁸

⁵⁷G. E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism', Philosophical Studies, p. 1 (emphasis his).

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 1 (emphasis his).

However accurate Professor Moore's description may be of Modern Idealism, it does not come into contact with the position taken in the dissertation. For, if by the universe Moore means the world which is made up of objects, then this is held not to exist in reality. That which does not exist in reality cannot possess forms of consciousness whether higher or lower.

But Professor Moore, as he later notes, is only interested in Idealistic arguments and he concentrates on the one argument which he believes that all Idealists must rely upon to establish the conclusion that 'Reality is spiritual'.⁵⁹ Now, if it is not the intent of the dissertation to establish this conclusion then it would appear that however damaging Professor Moore's criticisms of this one argument are, they will not constitute a refutation of the position taken in the dissertation. But even if Professor Moore's arguments seem to be at cross purposes with those contained within the body of the dissertation, let us examine them closely to see if his arguments can nonetheless apply and possibly present serious objections to the doctrines advanced in the dissertation.

The proposition upon which Professor Moore claims all Idealism rests is the proposition, esse is percipi.⁶⁰ Professor Moore states his philosophical translation of Bishop Berkeley's celebrated formula: "If esse is percipi, this is at once equivalent to saying that whatever is, is experienced; and this, again, is equivalent, in a sense, to saying that whatever is, is something mental."⁶¹ This is not exactly the position taken in the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 6.

dissertation.⁶² The dissertation is concerned only with that kind of existence which can be known in the sense which satisfies the criteria for knowledge given in the text.⁶³ According to these criteria we can never know that objects exist. All that we can know to exist is knowledge. Therefore, it would not be accurate, in the strictest sense, to say with Moore that, "...whatever is, is experienced...", for this implies that there is a something which is experienced. If we are to state the position of the dissertation in Professor Moore's language of experience, we would say that we cannot know that there is a something which is experienced. All that we can know is that there is experience.⁶⁴ If we were to adopt a paraphrase appropriate to articulating the essence of the ontological commitment of the dissertation we might say, "Experience is what is". For experience does satisfy the requirements for that which can be known to be.

The reasons for placing 'experience' first in the philosophical paraphrase are not only epistemological and ontological; the choice of word order is dictated by reasons of interest as well. For the dissertation is interested only in that which can be a possibility of experience.⁶⁵ It is

⁶²The subject and the mental have no privileged status in the dissertation. Vide, Preface; First Dialogue, pp. 17-23; Second Dialogue, pp. 33-38; p. 42; Fourth Dialogue, p. 99; Fifth Dialogue, pp. 120-122; Epilogue, pp. 146-147. While the arguments in the dissertation are often couched in the language of subjects and objects, this is due to the fact that we must work within the limits of language while at the same time aspiring to that which exists beyond language. We must not confuse the dimensions of the sign with that to which the sign points. Vide, Second Dialogue, p. 50; Fifth Dialogue, pp. 136-137; Epilogue, p. 147.

⁶³Vide, Preface; First Dialogue, p. 3; Second Dialogue, p. 49.

⁶⁴'Knowledge' and 'experience' are employed as equivalent expressions in the dissertation as well. Vide, Fourth Dialogue, pp. 69-70; Epilogue, pp. 143-144; Vide, also f. 83, below.

⁶⁵Vide, Fourth Dialogue, p. 99; Fifth Dialogue, p. 119; Epilogue, pp. 144-145.

argued extensively that it is never possible to experience objects.⁶⁶ The possible existence of that which is not a possibility of experience is a possibility which falls outside of the scope of the interest of the dissertation.

It is crucial to see that the validity of Professor Moore's argument at every stage depends upon the acceptance of the subject-object duality, the very supposition that the dissertation calls into question. For example, Professor Moore states: "...since the whole world must be an object, we must conceive it to belong to some subject or subjects."⁶⁷ What is said in the dissertation is, if there is an object, then there must be a subject; or, the concepts of subject and object are interdependent, but not that the concepts are valid.⁶⁸

Professor Moore's argument depends upon another equally important assumption as well, namely, that reality is a whole, part of which is not experienced.⁶⁹ Nowhere does Professor Moore prove that perception is only a part of a whole which is reality.

Why does Professor Moore think that there is something more in reality than there is in experience? He thinks this because otherwise he thinks that the proposition, esse is percipi, will be an absolute tautology.⁷⁰

⁶⁶First Dialogue, pp. 5-9; pp. 11-23; Fifth Dialogue, pp. 118-123; et passim.

⁶⁷G. E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism', Philosophical Studies, p. 6.

⁶⁸Vide, above, f. 62; f. 70.

⁶⁹Op. cit., p. 9.

⁷⁰Op. cit., p. 11.

But the proposition, 'Whatever is, is experience',⁷¹ is only empty if we assume that experience is the experience of objects, and if we then take the objects away, experience is empty. But if there are no objects, we are not taking anything away. We assert only what is.

But let us inquire into why Professor Moore says what he does. He holds that if there is not a reality in addition to experience, to assert that esse is percipi will amount to making a "perfectly barren analytic proposition".⁷² But the proposition, 'Whatever is, is experience', is not an analytic truth in the same sense in which the proposition, 'All bachelors are unmarried males', is an analytic truth. The latter proposition is analytically true because of the rules of language. The former proposition is analytically true because it is analytic of experience; i.e., it is analytic of what is found in experience. That a truth of experience is analytic for experience follows from its being a truth of experience. If we assert that which is necessarily true of experience that does not make our assertion an empty truth.

The question may well be asked of the author of the dissertation, "Why do you not accept the assumption that there is something in addition to experience?" The author can only reply: "I must confine myself to accepting as truths only those propositions which are consonant with the findings of experience and which are not logically contradictory."⁷³ I permit

⁷¹For the sake of a harmony of reference we will change only the past tense of the verb form 'experienced' to the noun form 'experience' and leave the word order of the paraphrase intact. However, we must keep the above arguments in mind. (Vide, pp. 3-4 above)

⁷²Op. cit., p. 10.

⁷³Cf. Epilogue, pp. 143-144.

myself no assumptions.⁷⁴ I do not find in my experience an example of a reality which is not experienced. Therefore, I do not permit myself this hypothesis."

But let us proceed with the argument of Professor Moore. Professor Moore states:

We have then in every sensation two distinct terms, (1) 'consciousness', in respect of which all sensations are alike; and (2) something else, in respect of which one sensation differs from another. It will be convenient if I may be allowed to call this second term the 'object' of a sensation....We have then in every sensation two distinct elements, one which I call consciousness, and another which I call the object of consciousness.⁷⁵

This analysis of Moore's states the problem in a nutshell. The question at issue is, are there two distinct elements in sensation, namely consciousness and the object of consciousness. In the dissertation the position is taken that the introspection does not reveal there is to be two distinct elements in sensation.⁷⁶ But we cannot appeal to introspection to settle the case as according to some introspection reveals there to be two elements in consciousness while to others introspection reveals no duality within consciousness.⁷⁷

⁷⁴First Dialogue, pp. 1-2; Third Dialogue, pp. 68-69. As Plato says in the Republic, "For where the starting point is something the reasoner does not know, and the conclusion and all that intervenes is a tissue of things not really known, what possibility is there that assent in such cases can ever be converted into true knowledge or science." Republic, 533 c.

⁷⁵G. E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism', Philosophical Studies, p. 17.

⁷⁶Vide, First Dialogue, pp. 21-23; Fifth Dialogue; pp. 124-125.

⁷⁷Professor Errol E. Harris states that he can find no such distinction in sensation: "I am myself unable to distinguish in my own experience of sensation between anything describable as an act of consciousness and the immediate object of consciousness." Vide, 'The Mind-Dependence of Objects', The Philosophical Quarterly, April, 1955, p. 224. Professor Harris states that Bertrand Russell is also unable to find such a distinction in sensation: Vide, Russell, Analysis of Mind, pp. 17, 141 f. and Our Knowledge of the External World, p. 83. (I have been unable to discover the claim of Russell in this last source that professor Harris cites.) On the other side there is Moore

On the basis of introspection, at least, it appears to be a moot point as to whether or not there is a duality within sensation.

At this point it may be useful for us to inquire into the way in which Professor Moore has arrived at his conclusion that there are two distinct elements in sensation. Consciousness, for Moore, is a name given to all cases of sensation on the ground that while individual sensations differ from each other, they all nonetheless share in common the characteristic of being sensations. However, from the fact that the experience of blue shares in common with the experience of red that they are both consciousnesses, it does not follow that in either experience alone there is a distinction between consciousness and an object of consciousness. Why do I say this? The analysis from which Professor Moore draws his conclusions we may call an abstract analysis since the existence of that to which Moore refers with the term 'consciousness' is not, in terms of that analysis, immediately known in introspection but is deduced from the inference that all sensations must have something in common. Moore has confused what we may call existential orders. Consciousness, which according to Moore had but an abstract existence (that which all sensations have in common) is given a phenomenological existence, i.e., an existence detectable as a datum of immediate experience. Moore has taken what may be true of the abstract order of existence and inferred that it is true of the phenomenological order of existence. But there is no legitimate ground for such an inference. An inference which is made without a legitimate ground we may call a fallacious inference. In this case we may accuse

himself, Brentano, Husserl, and others. Professor Ducasse states: "Professor Moore asserts that in any case of awareness of blue it is possible (even if not easy) to distinguish by careful introspective observation the awareness from the blue. This I readily grant..." Cf. Moore's: "The Refutation of Idealism", The Philosophy of G. E. Moore. p. 239.

Professor Moore of committing the fallacy of confusing existential orders.⁷⁸

There is a way in which we may say that the distinction Moore draws between consciousness and an object of consciousness is a valid distinction. While we cannot argue that introspection allows us to distinguish between consciousness and an object of consciousness, we can make different use of statements which refer to one as opposed to the other, without involving ourselves in ontological commitments. For example, let us take the statement, 'I am aware of blue' to stand for the case in which one wishes to draw attention to consciousness, and the statement, 'I see blue' to stand for the case in which one wishes to draw attention to the simple object of consciousness. We can (and do) make certain statements in connection with one of these statements that we do not make in connection with the other. In connection with the simple awareness blue we may say, "I see blue" instead of "I see red". In connection with the statement, 'I am aware of blue' we may say, "I am aware" rather than saying, "I am rowing a boat". The difference between these different verbal forms of description is entirely due to the context in which they are to be used. The difference between the two kinds of statements falls on grounds of linguistic convenience and pragmatic utility. The existence of differing verbal forms of description is a convenience in allowing us to make differing and varying forms of connections among our statements allowing for the richness of language and the variety of our

⁷⁸We may take as an analogy of items existing on different existential levels the family trait of the Hapsburg jaw and the existential instantiation of the trait, i.e., the actual occurrence of an individual with such jaw. There is no separate family of cases of Hapsburgs who exist apart from individually occurring cases of Hapsburgs with Hapsburg jaws. Moore's analysis of consciousness into two distinct elements is to place the family trait of the Hapsburg jaw on the same existential level as the case of the individually occurring Hapsburg with Hapsburg jaw.

purposes and intentions.

But let us turn to Professor Moore's final description of sensation:

The true analysis of a sensation or idea is as follows. The element that is common to them all, and which I have called 'consciousness' really is consciousness. A sensation is, in reality, a case of 'knowing' or 'being aware of' or 'experiencing' something.⁷⁹

From this analysis it would appear that sensation is a case of subject knower "knowing" an object. Sensation, in this analysis, is not the object known, but the knowing of it.

Later on, however, Moore gives this analysis of sensation:

...I am aware of blue, and by this I mean, that my awareness has to blue a quite different and distinct relation. It is possible, I admit, that my awareness is blue as well as being of blue: but what I am quite sure of is that it is of blue; that it has to blue the simple and unique relation the existence of which alone justifies us in distinguishing knowledge of a thing from the thing known, indeed in distinguishing mind from matter.⁸⁰

Here, Moore admits the possibility that awareness can be blue as well as being of blue. But I will argue that if awareness is blue then it makes no sense to say that it can be of blue as well. For, if awareness is blue then we do not need to become aware of it. If there is already a blue awareness we would not need to become aware of it or else why should we have said that it was a blue awareness in the first instance. The only possible alternative is that it is not a blue awareness of which we are becoming aware, but it is blue simpliciter of which we are becoming aware. But if it is blue simpliciter of which we become aware, it seems then that we must first have the blue before knowing it. But this, even on Moore's own account, is impossible. On the one hand, if there is already a blue awareness there would seem to be no

⁷⁹G. E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism', Philosophical Studies, p. 24 (emphasis his).

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 26 (emphasis his).

need to become aware of it, or else why do we refer to it as a blue awareness. On the other hand, if it is a blue simpliciter, we could have a sensation without knowing. But this Moore himself does not allow.⁸¹

What Moore actually discovers in introspection is, I think, blue awareness and not blue simpliciter. Why else would he allow for the possible existence of blue awareness? And yet, if what he actually discovers is blue awareness, it would not seem that he would need a further entity, consciousness, to become aware of this.⁸²

Moore's 'Refutation of Idealism' follows quite simply from his last description of sensation:

There is, therefore, no question of how we are to "get outside the circle of our own ideas and sensations." Merely to have a sensation is already to be outside that circle.⁸³

What Moore intends in this analysis is simply this. If sensation is comprised of two distinct elements, consciousness and the object of consciousness, then to have a sensation is already to be aware of something which is other than consciousness. But Moore's analysis depends upon his having access to that to which he has no access, namely a blue in itself. If the blue Moore speaks about is a blue awareness then he would not have to become aware of it, in which case there are not two items, consciousness and its object. If the blue Moore speaks about is that of which he must become aware before he can know it as blue then it must be that he can have a blue before he knows it as blue. But this is impossible. For how could you "have a blue" without knowing

⁸¹Vide, above f. 79.

⁸²Vide, Second Dialogue, pp. 47-49; Fifth Dialogue, pp. 118-123. The question addressed here is, what is knowledge? While Moore calls it a 'simple and unique relation' he does not analyze what is the relation.

⁸³Op. cit., p. 27 (emphasis his).

it was blue? It must be that "having the blue" is discovering a blue awareness, or, in a word, that blue and consciousness are not two distinct elements, but one.⁸⁴ It seems that Moore's argument for the 'Refutation of Idealism' is not actually an argument for the 'Refutation of Idealism'. It seems rather to be an argument offered on its behalf.

⁸⁴Cf. C. J. Ducasse, Moore's "The Refutation of Idealism", The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, pp. 232-233; 236-237; 239; 242; et passim. In Professor Ducasse's very cogent analysis he argues that blue is a kind of experience as waltzing is a kind of dance. The discovery of a blue awareness would be the discovery of a kind of awareness. In Professor Ducasse's terms, blue is not an object of experience, but a species of experience.

THE LATER MOORE

In all justice to Professor Moore we must take into account his later position and not leave off our analysis with his early one. As best as I can understand Professor Moore's later position, it is this. Professor Moore no longer subscribes to the position that there can be unsensed sensibilia, i.e., that blue exists independently of our sensing it. He does, however, insist that there are a class of objects of which it would be true to say that they exist independently of our sensing them, e.g., something which possesses the property of blue. This is, at least, what I understand Professor Moore to be saying in these comments:

In that early paper I really was asserting that the sensible quality "blue" (and, of course, also should have asserted the same of the sensible quality "bitter") could exist without being perceived: that there was no contradiction in supposing it to do so. Mr. Ducasse's view is that it cannot: that there is a contradiction in supposing it to do so. And on this issue I am now very much inclined to think that Mr. Ducasse is right and that I in that paper was wrong..."⁸⁵

...I now agree with Mr. Ducasse and Berkeley, and hold that that early paper of mine was wrong. As an argument for my present view I should give the assertions that a toothache certainly cannot exist without being felt, but that, on the other hand, the moon certainly can exist without being perceived."⁸⁶

...when we say that a tie is blue or quinine is bitter...here each word stands for a property, in Mr. Ducasse's sense of that term, and a property which may belong to physical objects, and hence certainly may exist when it is not being perceived."⁸⁷

⁸⁵G. E. Moore, 'A Reply to my Critics', The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, p. 658.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 653 (emphasis his).

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 658 (emphasis his).

It would appear, then, that Professor Moore would not suppose that the sensible quality "blue" could exist without being perceived, but a blue thing could exist without being perceived, e.g., a blue wall. But it is not at all clear how a blue wall can exist without blue existing. Professor Moore seems to hold that blue would exist as a property of the wall. But how can this be if the blue of the blue property cannot exist outside of perception according to Professor Moore?

What then can it mean to say that the blue property of the wall exists outside of perception? It can only mean, I suppose, that the wall possesses the property, not strictly speaking of blue, but of being capable of exciting that blue upon being perceived. This seems to be the only way of saving Professor Moore from a contradiction. Blueness can only exist in sensation according to Professor Moore. But the wall can exist outside of sensation. If the wall can exist outside of sensation but blue cannot and blue is nonetheless a property of wall it seems that the only manner in which we can give meaning to the expression 'blue property' is to say that should the wall be observed by someone, that it is blue will be experienced. Yet, if this is what possessing a blue property means, (and it is difficult to see what else it can mean), then the wall must in some way be responsible for causing the sensation of blue to arise in us. Moore, in a word, is back to a causal theory of perception and all the criticisms brought forth in the dissertation against a causal theory of perception are relevant here.⁸⁸

Indeed, with the causal theory of perception that (we say) Moore

⁸⁸ First Dialogue, pp. 5-9; Second Dialogue, pp. 46-48; Fifth Dialogue, pp. 118-122; et passim.

seems to be committed to, he cannot at the same time maintain that blue is a property of wall. For, if blue arises in us upon our perception of wall, and this is our only contact with blue, then by what right can we say that that same blue exists in the wall when it is not perceived? The criticisms advanced in the dissertation against the representative theory of perception would apply equally well here as well.⁸⁹

Now, it might seem unfair to attribute causal and representative theories of perception to Professor Moore, but we did so initially to save him from a contradiction. If we do not ascribe a causal and representative theory of perception to Professor Moore, there is another consequence which will follow. There are two classes of entities for Professor Moore, those which can exist unperceived (as the moon) and those which cannot (as blue). The class of entities which cannot exist except as perceived are, for Professor Moore, directly apprehended:

...I am inclined to think that it is as impossible that anything which has the sensible quality "blue" and, more generally, anything whatever which is directly apprehended, any sense-datum, that is, should exist unperceived, as it is that a headache should exist unfelt.⁹⁰

It would seem from this analysis that Professor Moore holds that whatever is directly apprehended cannot exist apart from perception. If this is true then whatever exists apart from perception cannot be directly apprehended. It follows then either that the moon, for example, is not directly apprehended (in which case, I take it, we are involved with some form of a causal theory of perception), or, that the moon does not exist apart from being

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ G. E. Moore, 'A Reply to My Critics', The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, p. 658. (emphasis his).

perceived. Now, of these two alternatives, I think that Professor Moore would prefer the first.

Professor Moore is himself troubled by the problem. He wants both to be able to say that we can directly apprehend objects and still maintain realism. He states his puzzlement with regard to the question of whether physical surfaces are directly or indirectly apprehended:

Now at the end of the last section I said that I was strongly inclined to agree with Mr. Bouwsma, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Marhenke that physical surfaces are directly apprehended. I am, therefore, now saying that I am strongly inclined to take a view incompatible with that which I then said I was strongly inclined to take. And this is the truth. I am strongly inclined to take both of these incompatible views. I am completely puzzled about the matter, and only wish I could see any way of settling it.⁹¹

Professor Moore wants to be able to say that we can directly see objects which possess qualities and yet he realizes that he cannot say this or else he must give up his realism, for whatever is directly apprehended cannot exist apart from being perceived according to his own notions. How can we resolve this problem?

It seems that the resolution to this problem is the realization that we do not directly perceive objects but that what we call an object is a creation of the mind. We hear a sound; we infer that it is a train. We see a color, a line, a shape; we judge that it is a chair.⁹² If we understand that our peculiar mode of grouping qualities together so as to make of them objects is a function of the human intellect and does not reflect what exists

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 658-9 (emphasis his).

⁹²It is a more complicated affair than simply this, to be sure. There is combination in conformance to certain rules. But the example makes the point clear. For the rest, one may be referred to Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, Transcendental Analytic.

in independence from the human intellect, we should be able to resolve Professor Moore's dilemma. It is Professor Moore's conception that we directly see objects that is a cause of his difficulties. A fuller conception of the contribution of the human mind to perception would, I think, obviate many of his difficulties. Let us examine a particular case in point. We may take a very late description of sensation given by Professor Moore:

It seems to me evident that I cannot see the sensible quality blue, without directly seeing something which has that quality - a blue patch, or a blue speck, or a blue line, or a blue spot, etc., in the sense in which an after-image, seen with closed eyes, may be any of these things.⁹³

Now, that blue is seen no one would deny. What we might alter in Professor Moore's description is the status of the object. We could just as easily say that it is blue which has the quality shape, could we not? Or, we could say that it is the patch which is blueing. Another possible description of the blue pattern is that it is the patch which is in the blue. In all of these cases the same qualities are seen; it is only the arrangement of them that differs.

The point of these varying possible descriptions is that our arrangement of colors and lines into what we call objects is a matter of epistemological convenience. The fact that varying and differing descriptions are possible indicates that no one description can claim to be the description of the way things are. It indicates, I think, that what we call a "blue patch" is not something that we directly see, but is a composition which we have made up because it best fits our epistemological natures. "Blue patch" is something done, rather than something directly seen. The resolution to

⁹³Op. cit., p. 659 (emphasis his).

Professor Moore's dilemma is in fact the conclusion of the dissertation.
We never perceive objects; what we call an object is a creation of the
mind.

APPENDIX II

BERTRAND RUSSELL, 'OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD'

In the title essay of his now classic volume, Our Knowledge of the External World, Lord Russell puts forward a hypothetical model which will afford us probable grounds for the belief in the existence of an external world and other minds. Inasmuch as this is his objective, we should have no quarrel with him. He has with some clarity set forth a working hypothesis from the standpoint of belief.⁹⁴ From another level, the level of knowledge, we must take issue with Lord Russell. For, given the criteria of knowledge proposed in the dissertation, we cannot accept the proofs offered by Russell for the existence of an external world and of other minds. In this little essay we shall set out certain of Russell's arguments and indicate that however persuasive they may be on the level of belief, they are not compelling on the level of knowledge.

Russell takes for granted, "...our acquaintance with particular objects of daily life - furniture, houses, towns, other people, and so on." These existences are not subject to doubt. He reasons that, "...we do not, as practical men, entertain for a moment the hypothesis that the whole edifice may be built on insecure foundations."⁹⁵

Now, as practical men, of course, we are in complete accord with

⁹⁴ Bertrand Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, p. 56.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 56

Lord Russell. On the level of the subject knower there are indeed houses, towns, and other people.⁹⁶ But on the level of knowledge, we cannot begin by assuming the real existence of that which our previous inquiry calls so much into question. From the standpoint of knowledge, let us examine one of Lord Russell's proofs for the independent existence of the object.

The analytic technique of Russell is to reduce an allegedly obscure sentence to a sentence from which all the obscurity - as if placed through a linguistic filter - has been purified. For example, one possible linguistic reduction of the question, "Can we know of the existence of any reality which is independent of ourselves?" is: "Can we know of the existence of any reality of which our Self is not part."⁹⁷ This latter formulation of the question can then be answered in the affirmative since Russell assumes that we can know of the existence of objects of which the Self is not part, e.g., a book.

Does Russell succeed on his own terms? The key word here is the word 'part'. In order to assume, as Russell does, that the book is not part of the Self, we must assume that we can distinguish the Self and the book from each other. But much of the preceding dissertation is devoted to showing that this cannot be done.⁹⁸

Much of Russell's analysis depends upon what he means by the term 'Self'. For Russell the only philosophically relevant meaning of the term 'Self' is:

⁹⁶ Vide, Preface.

⁹⁷ Op. cit., p. 63.

⁹⁸ Cf. Appendix on G. E. Moore, p. 152, f. 62.

...the whole assemblage of things that would necessarily cease to exist if our life came to an end.⁹⁹

In this analysis he seems to beg the question for he assumes that a book is one of the members of the class of things which would not cease to exist should the Self cease to exist. Our response must be that while we may surely believe that the book exists independently of the subject, and while existing on the subject-object plane must have this belief, that we can never know that the book exists independently of the Self.

But not only is the independent existence of the object taken for granted. The independent existence of the subject is taken for granted as well:

Now it is fairly obvious that, whatever legitimate meaning we give to the Self, our thoughts and feelings are causally dependent upon ourself, *i. e.*, do not occur when there is no Self for them to belong to.¹⁰⁰

What may be fairly obvious on one level certainly is not obvious on the other. It is true that on the subject-object level, subject and object are correlative terms. Russell's conclusion that objects exist external to the Self depends, of course, on the validity of the assumption of the existence of the Self.¹⁰¹ While this is certainly an article of reasonable belief, it is argued in the dissertation that the subject, no more than the object, cannot be known to exist.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ B. Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, p. 62.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰¹ Professor Hartshorne does not assume the existence of the substantial self. He does, however, have the conception of the ego in a certain state: "Thus the state, not the substance, the experience (in its aspect of awareness of something) not the ego, is the subject." C. Hartshorne, Reality as a Social Process, p. 70. There seems to be the concept of a subject-object relation present though it is much refined. There is still the distinction between experience and what that experience is of.

¹⁰² Cf. above, f.98.

Russell himself seems to be aware of the difficulties inherent within his earlier formulation of the question:

It is a mistake to state the problem in the form: "Can we know of the existence of anything other than ourselves and our states? or: "Can we know of the existence of anything independent of ourselves?" because of the extreme difficulty of defining "self" and "independent" precisely.¹⁰³

Therefore, Russell proposes a second linguistic reductio:

The problem is: "Can the existence of anything other than our hard data be inferred from these data."¹⁰⁴

Is this new reductio free from the difficulties that beset the previous formulation. I do not think so. The word 'our' in Russell's putatively linguistically purified formulation is parasitic upon the meaning of Self which Russell himself admits the difficulty of defining precisely. It was on account of this difficulty, among others, that Russell proposes his linguistically purified version. But the second version still contains this difficulty! The personal pronoun 'our' is dependent for its meaning and its reference on the person to whom it refers. Russell has not succeeded on his own terms. He has not succeeded in reducing the philosophical obscurities but only in making them less visible in virtue of the surface level clarity of the language employed. The problem remains with us no matter how we formulate it: "Can we know anything to exist independent of the subject knower?"

There is a state in which the seeming reality of the independent existence of the objects of sense is considered to be an illusion, and that is the

¹⁰³B. Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, p. 69.

¹⁰⁴Ibid. By hard data Russell means: "...those which resist the solvent influence of critical reflection...The hardest of hard data are of two sorts: the particular facts of sense, and the general truths of logic." Ibid.,

dream state. Russell makes the astute point in reference to the dream state that what happens in the dream cannot be said to be an illusion. We really do see the objects that we see in our dreams. They are real to us. The illusion is only in the inference that we make about the dream objects, namely, what connection they will have with other objects of sense. This is, I take it, what Russell means when he says:

Objects of sense, even when they occur in dreams, are the most indubitably real objects known to us. What, then, makes us call them unreal in dreams? Merely the unusual nature of their connection with other objects of sense. I dream that I am in America, but I wake up and find myself in England without those intervening days on the Atlantic which, alas!, are inseparably connected with a "real" visit to America.¹⁰⁵

We may refer the reader directly to the dissertation at this point.¹⁰⁶

Lord Russell calls the dream objects unreal because they do not cohere with the objects in waking life. But one can turn this argument around. Why not call the objects in waking life unreal because they do not cohere with the objects in dream life? Russell takes for granted the reality of the experiences in the waking life. Russell tells us that:

The analogy in waking life is only to be preferred to that in dreams on the ground of its greater extent and consistency.¹⁰⁷

p. 60. We shall have more to say about some of these hard data later on. At the moment the distinction between hard and soft data does not affect the discussion. (By soft data Russell means: "...those which, under the operation of this process, ((the process of critical reflection)) become to our minds more or less doubtful.") Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 71. Here, it would seem, Russell employs a criterion which is more ultimate than the criterion of "hard data", one of which was "particular facts of sense". Here, particular facts of sense are not enough. The criterion employed is the coherence of certain facts of sense with other facts of sense.

¹⁰⁶Vide, First Dialogue, pp. 11-17.

¹⁰⁷Op. cit., p. 78.

And:

Certain uniformities are observed in waking life, while dreams seem quite erratic.¹⁰⁸

But the argument from consistency, uniformity, and extent is made from the waking state. It is said that the waking state is more uniform while in the waking state. But from the point of view of the dream state the dream is perfectly lawful, i.e., the dream state may have its own laws but it is perfectly self-consistent.

But finally, and the crux is this, the argument assumes that one can tell which state one is in at the time of the argument. If we are dreaming now, the idea that there are two states, one of them real and the other illusory, and one state to be preferred to the other on the grounds of its greater consistency with other experiences, may all be part of the dream. Russell himself seems to be well aware of this possibility:

...it is obviously possible that what we call waking life may be only an unusually persistent and recurrent nightmare. ...This may be true, since it cannot be shown to be false, yet no one can really believe it. ¹⁰⁹

It is clear that on the level of knowledge, Russell appears to be in agreement with us that we cannot know whether we are dreaming or awake. If we cannot know this, it follows that even on Russell's own analysis of the distinction between the waking and the dream state (which connects better with other experiences), that we cannot prove either the reality of the external world or of other minds. For, if we are dreaming now, it follows that the distinctions we consider to be real now, as the distinction between subject and object, will have no reality in the waking state. This analysis is borne

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 77. (emphasis after the comma is mine)

out by the facts since if what we now call the dream state is in fact the waking state then it is quite true that the distinction between subject and object will be found to be illusory since this distinction is not present in the dream state.¹¹⁰

Russell, however, makes it quite clear that no one really believes that we are dreaming now. On the level of belief we are in complete accord with Lord Russell. But Russell cannot employ arguments from the level of belief to establish anything on the level of knowledge.

To sum up. On the level of belief the position of the dissertation is in accord with that of Russell's. We most certainly believe in the existence of an external world and in other minds. But on the level of knowledge it cannot be said that Russell's arguments have proven that we can know either the existence of the external world or that of other minds.

¹¹⁰Cf. above, f. 106.

APPENDIX III

RALPH BARTON PERRY, PRESENT PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES

In Ralph Barton Perry's very lucid and illuminating chapter on idealism in his book, Present Philosophical Tendencies, he puts forth a criticism of Berkeley in particular and idealism in general. His criticism may be divided into two general categories: (i) the idealist does demonstrate that we cannot know anything but our ideas, but he draws from this an illegitimate inference, namely, that all that there is are our ideas;¹¹¹ (ii) to say that all we can know is our ideas is actually to say something quite trivial. Since it is true of everything that it is an item of consciousness to say this is not to make a philosophic claim of any importance. We are not saying anything more than we know what we know. Since the second 'we know' says nothing more than the first, we are putting forth an entirely empty claim. We may as well simply say, 'We know'. And every knowledge claim, including this one, must say at least that much. Therefore, to say that we know only our own ideas is to say nothing at all.¹¹²

Let us reply to each criticism individually. For the first criticism we may refer the reader to the appendices on Moore and Russell for the general criticism is the same. Professor Perry's idea is that something may exist

¹¹¹Perry argues that, "...there is nothing whatsoever to prevent a thing's belonging both to nature and to mind; in which case it is impossible to argue that because a thing belongs to mind it therefore owes its existence to the fact." Present Philosophical Tendencies, p. 125 (emphasis his).

¹¹²This is an attempt to state Perry's famous 'ego-centric predicament'. In Perry's own words: "This, then, is the 'ego-centric predicament.'" ...It should be evident that it proves nothing at all...It does, it is true, contain the proposition that every mentioned thing is an idea. But this is

which is beyond our capacity to experience. However valid this first criticism may be of traditional idealism, it does not come into contact with the position taken in the dissertation. The position of the dissertation with regard to the possible existence of that which lies outside of our ideas is three-fold. First, the dissertation is interested only in knowable existence. Existence which cannot be known under the criteria given in the dissertation falls outside of the question of the dissertation.¹¹³ Second, the dissertation is interested only in possible experience. Existence which falls outside the realm of possible experience falls outside of the scope of the dissertation.¹¹⁴ Third, we must distinguish between the level of knowledge and the level of belief.¹¹⁵ While we may, and for all practical purposes, we must believe in a world which exists independently of our experience, we cannot claim to know that such a world exists.¹¹⁶ All that we can know to exist is experience. That something in addition to our experience may exist is an article of belief. It can never, even in Perry's own terms, be an article of knowledge.¹¹⁷

Let us turn to Perry's second criticism. Perry's second criticism is that it is quite redundant to say that all that we know is our knowledge.¹¹⁸

virtually a redundant proposition to the effect that...every idea, object of knowledge, or experience, is an idea, object of knowledge, or experience. And a redundant proposition is no proposition at all. But what the idealist requires is a proposition to the effect that everything is an idea, or that only ideas exist." Present Philosophical Tendencies, pp. 130-131 (emphasis his).

¹¹³Vide, Preface to Dissertation, Appendix on G. E. Moore, esp. f. 63.

¹¹⁴Vide, Appendix on G. E. Moore, pp. 152-153; f. 58, 61, 62.

¹¹⁵Vide, Preface; Appendix on Lord Russell, pp. 167-170; pp. 172-173.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Cf. Above, f. 95.

¹¹⁸For the second criticism, see above, p. 174.

But there is one consequence which follows upon the truth of this proposition which would appear to make this claim other than empty. To know that we can only know our own experience of things is to know that we can never know anything which exists independently of our knowing it. While this statement of idealism may not establish the truth of idealism, at the very least it establishes that we can never know the truth of realism. Should the claim of idealism be true, it follows that we cannot know of the things when we know them that they exist in just this sense were we not to know them. And this is not to know something trivial. It is to know that the truth of realism can never be known.

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