THE THEORY OF SENSE-DATA IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
PETER CHARLES LIST
1969

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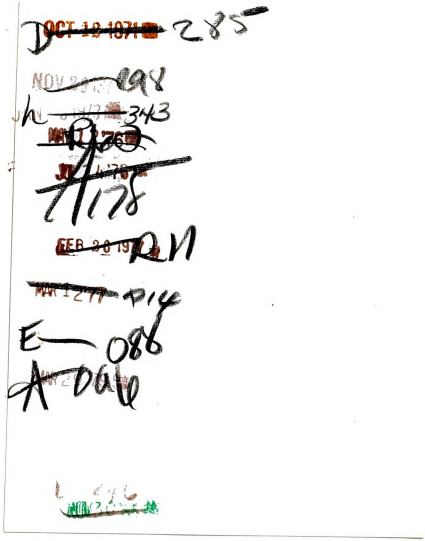

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By

Peter Charles List

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

THE THEORY OF SENSE-DATA
IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

By

Peter Charles List

The main objectives of this thesis are two: (1) to give an account of the re-emergence of the realistic version of the sense-datum theory in Twentieth-Century British philosophy and (2) to give an account of the critique of the sense-datum theory by ordinary language philosophers and others. These objectives are approached through a chronological examination of the relevant works of the major sense-datum philosophers, G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, H. H. Price, and A. J. Ayer, and the works of the major critics of the theory, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle, and J. L. Austin.

In satisfying the first objective, the sense-datum theory is divided into two versions: the ontological version as advocated by Moore, Russell, and Price, and the linguistic version as advocated by Ayer. Five doctrines were found to be fundamental to the ontological version: (1) the basic doctrine first stressed by Moore in 1903 that an act-object analysis of sensation can be produced; and the correlative doctrines (2) that a distinction must be made between two levels of perceptual awareness, namely, sensing and perceiving, (3) that a distinction must be made between two objects of perceptual awareness, namely, sense-data and material objects, (4) that the sensing of sense-data has some relation to the perceiving of material objects, and (5) that sense-data have some relation to material

THI

objects. The problem of perception then became that of giving explanations of the relation of sensing to perceiving and of sense-data to material objects. The ontological theorists tried to resolve this problem in traditional, empiricist terms, by turning either to a variant of Lockeian, Representative Realism, to a variant of Berkeleian Phenomenalism, or to an amalgamation of these variants.

In Ayer's linguistic version, sense-data were not objects and sensing was not a mental act. Rather, the use of sense-datum expressions was a convenient linguistic device chosen to avoid certain ambiguities in ordinary perceptual language. And the "sense-datum language" was only one, though the best, of several languages that could be chosen to serve in the analysis of perception. The problem of perception was that of showing how material-object sentences could be translated into sense-datum sentences, though Ayer eventually dropped this phenomenalistic program in favor of one which would show how our beliefs about material objects constituted a theory explaining the course of our sensory experience.

In satisfying objective (2), the critique of the sense-datum theory is divided into two main lines of attack: the internal and the external. The internal line of attack consists of the criticism initiated by Russell in 1919, of the basic doctrine of the ontological version. This critique resulted in a rejection of this doctrine and the correlative ontological doctrines. The main external line of attack consisted of a critique by Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin of the approach sense-datum philosophers used to resolve perceptual issues. This critique is interpreted to be part of a larger, revolutionary attack against certain tendencies which have dominated English epistemology and philosophy of mind for several

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centuries, namely, the Cartesian theory of the mind and the Cartesian search for the foundations of empirical knowledge. Wittgenstein turned this critique into an attack against the mental-process analysis of the concepts of sense-perception, Ryle into an attack against the category mistake of assimilating sensation to observation, and Austin into an attack against the general doctrine that we are never aware of common objects but only of sense-data. These philosophers thought that the errors of the sense-datum theory were brought on by certain misleading distinctions and metaphors entrenched in both ordinary language and in the technical language of philosophy. And they called for a careful examination of our ordinary perceptual language to ascertain the true conceptual framework for analyzing perception.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....1

PART I. THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY

Chapter

I. THE ONTOLOGICAL VERSION.....7

II. G. E. MOORE: THE ACT-OBJECT ANALYSIS OF SENSING.....18

III. BERTRAND RUSSELL: SENSE-DATA AND LOGICAL CONSTRUCTIONS.....71

IV. H. H. PRICE: SENSE-DATA AND PERCEPTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.....114

V. A. J. AYER: THE LINGUISTIC VERSION.....162

PART II. CRITICISM OF THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY

VI. INTRODUCTION: TWO MAIN LINES OF ATTACK.....209

VII. LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN: THE MENTAL CONCEPT VIEW AND THE CONCEPT OF SEEING.....233

VIII. GILBERT RYLE: THE CONCEPTS OF SENSATION AND OBSERVATION.....276

IX. J. L. AUSTIN: THE LINGUISTIC AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ERRORS OF THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY.....317

CONCLUSION.....368

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....378

THI

INTRODUCTION

Since the time of Hobbes, and especially since the time of Locke, English philosophers have shown a considerable interest in the philosophy and psychology of perception. In the last sixty years, this interest has been particularly acute, and philosophical discussions of perceptual issues have often occupied the center of philosophical attention in England. It is true that during this time there have been many competing and incompatible theories of perception in England. But some of these theories, especially those that would be called "Realistic," have exhibited a common, underlying agreement about the nature of what we immediately perceive in both ordinary and unordinary perceptual situations. This agreement can be described by saying that these theories have all accepted the theory of sense-data at their core. Thus, while controversy has raged about which theory of perception is true, whether, for example, some version of Phenomenalism or some version of Representative Realism is true, there has been some unanimity in respect to the truth of the theory of sense-data.

This unanimity did not in any way dominate perceptual theory in the early decades of this century, for during this time English philosophy was under the control of Idealists such as F. H. Bradley, Hastings Rashdall, Bernard Bosanquet, and J. E. McTaggart. And the Idealists did not believe that the Realistic version of the sense-datum theory was feasible despite the fact that some of them advocated an Idealistic

THE

version of their own.[1] The influence of such Realists as G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell was not felt so strongly at first due to this fact. Yet, during the decade after 1930 the influence of the Realists became predominant in English philosophy, and the sense-datum theory found its most sympathetic hearing in the work of H. H. Price. During this period, the sense-datum theory became perhaps as orthodox as a philosophical theory can get.

Since the middle thirties, however, this agreement about the truth of the sense-datum theory has been shattered both by critical doubts concerning certain of the fundamental and more peripheral assumptions of the theory and by a frontal assault against the very approach sense-datum philosophers have used to discuss perceptual issues. Criticism of the sense-datum theory was broached in the first instance by philosophers who agreed to a large extent with the general approach sense-datum philosophers used to deal with perceptual problems and issues. But such criticism took a different turn in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein in the middle 1930's and in the work of Gilbert Ryle and J. L. Austin in the later 1940's. These philosophers, particularly Ryle and Austin, thought that such an approach was fundamentally mistaken. They argued that the approach was vitiated not merely by an insensitivity to ordinary language and to the conceptual framework embodied in it, but more importantly by certain basic misunderstandings about the nature of epistemological inquiry. They argued that if the epistemological assumptions of the sense-datum theory were

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[1] Moore called the Idealistic version of the sense-datum theory "the accepted view" in Some Main Problems of Philosophy, (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1953), p. 44. On the accepted view, sense-data were thought to be mental entities or objects. This was a position which both Moore and Russell were careful to avoid.

THE

exposed, they would appear to be erroneous and could then be removed from perceptual inquiry. Indeed, if philosophical advance were to be made in perceptual theory, such assumptions had to be removed. Many of these assumptions were assumptions about the nature of the mind and of mental processes, and some of them were assumptions about the nature of knowledge and its relation to perception. Very few of these assumptions were new in philosophy; most of them could be traced back in English philosophy to Locke and ultimately to Descartes in France. At any rate, critics argued that these assumptions had uncritically governed English epistemology since that time and that they were the primary support for the sense-datum theory.

In the last two decades, it has become clear that many younger English philosophers, especially those who were students of Ryle and Austin at Oxford, have taken up the "Anti-Cartesian" banner of the major sense-datum critics. These younger philosophers appear to believe that the criticisms of Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin have decisively demolished the sense-datum theory in both its ontological and linguistic forms. And the sense-datum theory is presently a dead issue. Indeed, philosophical discussion of perceptual issues has become lethargic, perhaps because many philosophers do not know where to turn to revitalize the philosophy of perception. G. J. Warnock, one of the leading transmitters of J. L. Austin's work, has remarked that "Philosophers have not only come to distrust the terms in which, by long tradition, philosophical problems about perception have been posed and discussed: they are also not yet by any means sure how these problems might be posed and discussed more profitably. Perhaps they are not even

THE

quite sure what the 'problems' are."[1] This statement reflects quite well the present state of the philosophy of perception in England.

The question of whether the Anti-Cartesian attack against the sense-datum theory will continue to rule the day in England has recently been complicated by the fact that the main advocate of the linguistic version of the theory, A. J. Ayer, has belatedly defended the theory against Austin's attack.[2] It is likely, however, the Ayer will never be able to restate his version of the theory in a way that will substantially influence the thinking of many younger English philosophers. In the last two decades, the thinking of Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin has become too predominant and forceful for that to become a reality, and his defense of the sense-datum theory has come twenty years late. There are strong indications that the significant thinking in the philosophy of perception will not henceforth follow the traditional lines. And we can expect that the examination of perceptual language which Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin began and which was carried further by philosophers like G. J. Warnock and F. N. Sibley, will continue along linguistic lines.

It is my purpose in this dissertation to give an account of the rise and fall of the sense-datum theory in the works of seven of its most important advocates and critics in Twentieth Century English philosophy. I shall hope to show how, after some four decades of Idealism, the Realistic version of the theory first re-emerged in 1903 with the

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[1] G. J. Warnock, ed., The Philosophy of Perception (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 2.

[2] A. J. Ayer, "Has Austin Refuted the Sense-datum Theory?", Synthese, XVII (1967).

THI

publication of G. E. Moore's article, "The Refutation of Idealism."[1] It was then advocated under Moore's influence by Bertrand Russell until 1919, and then carefully and thoroughly re-elaborated in the work of H. H. Price. The work of these three philosophers reinstated what I will call the "ontological version of the Realistic sense-datum theory." I then want to continue my treatment of the sense-datum theory by looking at the work of A. J. Ayer, beginning with LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC.[2] Ayer was a strong advocate of the sense-datum theory, too, only he thought out a novel version, a version which I will call the "linguistic version of the sense-datum theory." In the second part of the dissertation, I will continue by examining the critical attacks which Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin made against both the ontological and linguistic version of the theory. I will try to assess the justice of their criticisms, in the light of what is said in the first part of the dissertation about the individual contributions which Moore, Russell, Price, and Ayer made in support of the theory. In this way, I hope that some light can be thrown on the state of contemporary thinking about perceptual issues in England.

Although in the body of the dissertation I will take up individually the contributions which each of the above-named philosophers made to the sense-datum issue, I want to begin Part One by giving an introductory characterization of those assumptions which Moore, Russell, and Price held in common about sense-data, and I want to mention briefly the points on which they diverged in their respective theories of perception. At

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[1] G. E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism," in Philosophical Studies (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1922); first published in Mind, n.s., XII (October, 1903).

[2] A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic (2nd ed.; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1952); this book was first published in 1936, and the second edition was first published in 1946.

THI

the beginning of Part Two, I will also include some very general introductory remarks about the character of the criticisms which Wittgenstein, Ryle, Austin, and other critics made of the sense-datum theory.

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PART I. THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE ONTOLOGICAL VERSION

Although Bertrand Russell is sometimes given credit for introducing the term "sense-data" into public, philosophical discussions in England in 1912, it is more probably G. E. Moore who first did so in a paper read before the Aristotelian Society in December, 1909, called "The Subject Matter of Psychology."[1] Moreover, in an earlier paper read before the same society in 1905, Moore talked about "colored patches" and that "class of data which I have called 'sense-contents'" in a way that leaves no doubt that he was referring to the same thing which in 1909 he called "sense-data."[2] Of course, Moore knew full well when he introduced the term "sense-data" in "The Subject Matter of Psychology" that he was talking about much the same sort of entities which other philosophers had already called "impressions," "sensations," "sense-presentations," "presentations," "sensational qualities," "sensational data," and the like. In many cases, however, different views were taken about the nature of these entities, so that while it is true that the sense-datum analysis had some sympathetic support in the views

[1] Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, n.s., X (1909-10).

[2] The 1905 paper was "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception," in Philosophical Studies (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1922); first published in PAS, n.s., VI (1905-06). (Hereinafter referred to as "Objects of Perception.") A contrary view is presented by Roland Hall in "The Term 'Sense-datum'," Mind, n.s., LXXIII (January, 1964). Hall argues that A. C. Frazer first used the term in the 1880's, that William James took it from Frazer and that Russell borrowed it from James on the ground that Russell had some familiarity with the work of James.

of such Realist philosophers as T. Percy Nunn, G. F. Stout, and Samuel Alexander, the Realistic sense-datum analysis of appearance first came to take on its distinctive flavor in the early work of G. E. Moore.

The fact that Moore rather than Russell first introduced the term "sense-data" into philosophical discussions is not very significant from a philosophical standpoint, however; and it only shows, among other things, that Moore was publicly concerned with perceptual problems earlier than Russell. Moreoever it is likely that the notion of a "sense-datum" first became more generally known in philosophy as a result of the publication by Russell of THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY in 1912 rather than as a result of Moore's earlier work. Furthermore, Moore's most extensive consideration of the sense-datum theory occurred in some lectures he gave in London in 1910 and 1911. These lectures were not published until 1953.[1] It is also more probable that philosophers paid more attention to Russell's work since he had already established a brilliant reputation with the publication of THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNIZ in 1900, THE PRINCIPLES OF MATHEMATICS in 1903, and PRINCIPIA MATHEMATICA, Vol. 1, in 1910. At any rate, by July of 1914, the issue of the status of sense-data had become important enough to become the subject of a discussion by Moore and Stout before a joint meeting of the Aristotelian Society, the British Psychological Society, and the Mind Association, so that for all practical purposes the ontological version of the sense-datum theory became a topic of fervent philosophical concern in England by 1912.

Moore, Russell, and later on, Price, all agreed to the truth of

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[1] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy.

certain fundamental points about sensing and sense-data, points which mark them out as Realistic sense-datum philosophers. This agreement was not always intentional but was one which is evident nevertheless in most of Moore's work on perception throughout his life, in Russell's work until "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean" in 1919,[1] and in what we might call the "sense-datum classic," Price's PERCEPTION.[2] This agreement can be broken down into five doctrines basic to what I will call the "ontological version of the sense-datum theory."

(1) The most fundamental doctrine of the ontological version is the doctrine that philosophers can give an act-object analysis of sensation. Moore and Russell specifically argued for, and Price took for granted, the idea that sensing is a dyadic relation between (a) a mental act of sensing and (b) an object sensed, the sense-datum (or sense-data). What was crucial to this analysis is the belief that the two terms of this relation, the act of sensing and the sense-datum, are in some sense distinct from, and independent of, each other, even though the sense-datum is in part "mind-dependent." There was disagreement and vacillation among these sense-datum philosophers about the question of whether sense-data could continue to exist when not being sensed; to Russell it seemed possible for this to be true, while Moore was never sure what to think about the issue. But neither Moore, Russell, nor Price ever felt that the mental dependence or independence of sense-data meant that sense-data were mental entities. And this was an important step away from "the accepted view" of the Idealists.

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[1] Bertrand Russell, "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean," in Logic and Knowledge, ed. by Robert Marsh (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1956); first published in PAS, Supplementary Vol. II (1919), 1-43. (Hereinafter referred to as "On Propositions.")

[2] H. H. Price, Perception (2nd ed.; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1950); first published in 1932.

To explain what it meant to say that sense-data are distinct from acts of sensing, yet in some way mind-dependent, it is necessary to characterize those things which Moore, Russell, and Price thought were true about the act of sensing and about sense-data.

All three took the act of sensing to be a mental act whereby the mind is actively aware of or conscious of an object. In the act of sensing, the mind was alternately said to "grasp," to "apprehend," to "know," or sometimes to "perceive" a sense-datum. That element which all acts of sensing had in common was "conciousness" or "awareness," and consciousness was thought to be cognitive. Sensing was taken to be a way of knowing an object, in this case a sense-datum. In this respect sensing a sense-datum was described as being acquainted with an object in a non-judgmental, presentational way.

The concept of an act of sensing was of course only an abstraction, utilized for the purpose of analyzing different concrete kinds of sensing; sensing was characterized as an abstract, generic activity having different specific activities as sub-species. The species of sensing were as numerous as the different ways we could sense things or be sensually aware of things; there were said to be as many kinds of sensing-activities as there are kinds of sense-modalities. Thus, where "X" represents a sense-datum, it was said that we could see X, or touch X, or hear X, or smell X, or taste X. All of these ways of sensing sense-data required the same kind of analysis into act and object. It is true that the sense-datum theorists were biased toward the modalities of sight, touch, and hearing, but all kinds of sensation were described as ways of being acquainted with sense-data. Thus there were said to be visual acts and visual sense-data, tactual acts and tactual sense-data,

olfactory acts and olfactory sense-data, kinaesthetic acts and kinaesthetic sense-data, etc. Naturally, it was conceded that there were differences in these kinds of acts and differences in these kinds of sense-data, differences which made these acts and data visual rather than auditory, or kinaesthetic rather than visual. Nevertheless, these philosophers acted as if these differences were relatively unimportant. At any rate, the differences were taken to be fairly transparent so far as the essential character of sensory acts and sense-data went, and nothing much was said about them. The important facts about sensory acts were facts about what the different kinds of acts had in common with each other. The important and essential facts about sense-data were also facts which were thought to be true of all kinds of sense-data.

What these latter facts about the objects of sensing were, can be summarized in the following way: sense-data are indubitably existing objects or "particular existents." They can be described, for example, as patches of color having certain sizes and shapes and arranged in a sensory field.[1] These patches of color are distinct from the act of sensing and are not created by consciousness, yet are in some sense private to the mind that senses them, or "mind-dependent." Sense-data are also distinct from "material objects" or "material things," yet their existence is also partially dependent upon material objects. It is not possible in general to demarcate any agreement among sense-data philosophers as to what this latter dependence "amounted to," however, since this is one point at which the views of Moore Russell, and Price diverged. The nature of the relation of sense-data to material objects was the focal point of a good deal of argument and dissension among sense-

[1]The typical examples were taken from vision.

datum philosophers and their critics. But there can be no doubt about the fact that sense-data do exist, it was thought, since they are invariably discovered in our sensory acts.[1]

This basic distinction between the act of sensing and the sense-datum led to two corollary doctrinal distinctions: (2) the distinction between two levels of perceptual awareness and (3) the distinction between two objects of perceptual awareness. First, it was typically argued that the analysis of perception was not exhausted by the primary distinction between sensing and sense-data; it was suggested that perceiving involved more than sensing sense-data and was thus in some way distinguishable from sensing sense-data. True, the sensing of sense-data was thought to be a component of perception, for this sensing must occur if perceiving is to occur. But the belief that we normally perceive "material objects" rather than sense-data needed to be taken into account, and this the sense-datum philosophers did by suggesting that perception is a complex matter consisting of the sensing of sense-data and, in veridical cases, the perceiving of material objects. Perceiving material objects was also given an act-object analysis, or a process-object analysis, though this analysis was worked out in different ways by Moore, Russell, and Price, and though different language was used by these philosophers to label the distinction between sensing and perceiving. Thus Moore made a distinction between direct apprehension of sense-data (sensing sense-data) and indirect apprehension of physical objects (perceiving material objects);[2] Russell made a similar distinction

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[1] We are acquainted with our acquaintance with sense-data, Russell said. See "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description," in Mysticism and Logic (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), p. 211; first published in PAS, n.s., XI (1910-11).

[2] Moore also extended his analysis later to three senses of "see": (1) seeing sense-data; (2) seeing part of the surface of a material thing; (3) seeing a material thing.

between acquaintance with sense-data and descriptive knowledge of physical objects; and Price made a distinction between sensing sense-data and perceptual consciousness of material objects.

To argue that a similar distinction was present in all three cases must now, however, mislead the reader into thinking that precisely the same distinction was present in all three cases, for while it is true that "direct apprehension" for Moore, "acquaintance" for Russell, and "sensing" for Price all meant substantially the same thing, it is not at all true to say that "indirect apprehension," knowledge by description," and "perceptual consciousness" meant the same thing. Moore's "indirect apprehension" and Russell's "knowledge by description" at one time were very similar in meaning, but "perceptual consciousness" was for Price a very complicated affair consisting of a number of elements which neither Moore nor Russell ever intended to be a part of their own analyses.

I will discuss the differences between these analyses of perceiving when I come to deal with the individual theories of Moore, Russell, and Price in the succeeding chapters. Let me point out now that these differences are very important since the way individual sense-datum theories are characterized will affect the kinds of criticisms that can be made of them. I hope to show that these differences in the analysis of perceiving material objects are inextricably bound together with individual views about the nature of material objects and about the relation of sense-data to material objects.

The second corollary distinction, and third fundamental doctrine, to which the act-object analysis of sensing commonly gave rise, was the distinction between the sense-datum and the material object. This distinction was of course directly tied to the other corollary distinction

between sensing and perceiving. Just as there was some agreement about the latter distinction, so there was some agreement about the properties sense-data were said to have in common and the properties material objects were said to have in common. I have described some of the common properties of sense-data already, but more can be said about sense-data in the light of what sense-datum philosophers said about the properties of material objects. Briefly, it was suggested that while material objects all persist and endure through time, are spatially complete or three-dimensional, and are publicly observable entities, sense-data, on the other hand, are transitory in temporal nature, are spatially incomplete in the sense that they have, for example, no tops or bottoms, and are arranged in private sense-fields in such a way that they are private to the mind that is acquainted with them. It was either implied or directly stated that sense-data are inhabitants of a private, spatial world (though not necessarily "in" the mind), while material objects are occupants of "public" space.

The belief that sense-data and material objects have different common properties was not taken to preclude a relationship between them. In fact once the distinction between sense-data and material objects was made, it was thought necessary to show what the relation was between the two. The three basic doctrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory were thus supplemented by two further doctrines: (4) the doctrine that the sensing of sense-data has some relation to the perceiving of material objects; and (5) the doctrine that sense-data have some relation to material objects. The fact that these two doctrines were a part of the common fund of doctrines with which Moore, Russell,

and Price worked needs to be stated with some caution, however. Just as these three philosophers did not agree about what the relation between sensing and perceiving was, so they disagreed about what the relation between sense-data and material objects was. Acceptance of the basic distinction of the theory along with the first two corollary distinctions did not lead to the same consequences for any of the major sense-datum theorists; each philosopher worked out different analyses of the last two relations (4) and (5) . We can describe this fact in a slightly different way by saying that Moore, Russell, and Price all agreed to a sense-datum analysis of sensation, but differed as to their analysis of perception and differed as to their analysis of the nature of material objects. The fact that they accepted certain common facts about sense-data and material objects did not prevent such disagreement. Thus Moore never got to the point where he was satisfied with what he had said about either of these last two relations. He left the relation of sense-data to material objects largely unanalyzed. It could be said that Moore set the stage for analyses of both of these relations by pointing to their existence and by implying that the problem of perception should be to give analyses of them. Then Russell and, later, Price attempted to resolve this problem by giving analyses of both the nature of perception and the relation of sense-data to material objects. But the results of these analyses were radically different, even if not altogether novel in modern British philosophy. Of course, it can be argued that Moore was merely reformulating in different terminology a problem which was at least as old as John Locke's AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. It is also possible to conceive of both Russell and Price's "solutions" to this problem in more traditional terms.

One can discriminate then in the writings of Moore, Russell, and Price certain doctrines which, we can argue, were fundamental to the sense-datum theory, doctrines which all mark out the ontological variant of the theory. This variant has been otherwise described as the "metaphysical" version or the "two objects" version of the theory, but no matter how it is named, the basic doctrines are the following: (1) the doctrine that an act-object analysis of sensation or of sensing can be produced; (2) the doctrine that a distinction can be made between two levels of perceptual awareness, namely, sensing and perceiving; (3) the doctrine that a distinction can be correlatively made between two objects of perceptual awareness, namely, sense-data and material objects; (4) the doctrine that the sensing of sense-data has some relation to the perceiving of material objects; (5) the doctrine that sense-data have some relation to material objects.

Before continuing with an examination of the work of Moore, Russell, and Price, let me add two last points: first, at least one sense-datum philosopher, A. J. Ayer, objected to calling the ontological version of the sense-datum theory a "theory" if this were taken to imply that it has the features of a scientific theory, such as predictive power. This argument went hand in hand with Ayer's claim that the sense-datum "theory" is just an alternative language for describing what appears to be the case, and I shall deal with it later. I think, however, that it is entirely justifiable to describe the ontological version of the sense-datum theory as a "theory" so long as we keep in mind that it is a "philosophical theory" in the loose way that this expression is used by philosophers.

Second, one should be careful about referring to the ontological

version as a "theory of perception," for this may imply an agreement about the analysis of perception which just did not exist. As I will show in more detail, Moore, Russell, and Price did agree about such matters as the nature of sense-data, about what counts as a sense-datum, and about what sensing is. Nevertheless they differed in important ways on the question of how to analyze perception. I will argue that Moore tended towards a version of Lockeian, Representative Realism, as Russell did at one time, but that Russell was also at one time a phenomenalist. Price tended to wed the two views into a phenomenalism of a different sort. Simply conceived, I shall maintain that the belief that sense-data, rather than physical objects are sensed, led to two different and long familiar theories of perception: (1) a version of Representative Realism in which physical objects are both analytically and metaphysically distinct from sense-data; and (2) a version of Phenomenalism, broadly conceived as the view that material objects are in some way identical with or partly composed of sense-data even though distinguishable from sense-data in a causal sense.

CHAPTER TWO

G. E. MOORE: THE ACT-OBJECT ANALYSIS OF SENSING

The possibility of introducing the idea of a sense-datum as a part f a theory of perception perhaps first suggested itself to G. E. Moore hile ruminating about the main thesis of Idealism as he conceived it, he thesis that *esse est percipi*. In a famous paper published in 1903, The Refutation of Idealism," Moore found it necessary to refute the argu- ents which had been given to establish this thesis. In the process of oing so, he was led to give an act-object analysis of sensation. This nalysis became the fundamental doctrine of the ontological version of he sense-datum theory, a doctrine which led to the two corollary dis- inctions between sensing and perceiving, and between sense-data and hysical objects. These corollary distinctions were first discussed by oore in subsequent articles, such as "The Nature and Reality of Objects Perception" (1905) and "The Subject Matter of Psychology" (1909). 1910 and 1911 Moore gave a series of lectures later published as ME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY in which he further developed all of e five basic doctrines of the ontological variant of the theory, al- ough what he said in respect to some of these doctrines was very ited in extent and was presented in a tentative way. In these lec- es, Moore considered two different sense-datum theories, both based what he called "the accepted view." After arguing that one of these sions must be preferred, he suggested that three different theories perception could be based on this version: (1) a variant of

phenomenalism; (2) a variant of the causal theory; and (3) a "common sense theory" which he later called "Locke's view."[1] He argued that both the phenomenalistic variant and the causal variant were false and that we must opt for Locke's view. In "The Status of Sense-data" (1914) and "A Defence of Common Sense" (1925),[2] Moore continued to affirm and enlarge on his common sense "theory of representative perception," but he never did develop some very essential points of that theory. Eventually, in his "Reply to My Critics" in 1942, he even confessed puzzlement about certain of the less fundamental doctrines of the sense-datum theory.[3]

I should like to discuss the development of Moore's views with the purpose of showing how strong was his insistence on the fundamental doctrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. I hope it will become clear that Moore's conviction as to the truth of these fundamental doctrines clouded his certainty about what these doctrines implied for "Locke's views."

In "The Refutation of Idealism" Moore introduced the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, namely, the distinction between the act of sensation and the object of sensation. Moore said that the true analysis of one's sensation" shows that it

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[1] G. E. Moore, "The Status of Sense-data," in Philosophical Studies (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1922); first published in PAS, n.s., XIV (1913-14).

[2] G. E. Moore, "A Defence of Common Sense," in Philosophical Papers (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1959); first published in Contemporary British Philosophy, 2nd Series, edited by J. H. Muirhead (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925).

[3] G. E. Moore, "Reply to My Critics," in The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp (2nd ed.; New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1952).

must be divided into three elements: (A) an awareness; (B) an object of this awareness; (C) and the relation of this awareness to its object. The sensation of blue, for example, can be analyzed into (A) an awareness of the color blue, into (B) the color blue, and (C) into the relation of the awareness of blue to the color blue. Moore later referred to this relation as "direct perception"[1] or "direct apprehension."[2] The act of being aware of the color blue he later called the "act of sensing a sense-datum." And he also later came to call the object of awareness a "sense-datum" or a "datum ordinarily called a 'sense-content'."[3] Since Moore's later analyses of sensation until 1942 were identical in containing these elements, and since Moore's distinction between act and object was taken by many English philosophers to be a revolutionary move away from idealistic analyses of perception, it is reasonable to trace the origin of the sense-datum theory in Twentieth Century English philosophy to Moore's "Refutation." Of course Moore was in no way the originator of this distinction, nor was this distinction entirely alien to the thinking of idealistic philosophers like Bradley, as Moore readily acknowledged. In fact it is clearly a distinction that Berkeley himself made while expounding the *esse est percipi* doctrine. What was distinctive was Moore's insistence on the belief that the object of sensation was distinct from and in some sense independent of the act of sensation while maintaining that this object was not "mental" in nature. In the context

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[1]Moore, "Objects of Perception," p. 67.

[2]Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 46.

[3]Moore, "Objects of Perception," p. 79. Even later, in his "Reply to My Critics," (1942), Moore acknowledged that he should make a distinction between the sensible color blue and the patch that it qualified, in Moore, "Reply to My Critics," p. 658.

of the kind of philosophy which dominated English thought at the turn of the century, these beliefs were of revolutionary, philosophical importance in turning English philosophy away from Idealism towards Realism.[1]

In "The Refutation of Idealism" Moore argued that Idealist philosophers like George Berkeley analyzed our consciousness of physical objects into an act and a content, yet believed that the content of a conscious act, whether thought-content or sense-content, was in some sense "in" the mind. The content of a conscious act was conceived to be a mental entity, or was conceived to be mental in some essential way. For example, Berkeley thought that both secondary and primary qualities were ideas in the mind, Moore said. But in some cases this view led to doubt as to whether one could be directly acquainted with objects external to the mind without the intervention of these "ideas" or "sensory qualities" between one's consciousness and external objects. It seemed impossible to "get outside the circle of our own ideas and sensations."

This difficulty, Moore argued, is a consequence of the Idealistic thesis that *esse est percipi*. If,Moore said, there is an analytic connection between "being" and "being experienced," as the Idealistic thesis implies, then it is necessarily true that anything which exists, exists only so long as it is being experienced. For the Idealist, Moore thought, this means that the object and the subject in experience are necessarily connected with each other;[2] there is, for example, a necessary connection between blue and the sensation of blue. The Idealist also believes,

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[1] John Passmore believes that "the main tendency of nineteenth-century thought" as a whole, and not just English thought in particular, was "towards the conclusion that both 'things' and facts about things are dependent for their existence and nature upon the operation of a mind." See John Passmore, One Hundred Years of Philosophy, (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 175. This was the tradition that Moore was rejecting in "The Refutation of Idealism."

[2] Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism," p. 13.

Moore asserted, that these two components of an experience form an organic whole, or that they are internally related to each other and that they would not be what they are unless they were internally related to each other. The Idealist thinks it to be illegitimate to abstract or to see as distinct two things that are in an internal, organic relation to each other, such as blue and the sensation of blue. On the other hand, he also wants to maintain that these two things are distinct, and that they must be distinquished from each other. But Moore thought this was tantamount to holding both of the two following contradictory propositions: (a) "Blue and the sensation of blue are distinct"; and (b) "Blue and the sensation of blue are not distinct." To quote Moore, "to assert that (blue) is necessarily an object of experience is to assert that (blue) is necessarily (blue)--a purely identical proposition, and therefore proved by the law of contradiction alone. Of course, the proposition also implies that experience is, after all, something distinct from (blue)--else there would be no reason for insisting that (blue) is a sensation; and that the argument thus both affirms and denies that (blue) and the sensation of (blue) are distinct, is what sufficiently refutes it."[1]

This problem would not arise if we did not take the connection between blue and the sensation of blue to be a necessary and organic one. Once we reject this belief, we don't fall into the contradiction, Moore thought. And he believed that we had to reject this belief if we were to avoid this contradiction. If we make a distinction in sensation between the act of sensation and the object of sensation, a distinction which presumably makes the relation between these two things an external

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

one, then no contradiction about their distinctness will follow. It is for this reason that Moore did make this distinction. Moore still believed that we could use the language of "act" and "content," or of "consciousness" and "the content of consciousness." Yet we could do so only with the understanding that the content of our sensory act is the object of our consciousness and is not an inseparable, organic part of that consciousness. When we are aware of something in sensation, or when we sense some color, what we are aware of is distinct from and independent of our experience or sensation of it.

Moore gave no clear indication in "The Refutation of Idealism" that the object of sensation was a sense-datum, nor in fact did he made a distinction between a material object and a sense-datum and then discuss the relation of the one to the other. Yet the foundation for a distinction between sensation as an act of the mind and the sense-datum as the independent object of that act was made in "The Refutation." And though at least one important sense-datum philosopher, H. H. Price, wanted to begin the analysis of perception with a putatively "neutral" entity (the sense-datum) whose physical or mental nature was left undecided, we can see now that Moore, and later Russell, believed that the object of sensation was independent of the mind in the sense that it was not an inseparable part of a mental act. In SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, Moore developed this view further by making a distinction between the two senses of being "mental"; being "mental" in the sense that something is a content of the mind and being "mind dependent."[1] He argued that a sense-datum was not mental in this first sense, but was mind-dependent.

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[1] Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 43.

Moore continued to develop his version of the sense-datum theory in his article, "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception" in 1905. It was in this article that Moore more clearly made the fundamental distinction of this theory, and it was here that he also discussed the first two corollary distinctions of the theory. The way he moved into a discussion of these distinctions was by taking a normal perceptual situation and asking questions about it. Thus he asked us to consider that we are looking at a book-shelf on which there are two books, one red and the other blue, standing next to each other. He asked us to determine what it is that we "directly perceive" when we see these two books side by side. In answering this question, Moore left no doubt that what we directly perceive are sense-data, for he said that in looking at the two books, we directly perceive two "colored patches," one red and one blue, each having a certain size and shape, and each being in a certain three-dimensional spatial relation to the other. Furthermore, he suggested, what we directly perceive is not the same as what we would ordinarily say that we perceive when we say that what we perceive are books, for we do not see, for example, the inside of the books nor those sides of the books which are coincident with the shelf.[1] What we "actually" see is limited to certain colored patches, to the sizes and shapes of these, and to the spatial relations between these patches.

Moore then asked what it meant to say that a sense-datum such as this red patch exists. He decided that though it is difficult to define what he meant by saying that a sense-datum exists (or, in later terminology, though it is difficult to give an analysis of what he

[1]Moore, "Objects of Perception," p. 68.

meant when he said this), he was using the "ordinary sense" of the word "existence" here.[1] Ordinarily, Moore said, when we say that something exists, it is not self-contradictory to say either that this thing exists yet is not perceived, or that it does not exist yet is perceived.[2] This would imply that it is not self-contradictory to say of a sense-datum either that it exists yet is not perceived or that it does not exist yet is perceived. Thus sense-data are prima facie "things" of which the Idealistic thesis (*esse est percipi*) is not true.

It would be natural to assume that Moore would have gone on then to determine whether there was more than prima facie plausibility in the thesis that sense-data may exist when they are not being directly perceived and in the thesis that sense-data may not exist even when directly perceived. Moore did take up the first thesis; in fact, he puzzled about this thesis for many years thereafter, and I will consider what he said about the first thesis shortly. But he did not take up the second thesis at all in "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception" nor later, and this leaves some question about Moore's views. The problem is that he later made it a sufficient condition for something's being a sense-datum that it be an entity of which one was often directly conscious.[3] Yet this would make it impossible for the second thesis to be true. That is, it would be contradictory to maintain both the second thesis that sense-data might not exist when directly perceived and the view that a sense-datum does exist when it is directly perceived. If it is a sufficient condition for the existence of a red patch that we should directly perceive it, then when we do directly perceive it, it

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[1] Ibid., p. 72. [2] Ibid., p. 74-5. [3] See Infra, p. 31.

exists. And there is no possibility that it could fail to exist when we did directly perceive it. This is a logical error in Moore's view that he failed to notice, and the reason is that he probably concentrated too much of his interest on the first thesis, the thesis that the Idealist would have argued against. The problem about the existence of sense-data then was not that of determining whether they exist when they are perceived, for this is a point which the Idealist conceded. The problem for Moore and other Realists was that of determining whether they exist when they are not perceived. If he could find plausible arguments for this first thesis, then he could show that the Idealists were wrong in maintaining that it was both a sufficient and a necessary condition for the existence of a sense-datum that it should be perceived.

Could any arguments be given to support the first thesis? Moore stated that while he had not given any arguments for believing that sense-data exist when not perceived, it was "at least conceivable that things (colors, sounds, smells) should exist when they are not perceived" since "exists" does not mean "is perceived."[1] Ultimately, Moore said, "the question whether anything exists, when it is not perceived, and, if so, what things, seems to me to be one which can only be settled by observation; and thus, I conceive, observation might justify us in concluding that certain kinds of things--pains, for example, do not exist, when they are not perceived and that other kinds of things--colors, for example, do exist, when they are not perceived."[2]

It is difficult to see what Moore could have meant by "observation" here since if he meant by this "direct perception" he would have been

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[1] Ibid., p. 91. [2] Ibid., pp. 91-2.

involved in the contradiction of asserting that we can discover whether sense-data exist when they are not directly perceived by directly perceiving them at the same time. But of course the time when they are directly perceived could not be the same as the time when they are not directly perceived, by the same person at least. It is also possible that he meant by this word, "indirect perception." Yet the only way for Moore that sense-data could be indirectly perceived was if they were being remembered. The problem then was to observe at the time when they are thought to exist, whether they do exist or not, and this could not be the same time as the time when they were remembered to have existed.

Traditionally, there had been an objection made to believing in the "real" existence of sense-data. This objection had been used to deny the "objective" existence of sense-data independent of our sensation. It was an objection that went back at least to Berkeley's PRINCIPLES, as Moore pointed out.[1] According to this argument, it is impossible that a body of water, for example, should be either hot or cold since the same body of water may appear to be both hot and cold at the same time. From this it was concluded that since it is impossible that the body of water could really be both hot and cold at the same time, these qualities must be "subjective," or "in the mind," rather than "objective" or "in the water."

Moore claimed that this argument did not prove that no sense-datum exists at the place where it is perceived to exist; it just showed that the water could not be both hot and cold. Thus it did not follow that the water was neither hot nor cold, or that neither of these sensory

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[1] Ibid., p. 92.

qualities really existed "in the water!" Moore believed that examples like this showed that some sensory qualities which are perceived as existing in certain places do not in fact exist there, but this did not mean that no sensory qualities exist in those places.[1]

Moore was thus strongly optimistic about his belief in the "real" existence of such things as colors and sounds. He thought that the difficulties that were raised by examples like mirror images were not insuperable.[2] Our own ability to directly perceive or observe sense-qualities or sense-data as existing in certain places, gave no reason to doubt that those particular qualities actually existed there. As Moore said, "The more I look at objects round me, the more I am unable to resist the conviction that what I see does exist, as truly and as really as my perception of it. The conviction is overwhelming."[3] Moore was affirming his belief in the existence of sense-data here, since he had all along been calling colors, sounds, and smells "objects," not material objects.

Once we accept the proposition that sense-data do exist in this "ordinary" sense, Moore thought that the following question arose, Does the perception of sense-data furnish any reason to believe in the existence of anything else apart from the data themselves, such as other persons with thoughts and perceptions like our own? Moore believed that unless these "observed data which I have called 'sense-contents' " existed,[4] it would be impossible that my own perceptions could provide any reason for believing that other person's thoughts and perceptions exist.

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[1] Moore said that he would say the same about mirror images and about cases of perceiving objects at great distances, such as the moon.

[2] Moore, "Objects of Perception," p. 95.

[3] Ibid., p. 96. [4] Ibid., p. 88.

Our knowledge of the existence of the contents of other minds and of the existence of other minds and bodies, depends upon the existence of our own sense-data. And our knowledge of these things is just a special case of our knowledge of anything external to our own minds. So that unless the "things which I directly perceive--colors, sounds, smells, etc.--do really exist," there is no reason to believe in the existence either of "any perception in any other person or of any material object."[1] Whether sense-data do in fact provide evidence for such beliefs was not decided by Moore in "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception." He did not, for example, discuss the relationship of what we "actually see" in the case of the two books to what we would, in a different sense of "see," say that we see if we said that we saw two books rather than two colored patches. The connection between what we "directly perceive" and what we "indirectly perceive" in perceptual situations was taken up for the first time in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY in 1910-11, and was not discussed here. This corollary distinction between the two senses of "see" was present in 1905, but no account was taken of it.

One needs to be cautious about interpreting what Moore was claiming in "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception." It is clear that he made the fundamental distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, although he had not distinguished between a sensory quality and a sense-datum as he later did. It is clear, too, that he had also made a distinction between direct and indirect perception. But the second corollary distinction between the object of direct perception, i.e., the sense-datum, and the object of perception, namely, the material object, was not quite as definite or distinct as these

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[1] Ibid., p. 90.

other two distinctions. The distinction between what we "actually see" (or what we "indirectly perceive") and what we would ordinarily say that we perceive did lead more clearly to this second distinction. In this early work, Moore avoided talking about "material things," about the relation of sense-data to material things, and about the question of whether material things exist. Of course, he took up these matters later.[1]

The next significant work on perception which Moore produced was "The Subject Matter of Psychology" in 1909. In this essay, Moore formally introduced the term "sense-data" by giving a definition of it, although it is clear that he was referring to sense-data as early as 1905. The major purpose of this paper was to consider what kinds of entities are "mental" and to show how these entities could be distinguished from those which are not mental.[2] It is evident that Moore had gotten beyond the stage of wondering whether sense-data existed or not, and that he was now concerned about their nature. In the most "fundamental" sense of the word, it is acts of consciousness that are undoubtably mental, Moore decided. But the question is, Are sense-data also mental entities? And if they are, In what sense are they mental? With the extreme caution that Moore exhibited on so many occasions when he attempted to answer a philosophical question, he concluded that he was not definitely certain whether sense-data are mental or not.

By way of deciding this question, Moore defined for the first

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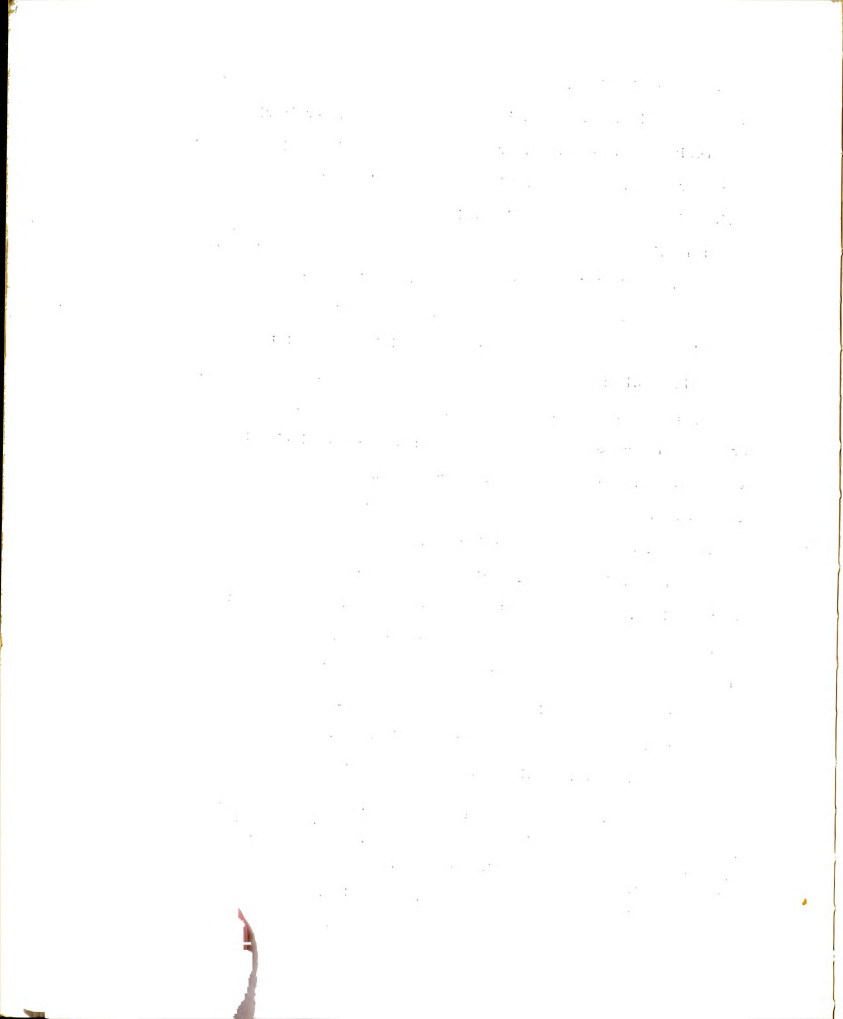
[1] In Some Main Problems of Philosophy he discussed the question of whether sense-data are parts of the surfaces of physical objects, and in "A Defence of Common Sense" he stated that it is reasonable to believe in the existence of physical objects. In "Proof of an External World" he tried to give an argument to show that things external to the mind, such as books on shelves, do really exist.

[2] Moore, "The Subject Matter of Psychology," p. 37.



time in his published work what he meant by "sense-data." He said,

> By sense-data I understand a class of entities of which we are very often directly conscious, and with many of which we are extremely familiar. They include the colors, of all sorts of different shades, which I actually see when I look about me; the sounds which I actually hear; the peculiar sort of entity of which I am directly conscious when I feel the pain of a toothache, and which I call 'the pain', and many others which I need not enumerate. But I wish also to include among them those entities called 'images,' of which I am directly conscious when I dream and often also when awake; which resemble the former in respect of the fact that they <u>are</u> colors, sounds, etc.; but which seem, as a rule, like <u>rather</u> faint copies of the colors, sounds, etc., actually seen or heard, and which, whether fainter or not, differ from them in respect of the fact that we should not say we actually saw or heard them, and the fact that they are not, in the strictest sense of the words, 'given by the senses'.[1]

In this passage, we can see that Moore was analyzing what he meant by "sense-data" in two interrelated ways. First, he was defining the term "sense-datum" intentionally:

(1) "A sense-datum" $\xrightarrow{\text{df.}}$ "an entity of which we are often directly conscious."

We need to keep in mind, of course, that the definiens of (A) was only a sufficient condition for something's being a sense-datum. This is clear if we recall what Moore said in "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception" and if we note that in the above passage he said that sense-data are entities of which we are <u>often</u> directly conscious. It is an open question whether the definiens of (A) was also a necessary condition for an object's being a sense-datum. To maintain that it was an open question was Moore's way of throwing into doubt the idealistic thesis that to say that an object exists is the same as to say that it is perceived.[2]

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[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 57.

[2] Moore later said, "I think I have always both used, and intended to use, 'sense-datum' in such a way that the mere fact that an object is directly apprehended is a sufficient condition for saying that it is a sense-datum." See "Reply to My Critics," p. 639.

Second, Moore extensionally defined what a "sense-datum" is by pointing to the different entities of which we are directly conscious. Or, if it is too strong to say that he was "extensionally defining" the term "sense-datum," he was at any rate listing the kinds of things which are entities of the required sort. It was quite obvious to Moore that we all do have dream images and pains, obvious to him that we are conscious of sense-data. And thus to deny the existence of sense-data was to deny the existence of things which are ordinary and commonplace.

After defining the term "sense-data", Moore went on to consider whether sense-data are mental or not. He said there are at least four ways in which sense-data could be mental, or four views about what it means for sense-data to be mental. First, some philosophers, like Hume, have taken sense-data to be mental because they mistook them for acts of consciousness, Moore believed. But of course sense data are not acts of consciousness and thus could not be mental in this sense. Second, some philosophers say that sense-data are mental because they are "qualities" or "internal differentia" of acts of consciousness, and internal differentia of conscious acts are themselves mental. Yet this too is a sense of the term "mental" which Moore thought inapplicable to sense-data. In a third sense, sense-data are thought to be mental because they are "in my mind" and related to my mind in the same way that an act of consciousness is related to my mind. An act of consciousness is related to my mind in the sense that I can immediately determine whether any mental act is mine or someone else's through the privileged access that I have to my own conscious acts. However, Moore said, while a sense-datum may be mental in this third sense, he could not persuade himself that it was; the patch of blue which I directly perceive

does not appear to be "mine" in the same way that my act of perceiving it does.

The fourth and last sense of "mental" that Moore took up was that in which it is true to say of anything that it exists only when and only so long as one is conscious of it. Do "my" sense-data exist if and only if I am conscious of them? Moore did think that images are mental in this fourth sense, and he probably should have added that pains are mental in this sense too, since he had already suggested that they might be in "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception."[1] Once again however, Moore thought it difficult to decide whether other kinds of sense-data were mental in this sense because the arguments on both sides were inconclusive. Even if we could say of these other kinds of sense-data that they existed only when and so long as they were directly perceived, Moore believed that we still could not say without risk of confusion that they were "in the mind" or mental in the third sense.

At this stage of his thinking, then, Moore did not want to say whether all sense-data were mental in any legitimate sense; he wanted to leave this question open for further consideration. His answer to this question was: sense-data may be mental in some sense, but the sense in which they are mental is not clear.[2] It is safe to say that Moore never did

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[1] Moore, "Objects of Perception," p. 91.

[2] G. Dawes Hicks, in a lengthy reply to "The Subject Matter of Psychology," suggested that there is a view about the nature of sense-data which is different from the four views that Moore mentioned and from the one view that Moore implied (that sense-data are physical in some sense). This is the view that sense-data are neither mental nor physical. Hicks argued that Moore set up a choice between the belief that sense-data are mental and the belief that they are physical when in fact there was "no ground whatever for the assumption that the universe of what Mr. Moore calls entities can be exhaustively divided into mental and physical entities." Hicks thought that we shouldn't "shrink

finally decide whether sense-data are either mental, physical, or neutral, although he certainly struggled with the "ontological" status of sense-data on several later occasions. What bothered him in later discussions of this issue was the problem of whether sense-data are parts of the surfaces of physical objects or not, for if they were identical with parts of the surfaces of physical objects, then they could hardly be mental entities. At one time he argued that sense-data may possibly be parts of the surfaces of physical objects;[1] but in his last work on perception, he argued that that view was mistaken.[2] Moore was always inclined to believe that sense-data were not identical with parts of the surfaces of physical objects, but his doubts about this issue effectively prevented him from deciding whether sense-data were mental in any sense with which he was familiar.

Thus far we have seen that in his early work on perception Moore did all of the following things: (1) he introduced the notion of sense-data, (2) he claimed that their existence could not be doubted, (3) he argued that they were what was immediately perceived when we perceived anything at all in normal perceptual situations, (4) he gave reasons for doubting that some kinds of sense-data were mental and reasons for believing that other kinds of sense-data were mental, and (5) he

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from admitting" that we have in sense-data "a class of entities that belongs neither to the one nor the other of these heads." See "Mr. G. E. Moore on 'The Subject Matter of Psychology'," PAS, n.s., X (1909-10). Hicks also made this view out in "Appearance and Real Existence," PAS, n.s., XIV (1913-14).

[1] G. E. Moore, "Some Judgments of Perception," in Philosophical Studies, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1922), p. 251; first published in PAS, n.s., XIX (1918-19).

[2] G. E. Moore, "Visual Sense-data," in British Philosophy in the Mid-Century, ed. by C. A. Mace (2nd ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1966), p. 210.

suggested that it is conceivable that sense-data continued to exist when they were not being directly perceived. These points of doctrine were underlined by the first three fundamental distinctions of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory: the distinction between the act of sensation and the object of sensation; the distinction between direct and indirect perception, the two levels of perceptual awareness; and the distinction between the two objects of perception, the sense-datum and the physical object. There were other points of doctrine still to be discussed, however, not to mention the fact that the primary three distinctions had not been developed with much precision or completeness. Thus Moore had not carefully discussed the relation between direct perception and indirect perception, and he had not spelled out the relation between sense-data and physical objects. Moreover, he had not as yet considered the nature of physical objects, nor had he decided what ontological status and ontological character sense-data were to have. These were problems that he left for his later works.

After having presented "The Subject Matter of Psychology" in the winter of 1909, we can suppose that Moore spent a good deal of time in the subsequent year thinking about perceptual issues. For in the winter of 1910-11 he gave a series of twenty lectures in London of which a good part was devoted to perceptual theory. These lectures were not published until 1953, and thus we can surmise that their more general influence was probably not very substantial. Nevertheless, beside their obvious value in the development of Moore's thinking on perception, it is clear that they had an important effect on Bertrand Russell's early views about perception as we will come to see later.[1]

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[1]Russell acknowledged this in his Preface to The Problems of Philosophy (London: Williams & Norgate, 1912).

In these lectures, later called SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, Moore discussed all of the issues about sense-data that he had already discussed, only he did so more thoroughly. Moreover, he began to develop his views about the last two of the five basic doctrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, namely, the doctrine that there is a relation between sensing and perceiving, and the doctrine that there is some relation between sense-data and material objects. Perhaps the most important value these lectures had lay in the fact that Moore arrived at the outlines of a perceptual theory. The theory presented in these lectures was a variant of the Representative theory of perception; it was an amended version of the perceptual theory found in Locke's AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. The main differences between Locke's theory and Moore's amended version of Locke's theory concerned the nature of the sensory given. Moore's version of the Representative theory was based on a sense-datum theory which was different from Locke's theory about sensory ideas.

Moore's interest in perceptual issues in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY was ultimately tied to his interest in knowledge, for he believed that some of our knowledge arises through the medium of "sense-perception." An account of sense-perception was a necessary preliminary, he thought, to an account of perceptual knowledge. In giving the former account, Moore purposely limited his discussion to the sense of sight, for he believed that "all the general principles which I point out with regard to the sense of seeing will, I think, be easily transferable, mutatis mutandis, to all the other senses by which we can be said to perceive objects."[1] This limitation was unfortunate, however,

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[1] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 29.

because Moore never went on to state clearly what the "general principles" are which apply to vision. Even if we can assume that these "principles" could be transferred, mutatis mutandis, it would be difficult to begin to do so unless we knew which are the parts of Moore's theory of sense-data which he counted as "principles."[1] Moreoever, the expression "mutatismutandis" means that certain changes in the account would need to have been made when transferring principles to the other senses, yet this was an important problem which Moore left undiscussed. We would need to know what changes would be required in our principles if we were to understand what Moore's account of hearing or touch was. Moore was not, I think, guilty of the criticism that is sometimes made, that "it is very rash to assume that what holds for seeing can be transferred without supplement, omission, or modification to hearing or to touch."[2] But Moore was guilty of the sin of omission--of omitting a full discussion of what can be transferred, what cannot be transferred, and what can only be transferred in a transformed state.

In unfolding his views about visual perception, Moore took an example of a normal case of seeing something and developed his theoretical points in terms of it. He asked us to imagine that he was in a classroom talking to some students, and that he was holding up an envelope in his hand while asking his students to look at the envelope. The question Moore

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[1]Moore might have had in mind something like the following: It is a principle that sense-data are not parts of material objects, but this is not clear.

[2]This is a statement that C. D. Broad made in "Some Elementary Reflections on Sense-Perception," Philosophy, XXVII (January, 1952), 3. Broad was not directly accusing Moore of this "mistake," but he talked about "many philosophers," all unnamed, who committed it. P. Marhenke argues that Moore was not guilty of this mistake in "Moore's Analysis of Sense-Perception," in The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 257.

[3]Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 30.

asked about this normal situation was, Exactly what is it that happens when the students see the envelope in my hand? What is this "occurrence which we call the seeing of it?"[1]

Now, this is not, Moore said, a question about the bodily processes that occur in the eye, the optic nerves, and the brain; it is not a physiological question that he is asking. Rather, it is a question about the nature of the "mental occurrence" called "seeing." Moore was asking for what is sometimes called a "phenomenological analysis of seeing." That is, he was asking us to "directly observe" what is happening in our own minds when we see the envelope; he was asking us to introspect directly our own mental processes, to "see" what is going on. The question he wanted to answer was a question about the "operation" of our mind; something is "going on" in there, he implied, and the problem is to determine what it is. Consistent with what he said in his earlier work, Moore decided that "part" of what happens is that we see "a patch of a particular whitish color, having a certain size, and a certain shape, a shape with rather sharp angles or corners and bounded by fairly straight lines."[2] And it is these things, of course, the colored patches of certain sizes and shapes, that Moore called "sense-data," "things given or presented by the senses."[3]

In analyzing what goes on, Moore began by making the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, the distinction between sensing colored patches and the colored patches themselves. But he now made it clear that there were two good reasons why he wanted to make this basic distinction. The first reason was already familiar: we need to make this distinction because it is conceivable that the patch of color we see continues to exist after we cease seeing it, while it is

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

impossible that our seeing of the colored patch could do so. Moore was not dogmatically asserting that sense-data do continue to exist when they are not being sensed. This is a problem that he took up later when considering the "accepted view" about sense-data. But he believed that it was possible that they may. The second reason why this basic distinction must be made was novel for Moore. He said it is conceivable that the patch of whitish color may be a part of the surface of the material object (i.e., the envelope), while it is impossible that my seeing of a patch of whitish color could be a part of that surface.[1] Both of these reasons show that the status of the nature of sense-data was uncertain to Moore since he believed that they may be a part of the surface of a material object. But the uncertain nature of sense-data did not rule out the basic distinction, Moore thought, since there are some things we know for certain about the act of seeing. Nevertheless, it would be more difficult to make this basic distinction if it turned out that sense-data did not continue to exist when not being seen and were not parts of the surfaces of physical objects. So the uncertainty about the nature of sense-data extended to the basic distinction.

After making this distinction, Moore went on to make the first corollary distinction of the sense-datum theory. In one sense of the word "see," Moore said, we all see the same envelope. But in another sense of the word "see," what each of us really sees is a different set of sense-data, all more or less similar to each other. And if this is true, then there are grounds for making the corollary distinction between what we are seeing in the one sense and what we are seeing in

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[1] Ibid., p. 31.

the other sense. It is a fact that the colors, shapes, and sizes of the patches which each of us sees are very similar, yet they are not exactly the same. We all are standing in different positions when we look at the envelope. And if so, then Moore believed that the envelope that we all see is "not identical with the sense-data which we saw."[1] All of the sets of sense-data which are sensed by the students watching Moore, are slightly different qualitatively, and thus not all of them can be identical with the set which is "really" present since it is impossible that two slightly different colors, or two slightly different shapes or sizes should occupy the same place at the same time. Furthermore, when we say that we see the envelope, we do not obviously mean that we see all of the envelope, but we mean that we really see only a part of it. For no one of us really sees the inside of the envelope, supposing it is opaque.

Thus there were at least two different "meanings" of the term "see" at work for Moore. In the first meaning, we see material objects like envelopes and tomatoes. In the second meaning, we see sense-data like patches of whitish color having certain sizes and shapes. We indirectly apprehend material objects, but directly apprehend sense-data, Moore would have said.[2] As he explicitly put it,

> The seeing of a material object--or the perceiving one by any other sense--would therefore...be something quite different from the seeing of sense-data. The seeing of sense-data consists in directly apprehending them. But the seeing of a material object does not consist in directly apprehending

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[1] Ibid., p. 33.

[2] Later on Moore made a distinction between three different senses of "seeing" something. He added that seeing only part of a physical object was also a proper sense of seeing that object. See "The Status of Sense-data," p. 188.

> it. It consists, partly, in directly apprehending certain sense-data, but partly also in knowing, besides and at the time, that there exists something other than those sense-data.[1]

Moore's analysis of what it means to say that a person is seeing the envelope in his hand then led to the first three distinctions of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. Let me explain the first corollary distinction between direct and indirect apprehension.

Direct apprehension, Moore thought, is the immediate confrontation of sensing subject and sense-datum, whether that sensing be visual, auditory, tactual, kinaesthetic, or some combination of these. It is the unmediated relation between the mental act of sensing and the sense-data, in which the sense-data are given or are present to the senses. Furthermore, Moore thought that all of these different forms of direct apprehension--seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, etc.--were "ways of knowing things."[2] In all cases of sensing a sense-datum, the act of consciousness is "exactly the same in quality."[3] Seeing a color differs from hearing a sound only by the fact that different kinds of sense-data are apprehended in each case and the fact that different sense-organs are used to sense these objects. These two kinds of acts do not differ insofar as they consist of acts of direct apprehension. "Direct apprehension" was then a general term which referred to a cognitive relation in which we know the "things" which we sense. In fact, activities like seeing, hearing, and smelling were thought to be absolutely similar to activities like remembering, dreaming, imagining, thinking, and observing in that they all signified cognitive relations of different

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[1] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 51.
[2] Ibid., p. 77. [3] Ibid., p. 47.

sorts between a knower or cognizer and something which is known.[1] The differences between different kinds of sensing-acts were played down by Moore, and he implied that these differences were obvious.

What is puzzling about Moore's claim that in directly apprehending sense-data we are knowing something, is that he denied that direct apprehension is a form of what he called "immediate knowledge." In view of what Moore said about "immediate knowledge," this may not seem surprising since, among other things, he said that immediate knowledge is a relation that one can only have to propositions.[2] And when we directly apprehend sense-data we are not of course apprehending propositions. Yet this forced Moore to say things like the following: "At this moment, I directly apprehend the whitish color of this paper, but I do not immediately know this whitish color."[3] Even though in some sense of "know" it is true to say that I know this whitish color. One is inclined to wonder in what way it was illuminating to say that we know this whitish color, that we directly apprehend it, yet do not immediately know it. The idea of direct apprehension as a way of knowing sense-data seems, in other words, hard to square with the impossibility of immediately knowing sense-data. The fact that in directly apprehending sense-data we are knowing something was later rejected by Moore. He later decided that merely directly apprehending a sense-datum was not in any "common" sense of the word "know," to know that sense-datum.[4]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 77-8. [2] Ibid., p. 123. [3] Ibid.

[4] For example, in a 1953 footnote to Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 77. It could have been Bertrand Russell who influenced Moore to change his mind about sensing as a form of knowing, for Russell changed his own mind in The Analysis of Mind (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1921). And later, Prichard argued that sensing was not a form of knowing. "The Sense-datum Fallacy," in Knowledge and Perception (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 202.

There is also a second sense of "see" in which we say that we see "material objects" like envelopes and tomatoes rather than colored patches. This second sense of "see" also presents some difficulties for one who would clearly understand all of what Moore meant by it, for, in the first place, it is not exactly clear that seeing a material object in this sense is always the same as "indirectly apprehending" it, and, second, if seeing a material object is not always indirectly apprehending it, then what Moore meant by seeing in this sense is not theoretically fixed.

Moore believed that indirect apprehension is the sort of relation that I have "both to propositions and to anything else whatever."[1] I indirectly apprehend a thing when the relation I have to it is one in which I directly apprehend a proposition about it, but do not directly apprehend it itself.[2] To indirectly apprehend a thing, then, did not involve an act of directly apprehending it; it always involved directly apprehending some proposition about it. Thus we can indirectly apprehend sense-data, but only in the sense that we directly apprehend some proposition about them. I might, for example, remember seeing a red patch two minutes ago. I could then be said to be indirectly apprehending that red patch, for I am directly apprehending some proposition about what I once directly saw.[3] The question is, Did Moore also believe that material objects like envelopes are indirectly apprehended? And are material objects ever directly apprehended? The answer to the first question is "yes" and to the second "no."

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[1] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 74.
[2] Ibid., pp. 69 and 74. [3] Ibid., p. 74.

Moore limited direct apprehension to sense-data and to propositions.[1] Thus, if there is any kind of relation that a person had to material objects, it could not be the relation of direct apprehension. Yet Moore toyed with the possibility that there is a sense of "seeing" an envelope which did not mean indirectly apprehending that envelope.[2] To understand what this sense is and to see that Moore did believe that we indirectly apprehend material objects, I will mention briefly Moore's classification of the four kinds of cognitive relation that he thought one could have to something.

First, he said there is the "relation which holds between a person and an object, even at moments when the person is not apprehending the object either directly or indirectly." An example of this would be knowing the multiplication tables when one is not thinking about them. Second, there is the relation of direct apprehension itself. Third, there is the relation of indirect apprehension itself. And last, there is the relation of direct apprehension between a person and a proposition called by Moore "knowledge proper."[3] Now, Moore said that the relation we have to material objects is certainly not direct apprehension, nor does it refer to either the first relation nor to the last,[4] although he certainly did not want to rule out our having "knowledge proper" about material objects. Hence this leaves only the third relation, the relation of indirect apprehension, to be the one in question. The question is, Did Moore only mean this relation?

This question would not be problematical if it weren't for the fact that Moore entertained the possibility that when a person X sees an envelope and says of himself that he saw the envelope, what he means

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[1] See, e.g., Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 83. [3] Ibid., p. 81. [4] Ibid., p. 83.

is that at the time that he saw the envelope he was only directly apprehending certain sense-data.[1] Moore thought that this is a legitimate sense of "seeing an envelope." Yet he did not think that it is the only sense, nor even the most important sense. If it had been, then we could never have had any knowledge of the existence of a material object in the sense of knowledge proper, Moore said.[2] To have knowledge proper, we must at least be indirectly apprehending the envelope. But if we were "seeing" the envelope in the present sense, then all we would ever see would be certain sense-data and we would never know that a material object, the envelope, also existed.

Thus while it is clear that Moore entertained the possibility that seeing a material object is not always indirectly apprehending it, in fact thought that there is a legitimate sense in which this is possible, the dominant and most important meaning of "seeing an envelope" for Moore was "indirectly apprehending it."

Perceiving material objects, then, involved two things. If the sense in which we see a material object is that we indirectly apprehend that that object exists, then in perceiving a material object we are directly apprehending a proposition about the object itself. Therefore, the first thing involved in perceiving an envelope is that we "see" certain sense-data--a whitish, rectangular shape against a certain background of other sense-data having other colors and shapes. But, second, we also have "an obscure belief in the existence of something else, beside these sense-data."[3] And having this obscure belief is to indirectly apprehend that that material object exists. "Seeing, therefore, and feeling, and observing, as applied to material objects, would never mean merely the

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 100. [3] Ibid., p. 84.

direct apprehension of sense-data, which were in fact connected with those objects; it would always also include the indirect apprehension of those objects with which the sense-data are connected."[1] Of course it is possible that in some cases when we sense sense-data, we are not also aware of their connection to a material object. But in most cases, this "obscure belief" is present, too.

The reason why Moore said that this is an "obscure belief" and does not constitute knowledge that a material object exists is that "even if, when we directly apprehend a sense-datum, we do also indirectly apprehend something else; it by no means follows that we do ever know of the existence of material objects by means of our senses."[2] Even though indirect apprehension is a "cognitive" relation, its cognitive strength is less than "knowlege proper," because indirectly apprehending an object doesn't enable us to say that we know that it does in fact exist. Indirect apprehension cannot guarantee that the object indirectly apprehended does exist. For one thing, Moore said, indirect apprehension is only a way of thinking that something exists, and thinking that something exists does not of course mean that the thing does exist. Indirect apprehension is a kind of vague state of belief, and does not amount to knowledge. This does not mean, however, that we do not know that material objects exist. In fact, as we shall see later, Moore believed that we have immediate knowledge of their existence.

By making this distinction between directly apprehending sense-data and indirectly apprehending material objects, Moore arrived at a position about perception which we might call "perceptual dualism." Even though Moore professed to be adhering as closely as possible to

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[1] Ibid., p. 85. [2] Ibid.

the "common-sense" view of our perception of the external world, and indeed often appealed to the self-evidence of common-sense in order to evaluate philosophical positions, his analysis of a normal perceptual situation resulted in a position which was extremely unlike what many philosophers have called the "naive" or "ordinary position" to take about perception. Whatever that naive position may be in detail, it can at least be admitted that ordinarily we would not claim to directly apprehend sense-data at all. Moreover, we would probably not distinguish between these two senses of "see." Moore's belief that in seeing a material object part of what is "going on" is that we are having an "obscure belief" in its existence indicates the extent to which he deviated from common sense. Of course people do not go around saying to themselves, "I believe that my wife exists," when they sense wifely sense-data. Moore was not implying that they did. Nevertheless, he was saying that in seeing my wife, I am not immediately aware of my wife, but only of certain wifely sense-data. And if pushed, I could not claim that I "knew" that she existed, in her presence, but could only say that I believe that she existed. But it is easy to see that we would not ordinarily agree to this. We would probably say that we are immediately aware of our wife, not of wifely sense-data, and to suggest that we only <u>believe</u> she existed would be a mistaken representation of what we would ordinarily think.

It is, I think also clear, that if this kind of perceptual dualism is allowed to stand, certain other problems arise which Moore never satisfactorily resolved, and, given the nature of Moore's thinking about perception, I think one can easily agree that Moore had to resolve these problems. First, there is the problem of giving an analysis of the

relation between direct apprehension as a mental activity, as something going on in the mind, and indirect apprehension as a mental activity. And, second, there is the correlative problem of giving an analysis of the relation between sense-data and material objects.[1] Moore obviously believed that there is a relation between direct and indirect apprehension, and that there is a relation between sense-data and material objects; these two beliefs constitute the fourth and fifth basic doctrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. And Moore did wrestle with these two doctrines to some extent. But it was other sense-datum theorists, especially Price, who discussed these two problems most thoroughly.

We could perhaps say that Moore did attack the second of these problems in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS; he did so in an indirect way by considering certain views which had been taken, historically, about the relation of sense-data to material objects. But Moore's discussion of the relation between direct and indirect apprehension was never carried any further in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS than what I have already indicated. Indeed at one point Moore even said that he had said enough about these two mental acts.[2] And aside from implying that when we see an object, direct apprehension of sense-data accompanies indirect apprehension of the material object, nothing more was said about this relation.

If we grant that it is legitimate to ask questions about the operations of our minds, as Moore did, then we might expect Moore to have

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[1] Suggested by R. J. Hirst in his introduction of Perception and the External World, ed. by R. J. Hirst (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 14.

[2] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 78.

said a great deal more than he did. One could reasonably have expected an analysis of the mental act of direct apprehension and an analysis of the mental act of indirect apprehension, which would have revealed both how they were related to each other as mental acts and how they differed from each other. Neither Moore nor Russell gave what would amount to such a "phenomenological" analysis of seeing. Price did produce such an analysis, but his analysis was not published until 1932. It was not a common feature of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory to contain such an analysis, even though Moore implied that such an analysis could be given by asking what I have called "the phenomenological question" about seeing, namely, What is going on when we see something?

While Moore did not say much about the relation of sensing to perceiving, he did make some remarks about the relation of sense-data to material objects. His remarks were mainly negative ones in the sense that he took up three different views about this relation (a solipsistic version of the "accepted view," the phenomenalistic view, and the causal view) and showed what was wrong with all three. But it is apparent that he also wanted to advocate a certain view about this relation, a view which we shall later call an "amended version of Locke's view." In order to see what the outlines of that view were, we will need eventually to look at some of Moore's later work on perception. In order to see what he said about it in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS, we need to return to Moore's discussion of what we really see when we say that we see the envelope in his hand. And we need to remember that he decided that we only really see a part of the surface of what we say we see.

The question then arises whether any of those sets of sense-data which all of us see are parts of the envelope in the sense that they

occupy "a part of the volume in space occupied by the whole object."[1] Moore's answer was that it is difficult to see how all of the different sets of colored patches that all of us see could occupy the same part of the surface or volume of the envelope at the same time. And the same applies to the sizes and shapes of these patches, he thought. To make this clear, Moore introduced a distinction between "qualitative" and "numerical" identity. He said that two of us may indeed see similar colors, and similar shapes, when we look at the envelope; these color and shape sense-data may be qualitatively the same in the sense that we are both perceiving much the same color, namely, white, and much the same shape, namely, rectangular. But we cannot say that we are seeing numerically the same color and shape, Moore thought. And what Moore meant by this was that each of the sets of sense-data sensed are in some sense private to the percipient who is sensing that set, private in the sense that no other person can directly apprehend exactly the color and shape that I do. In some sense, the sense-data that I apprehend are "mine," for only I have direct access to them.

This view of Moore's needs to be contrasted with other things he said about the nature of sense-data. For example, Moore believed, as we have seen, that sense-data may, for all we know, continue to exist when we ceased to directly apprehend them. What this contrast leads to is the conclusion that Moore had a very curious position about the nature of sense-data: we know that sense-data are not mental in the sense that they are in the mind, like acts of consciousness, and we know that they are distinct from acts of consciousness. Moreover, sense-data may continue to exist when we are not sensing them. And this implies that

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[1] Ibid., p. 34.

sense-data are independent of our mental acts. Yet, on the other hand, Moore also believed that no one else can sense numerically the same sense-data that I do, and that no sense-data are parts of the surfaces of material objects. Further, sense-data are presentations to a particular mind; they are given or presented by the senses to some individual mind. Hence, sense-data are, in another way, not as entirely independent of our minds as would at first appear to be the case. But the sense in which sense-data are, then, private to a mind is extremely curious, and, as Moore and Broad might have said, "Pickwickian." If I may use a metaphor, they seem suspended in the air between mind and world.

Moore believed that there was another view about the nature of sense-data which also held that sense-data are private, but made of them mental entities. This view Moore called "the accepted view." To decide finally what Moore believed about the privacy of sense-data, it is necessary to look at this view, for eventually Moore adopted an amended version of this accepted view. The fact that Moore should have called a view about sense-data "the accepted view" shows that he did not take the sense-datum theory to be especially novel. He obviously thought that his own views had a certain historical continuity with traditional views like that of Bishop Berkeley. But the fact that he should "amend" this "accepted view," shows that he did want to develop a sense-datum theory free of traditional problems.

On what Moore called the "accepted view," three things were held to be true about sense-data. First, "absolutely no part of the sense-data which I ever apprehend, exists at all except at the moment when I am apprehending it."[1] Second, "no two of us ever apprehend exactly the same sense-data,"[2] or "any part of the same sense-data, even at the same

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[1] Ibid., p. 40. [2] Ibid., p. 41.

time."[1] Someone else may apprehend a sense-datum which is in a qualitative sense exactly the same as mine, yet no one can in a numerical sense apprehend exactly the same sense-datum or part of the same sense-datum as mine. And, third, on the accepted view, "none of the sense-data apprehended by any one person can ever be situated either in the same place with, or at any distance in any direction from, those apprehended by any other person."[2] Thus the sense-data I apprehend are not at any measurable distance from the sense-data you apprehend, in fact, have no spatial relations to your sense-data. The "sense given field of vision of each of us, at any moment, constitutes a private space of that person's own,"[3] Moore said, and there is no way in which anything in one private space may be related to anything in any other private space.

What these three views about sense-data amount to, thought Moore, is a position to the effect that sense-data exist only in the mind of the person who apprehends them, that sense-data are all private to a mind, or dependent on the mind in this "intimate sense." Now Moore himself, while allowing that it was possible that there may be absolutely conclusive arguments for the accepted view, nevertheless, thought that none of the arguments that had been given thus far were conclusive. In fact, the question whether the accepted view about sense-data is true or not was "one of the main problems of philosophy."[4] And since the accepted view maintained that sense-data are in the mind, Moore's conclusion about it was consistent with what he said in "The Subject Matter of Psychology."

In respect to the first point, Moore noted that it had sometimes been suggested by philosophers that it is self-evident that sense-data

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[1] Ibid., p. 42. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid., p. 54.

only exist as long as a person is perceiving them.[1] But Moore thought that this was simply false; it is simply false that it is self-evident that sense-data only exist when they are directly apprehended. Moreover, this view leads to certain absurdities; it would have to be held, for example, that there are no bones inside my hand because they are not directly apprehended, or that when a person sits in a railroad car, the car is not supported by wheels since these are not directly apprehended by him. In other words, a person would either need to believe a great many propositions which "contradict what he himself constantly believes and cannot help believing in ordinary life," if this view were true.[2] Or else he would need to take the position that someone, such as God, is, in fact, directly apprehending all of these things when we are not. However, Moore thought that we needed to hold to our common sense beliefs here and reject the so-called "self-evidence" of this view and the position that God apprehends sense-data which no human beings do.

Moore claimed that other philosophers argued that we must accept the view that sense-data exist only when directly apprehended because of the fact that the sets of sense-data which we all have are both qualitatively and numerically different from each other and hence because each one of these sets "only seems to occupy this sense-given space, and does not really occupy it."[3] But again, while this argument carries some weight, since Moore himself had already admitted that each one of us does apprehend a different set of sense-data in a numerical sense when looking at the same object, it was still not conclusive, he thought. In fact, we all have a very strong tendency to believe that the colors

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[1] Moore said that Berkeley held this view. See Ibid., pp. 105 and 109.

[2] Ibid., pp. 149-50. [3] Ibid., p. 45.

we see continue to exist when we stop sensing them, and Moore thought that this belief must be taken into account. At any rate, without knowing more about the accepted view, Moore thought that we could not decide whether it was true or not.

If we add a fourth thesis to the accepted view, a thesis which some philosophers accept who also accept the other three theses, then the accepted view must be rejected, Moore suggested. Suppose we add the thesis that "all knowlege consists merely in the direct apprehension of sense-data and images."[1] If we do this, then sense-data are certainly completely private to a mind, but it follows that there is no way of knowing that anything else exists except one's own private sense-data and images, Moore argued. We could never know of the existence of anything else, such as tomatoes and envelopes, and other people's sense-data, if we accepted this amended version of the accepted view. We would end in complete solipsism.

Moore did believe, however, that there are variants of the accepted view which need not accept this fourth thesis. In order to determine whether these other variants are true or not, said Moore, we need to see what they have to say about the relation of sense-data to material objects and about the existence of material objects. Moore then proposed a new accepted view.[2] This view adopted the three theses of the original accepted view, but added the thesis that the relation between our consciousness and material objects is one of indirect apprehension. When we directly apprehend certain sense-data, then we often also indirectly apprehend something else besides which we believe, or take to be a material object, although the sense-data in question are not parts of that

[1] Ibid., p. 48. [2] Ibid., p. 82.

material object. Thus this version of the accepted view maintained that "no part of the sense-data or images which you ever directly apprehend is a part of a material object; and no part of the space which you ever directly apprehend is a part of the space occupied by any material object,"[1] Moore said.

I think that this version of the accepted view is one which Moore was inclined to adopt, but it was never unequivocally adopted by Moore in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, and the reason is that he didn't know whether to accept the first thesis of the accepted view or not. Let me delay discussing Moore's positive position on the accepted view until I discuss two variants of this amended accepted view which Moore rejected, for this discussion will throw some light on Moore's positive view.

The two variants of this amended version of the accepted view which Moore rejected can be called the "phenomenalistic variant" and the "causal variant." On the phenomenalistic variant, it was maintained that indirect apprehension of material objects did not amount to knowledge that such objects exist. This variant made it doubtful whether I ever knew, in the sense of knowledge proper, that anything existed except directly apprehended sense-data, even if I indirectly apprehended something else which I believed to be a material object. On the causal variant, it was asserted that even if we do have knowledge of the existence of something else by indirect apprehension, it doesn't follow that we also know or could know that this something else is a material object.[2] Thus both variants denied that we could ever know of the existence of any material object, even if we had an obscure belief that such an object

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., pp. 86-7.

existed.[1] They both maintained that every man "can know of the existence of things which he himself is directly apprehending at the moment, or has directly apprehended in the past and now remembers. But they hold that the only existing things which any man ever does directly apprehend are (1) his own acts of consciousness and (2) his own private sense-data and images."[2] Thus, the phenomenalistic variant maintained that we can accept the existence of the past and future contents of our minds and the contents of other people's minds (i.e., acts of consciousness and sense-data).[3] For example, when I see the envelope in Moore's hand, what I see consists solely of certain visual sense-data which I am now directly apprehending, and these sense-data are signs of the existence of other sense-data which I would see if certain other conditions were realized. But there is nothing else called "the envelope" which I can know to exist in addition to the visual sense-data which I am now directly apprehending. The envelope simply is that collection of sense-data which I am seeing.

The causal variant maintained that aside from the past, present, and future contents of minds, we could also know of the existence of something else which was the cause of the existence of the sense-data which I and other people directly apprehend.[4] I could not, strictly speaking, know of the present existence of this something else, Moore said, but at least I could know that this cause existed a moment ago and was not directly apprehended by me.[5] But "I cannot possibly know whether this something else, which is the cause of a sense-data, is or is not in any respect like anything which anybody has ever directly apprehended."[6]

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[1] Ibid., p. 112. [2] Ibid., p. 110. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid., p. 112.
[5] Ibid., p. 115. [6] Ibid., p. 113.

For example, I could not know whether it had a shape, whether it existed in space, or whether it was similar in any respect to anything which I had ever directly apprehended, namely, my own sense-data and my own acts of consciousness. I could not know, in particular, whether it was a "material object" or not.

Moore argued that both of these variants of the amended version of the accepted view were false and must be rejected, since he could deduce an absurdity from both of them. Since it follows from the acceptance of each of them that I can never know that any material object such as this envelope in Moore's hand exists, these two variants must be false. For I do know that this envelope exists, Moore said. Hence I must reject any view which says that I do not.

Moore was arguing that these two variants of the amended accepted view go against what we commonly believe or know about the existence of material objects, like envelopes. What we commonly believe, Moore argued,

> ...is that these sense-data which we now directly apprehend are signs of the existence of something which exists now, or at least did exist a moment ago...And we believe--we all cannot help believing, even though we may hold philosophical views to the contrary--that this something which exists now or existed a moment ago, is not merely a something which may or may not have shape or be situated in space --something with regard to which we cannot possibly tell whether it has a shape or not. We believe quite definitely that the sense-data which we now see are signs of the present or immediately past existence of something which has a ...shape...and which certainly has an inside.[1]

We do not commonly believe that a material object consists solely of certain sense-data which we directly apprehend, says Moore. We believe, rather, that "even if sense-data of all these kinds really are now in the same place where the (envelope) is--and I think there are good reasons for doubting whether they are--I certainly believe that there is in that

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[1] Ibid., pp. 115-16.

place something else besides. This something else, even if it be not the whole material object, is certainly a part of it."[1] And we can have what Moore called "immediate knowledge" not only of the fact that we know that this something else exists, but also immediate knowledge of the fact that this something else, this envelope in Moore's hand, exists.[2]

Here again, we run into the difficulty referred to before about "immediate knowledge," only now the problem is not about direct apprehension as a form of knowledge but about indirect apprehension as a form of knowledge. It has been clear that Moore believed that indirect apprehension is not a way of knowing for certain that a material object exists, since it only amounts to an obscure belief that such an object exists. Yet here Moore was asserting that we do "immediately know" that a material object exists. Of course, we should have expected him to say this since he was defending a "common sense" theory about seeing, and normally we would say that in seeing an envelope we are certain that it exists. Yet in view of what Moore said about indirect apprehension and the fact that it can only give us an obscure belief in the existence of a material object, what he meant by "immediate knowledge" of the existence of a material object was not clear. But further, Moore compounded the problem by qualifying his claim that we do know of the existence of material objects. He said that "even if you really do not know of the existence of material objects, at least, you do not know that you do not know it."[3] His position seemed to be: we have no knowledge of our immediate knowledge of whether a material object exists or not, though we have immediate knowledge of whether it exists or not!

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[1] Ibid., p. 119. [2] Ibid., p. 125. [3] Ibid., p. 127.

But this qualification is belied by certain claims he made about the truth of our common sense beliefs. It is clear that he rejected the phenomenalistic and the causal variants of the amended, accepted view because they denied the existence of material objects and because we commonly believe and know that such objects exist. But there is more to his rejection than this; Moore also said that there is a common sense theory about what a material object is which shows that these objects do exist. On this common sense theory, material objects have three properties. First, a material object is "situated" in space, and this entails that material objects have shapes, namely, the shapes of the parts of space which they occupy.[1] Material objects also have two "negative properties," Moore said. First, "no sense-datum, or part of a sense-datum, or collection of sense-data, can possibly be a material object,"[2] or be on the surface of any material object.[3] Second, "no mind, and no act of consciousness can be a material object."[4]

Now Moore did not mean to deny that there are other properties which material objects have in common with each other. In fact, as we have already emphasized, "all material objects have the important property that none of them are ever directly apprehended by us."[5] And "this is a property which can be expressed...by saying that we can never know what a material object is in itself, but can only know what properties it has, or how it is related to other things."[6] Moreover, Moore said, "material objects all, I think, have also the important property, that they are a sort of thing which might exist even at times at which nobody

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[1] Ibid., p. 130. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 326-27. [4] Ibid., p. 131.
[5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.

was conscious of them."[1] Yet the one positive property and two negative properties mentioned, Moore believed, are all that is needed in order to determine whether objects exist which have these properties. And Moore concluded that we do know of the existence of objects with these three properties; in fact, this is the view of "common sense."[2]

The common sense theory is relatively certain about a number of points, Moore thought. Commonly, when someone holds up an envelope in his hand and we look at it, we believe (1) that this envelope exists; (2) that it exists in public rather than private space; (3) that it is not what we immediately apprehend although we do indirectly apprehend it; (4) that it consists of more than just what we immediately apprehend, (although Moore never said much about what this "more" is); (5) that what we directly apprehend (a sense-datum) is not part of the surface of it; (6) that it is a different sort of thing than an act of our mind or than a mind; and (7) that it probably exists when no one is looking at it or touching it. This means that the phenomenalistic and the causal variants of the amended accepted view must be mistaken, for they both deny that we can know that this material object is a material object.

According to what is called the "naive" position about perception, however, this common sense theory is mistaken on almost all of these points. If we are trying to represent what the typical person would believe if he saw Moore hold this envelope up, I think we could say that (a) it would not even occur to him to believe that the envelope exists, though if questioned he would certainly state that he did believe this, (b) it would not occur to him to believe that the envelope exists in public space as opposed to private space, though again he might state that

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 139.

he would believe this if Moore's distinction were made known to him, and (c) he would probably reject beliefs (3), (4), and (5). So we would do well to distinguish between what Moore called the "common sense theory" and what would ordinarily be called the "naive" view about perception, for they do not correspond at all.

If we are looking for further discussion about the relation of sense-data to material objects in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, we shall be disappointed, for Moore never did go on to discuss those properties of material objects which could aid us in understanding this relation. It is clear from his remarks about the "common sense" theory that we can distinguish between the properties that sense-data have and the properties that material objects have.[1] It is also clear from what Moore said elsewhere that in some way material objects "resemble" sense-data insofar as they have shapes and are situated in space.[2] However, what started out to be a promising discussion about the properties of material objects and their relation to sense-data turned into a discussion of other subjects not directly related by Moore to this earlier discussion of perception. Hence we are left with only a few hints about what his view was. I would argue then that the theory of perception that is found in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY was never sufficiently articulated to the point where we would fully understand Moore's views on such problems as the relation of sense-data to material objects, or the problem of what a material object is. We have seen that there are certain views which Moore specifically discarded as false, such as solipsism, a variant of phenomenalism, and a variant of the causal view. Moreover, he did discuss a "common sense" view about what a material object is and implied that we would need to

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[1] Ibid., p. 327. e.g. [2] Ibid., p. 105.

accept a perceptual theory which incorporated this common sense view. Yet, for all that, there were only the outlines of a perceptual theory present here, and we will need to look at some of Moore's later writings to understand more completely what his common sense theory amounted to.

Another disappointment in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY is Moore's failure to decide whether sense-data continue to exist when not directly apprehended. He did tend to accept the same amended version of the accepted view which the phenomenalistic and causal variants did. Yet he did not embrace this view completely since it made sense-data mental in the sense that they are "in the mind"; and this was a position that he never unequivocally accepted as true. Early in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY Moore thought that there were two possible views about sense-data that were consistent with "common sense": (1) the view that some sense-data are parts of the surfaces of material object, are situated in space and continue to exist when not apprehended; and (2) the view that no sense-data are in space and that all sense-data exist only as long as they appear or are given to someone.[1] He later went on to say that sense-data are not parts of the surfaces of objects,[2] and from this we would expect him to have concluded that they were not in public space and that they existed only so long as they were directly apprehended. Moore did claim that sense-data existed in private space, but he never said that they only existed when they were directly apprehended. Thus Moore left us in doubt about the nature of sense-data in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY: we knew that they existed in private space, that they were not parts of the surfaces of material objects, that they were not in the mind like acts of consciousness were, but we did not know whether they

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[1] Ibid., p. 20. [2] Ibid., pp. 33-8 & 85, e.g.

existed only when they were directly apprehended. Of course Moore did not want to maintain that sense-data existed only when directly apprehended, because this would have made his theory similar to Berkeleian Idealism. However, Moore was not clear about this point, very probably because he did not know what to think. If Moore's theory about the nature of sense-data was not clear, then his corollary remarks about direct and indirect apprehension, and his remarks about the relation of sense-data to physical objects rested on rather weak foundations.

For this reason, it seems perfectly appropriate that a symposium was given in July, 1914, whose subject was the status of sense-data, for this is just what Moore needed to straighten out.[1] Moore's discussion of the problem of the status of sense-data in this symposium was divided into two parts: a consideration of how sense-data are related to our minds and a consideration of how sense-data are related to physical objects. His discussion contained some new thinking on both relations.

As far as his discussion of the first relation goes, it can be said that Moore raised certain crucial doubts about the concept of direct apprehension even while persisting in the belief that this concept was viable. Thus he confessed that what he meant by "direct apprehension" was dependent upon an understanding of the more general relation which holds between or unites all of one's acts of direct apprehension. Until we could understand what this "I" or "me" is which distinguishes my acts of direct apprehension from yours, Moore doubted that we could understand what direct apprehension is.[2] Ultimately our view of what the relation

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[1] Russell too was accused of being unclear about this in his The Problems of Philosophy. See G. Dawes Hicks, "The Nature of Sense-data," Mind, n.s., XXI (July, 1912).

[2] Moore, "The Status of Sense-data," pp. 174-75.

of sense-data to our minds is depended upon our theory of the nature of the self, Moore was suggesting. Thus it would seem that our certainty that we understand and can utilize the concept of direct apprehension would be less than ideal. Moore did not think that we needed to discontinue using terminology like, "I directly apprehend A."[1] But certainly we can see that the usefulness of such expressions is lessened by our lack of a general theory which would enable us to comprehend the concepts behind them. Furthermore, Moore confessed that our understanding of the concept of direct apprehension was hindered by the problem of knowing whether direct apprehension is the same thing as attention. Moore believed that directly apprehending something may be a species of attending to that thing, but he admitted that he was not clear about this either.[2] In fact, the only fact which Moore professed to be certain of was the fact that,when I directly apprehend a sense-datum, I was not thereby implying that the sense-datum was in my mind or was mine in the sense, say, that some mental act is mine.

Moore also expressed puzzlement and uncertainty about the relation of sense-data to material objects in "The Status of Sense-data." Although the view that Moore did take about this relation was in most respects exactly the same as the amended version of the accepted view that he was working toward in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, Moore's full position on this relation was again not clear. What was novel in "The Status of Sense-data" was his insistence that we must adopt a Lockeian view about this relation.[3] But Moore did not say a great deal in explanation of what this view is, so again our expectations are shattered.

Another novel view which Moore adopted in this symposium was the

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[1] Ibid., p. 175. [2] Ibid., p. 176. [3] Ibid., p. 195.

view that our knowledge of material objects is based on the direct apprehension of sense-data and "the perception of relations between directly apprehended sensibles."[1] The novelty of this view consisted in saying that we perceive relations between sense-data. Unfortunately, Moore did not make anything of this view. He never spelled out in detail what kinds of relation there were between directly apprehended sense-data. If one considers H. H. Price's discussion of the relations sense-data have to one another as a model of such a discussion, then it is easy to see how little Moore really did say about this matter, not only here, but in all of his published writings on perception.[2]

To determine what position we should take on the relation of sense-data to material objects, Moore considered four different views about this relation in "The Status of Sense-data." One view is already familiar to us as the phenomenalistic variant of the accepted view in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. G. F. Stout, in his contribution to the symposium, took Moore to be discussing Mill's theory of matter as the permanent possibility of sensation.[3] From the description of this view which Moore gave, it is plain that this was a position that Berkeley also advocated at several places in his PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. Moore again found serious objections to this view, objections serious enough to warrant its rejection.

The other kind of theory that can be taken is what Moore called the

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[1] Ibid., p. 188.

[2] In Chapter VIII of Perception, Price invented the notion of a family of sense-data, and talked about family relations between sense-data.

[3] G. F. Stout, "The Status of Sense-data," PAS, n. s., XIV (1913-14), p. 382.

"source theory." On the source theory, our knowledge of material objects amounts to descriptive knowledge of its properties. Moreover, we know by description that the physical object has "some particular kind of causal relation" to the sense-data which I am directly apprehending, and this kind of relation in which the physical object is the "source" of my sense-data, rather than the "cause." Moore did not call this the "cause" of my sense-data, because he thought this too simple-minded. He believed that there were many events which took place "between" the material object and my sense-data which were also causes of my experience, such as certain brain events. Thus Moore wanted to use the term "source" instead of "cause," although it is clear that the "source theory" is a "causal theory." Of course, different views can be and have been taken about the nature of this source, Moore said, and he believed that one of these views must be chosen as the correct one. Sometimes the source has been taken to be spiritual in nature, as Berkeley thought. Sometimes the source has been taken to be something whose nature is unknown to us, as Locke thought. Both of these views are unnatural, Moore thought, since this source should exist and have properties "in a simple and natural sense."[1] Moreoever, neither Berkeley's view nor Locke's view about the nature of this source is common-sensical, Moore believed. A third view could be taken, which would make of this source a collection of sense-data. But this version of phenomenalism was Pickwickian also, Moore said.

As far as Moore was concerned, the only viable view that remained was what he called "Locke's view." Not surprisingly, Locke's view turned out to be very similar, if not identical, to the view that Moore was

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[1]Moore, "The Status of Sense-data," p. 193.

tending toward in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. On Moore's analysis of Locke's view, the following things were true about perception and perceptual objects: (1) physical objects exist independently of my perception of them; (2) physical objects have properties in a "natural sense" (whatever that may mean); (3) physical objects are not composed of sense-data which would be apprehended under certain conditions that do not hold now; (4) sense-data are not situated in the same place as physical objects nor are they parts of those objects; they do not exist in physical space at all; (5) physical objects "resemble" sense-data so far as their primary qualities go; (6) but "there is no reason to suppose that any parts of the (physical objects) have any of the 'secondary qualities'--color, etc.--which any of these sensibles have";[1] (7) unsensed sense-data exist; (8) sense-data do not exist in the mind "except in the sense that some are directly apprehended by some minds."[2]

With the exception of points (5), (6), and (7), these are all points Moore clearly made and adopted in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. Moreover, while points (5) and (6) were not made in that form, Moore did claim that physical objects resembled sense-data. The result is that these two points may be considered to be further elaborations of what he meant before. Point (7) is also one that Moore hinted at in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and in his earlier work, for he always left it an open question whether sense-data could exist when unperceived. It is true that he never did say that unsensed sensibilia existed, but he was open to this all along and had never asserted that they did not exist.

What is novel then in the second half of Moore's discussion in this symposium, is nothing more than an identification of his view with Locke's

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[1] Ibid., p. 195. [2] Ibid., p. 196.

and the admission that sensibilia exist. But Moore did not wholeheartedly agree with all of these points, even if he did tentatively accept them as true. There were certain problems with Locke's view which, he was aware, needed to be resolved. These problems were ones which have been trivialized in the history of philosophy, such as the problem of how we can know that sense-data have a source at all and the problem of how we can know that, if this source exists, it is circular, solid, etc.[1] Moore was aware of these problems, and he believed that they could be answered. Thus, he said that we could "immediately" know that sense-data have a source and we could "immediately" know that this source had certain properties. However, Moore did not go on to show how he knew these things to be true.

In 1925 Moore gave further indications that he held a Lockeian view about the relation of sense-data to material objects. In "A Defence of Common Sense" Moore let it be known that his view could be called a "theory of representative perception." Moore said,

> I hold it to be quite certain that I do not directly perceive my hand; and that when I am said (as I may be correctly said) to 'perceive' it, that I 'perceive' it means that I perceive (in a different and more fundamental sense) something which is (in a suitable sense) representative of it, namely a certain part of its surface.[2]

Nothing more was said about this representative theory, however, so that the meaning of the word "representative" which is suitable here remains a mystery. We do know that if he were a true Lockeian, then sense-data could represent physical objects only so far as their primary qualities go. Thus, if we directly perceived a sense-datum to be

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "A Defence of Common Sense," p. 55.

circular, then this quality would be representative of the circular shape of the material object, presuming that shape is a primary quality. But if we directly perceived a red sense-datum, then there would be no grounds to say that this sense-datum represented the color of the material object, if Moore meant that it did have a color.

The uncertain state of Moore's affinity with Locke does not enable one to determine what Moore's theory of perception involved in detail, however, as much as that would be desirable. And the reason quite simply is that Moore did not elaborate on Locke's view and never discussed what similarities there were between his own view and Locke's. None of Moore's other writings on perception after 1914 contain any substantial clues as to what he would accept and what he would reject in Locke's theory of perception either. Thus the most that we can maintain is that Moore's final position on the relation of sense-data to material objects was a version of Locke's causal, representative theory, without Locke's "unnatural" views about the substratum. Moore's uncertainty about the nature of sense-data, whether they are parts of the surfaces of physical objects or not, whether they exist when no one is directly perceiving them, perhaps prevented him from developing his views about the relation of sense-data to physical objects in any detail. At any rate, though Moore continued to discuss sense-datum issues long after 1914, as we have seen, most of the uncertainties that I have pointed to in this chapter continued to plague Moore until the time of his "Reply to My Critics" in 1942. Even in this latter work, though Moore changed some of his fundamental views slightly, he remained puzzled about certain of these views, and the novelty of his views until that time was not readily apparent.

The fact, however, that Moore was unable to resolve a number of basic problems about sense-data does not detract from the historical significance and value of his work. Moore obviously regenerated the sense-datum theory in the eyes of many British realists and empiricists. By carefully attacking the Idealistic thesis in its guise as a Berkeleian doctrine, Moore was able to strike a number of blows against contemporary Idealism and the "accepted view." As a result, the fundamental doctrines of the sense-datum theory worked their way into the thinking of other important British philosophers. Moore had a special influence on the perceptual thinking of Bertrand Russell and H. H. Price. It is to these philosophers that I shall now turn, since they both developed the doctrines of the sense-datum theory in more detail than Moore was ever able to do.



CHAPTER THREE

BERTRAND RUSSELL: SENSE-DATA AND LOGICAL CONSTRUCTIONS

The early position of Bertrand Russell on the nature of sense-data and on the relation of sense-data to consciousness and to physical objects was in a number of important respects very similar to the position of Moore as I have presented it. Indeed, this similarity should not be surprising since in the Preface to his book THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY (1912) Russell acknowledged his debt to some "unpublished writings" of Moore's which we know to be the first ten chapters of SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.[1] This early position of Russell's is found largely in two pieces published before 1914, "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description" and THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. The early position that Russell took on perceptual matters is a very sketchy one, however, and certainly does not approach in thoroughness or detail the position that he later took in his Lowell Lectures (OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD) and in other articles of 1914 and 1915, such as "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," and his three articles in THE MONIST on the nature of "acquaintance."[2]

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[1] See Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, Preface. Moore claimed that the first ten chapters of Some Main Problems of Philosophy were the unpublished writings that Russell referred to. See Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, Preface.

[2] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," in Mysticism and Logic, (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1918), first published in Scientia (No. 4, 1914); "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," in Mysticism and Logic (Ibid.), first published in The Monist, XXV (July, 1915); "On the Nature of Acquaintance," The Monist, XXIV (January, 1914; April, 1914; July, 1914).

Moreover, in these later works, Russell changed his mind about his earlier views, and thus the character of his perceptual theory changed too. Although he still agreed with Moore that the purer, Berkeleian phenomenalism was not tenable, he did abandon the theory of matter which he had previously advocated and invented a new version of phenomenalism which he integrated with a causal theory of perception. The early Russell had wanted to make the sense-datum theory compatible with a causal, scientific view of matter, too, but the result was only another fairly orthodox version of Lockeian Realism. By 1914, however, Russell's views changed on a number of important issues such as the nature of matter and the nature of physical objects. Russell moved toward a "constructive phenomenalism" which was not present in his earlier works. This change in view was indicated by Russell in MY PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT, where he said,

> In THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and in all my previous thinking, I had accepted matter as it appears in physics. But this left an uncomfortable gulf between physics and perception, or, in other language, between mind and matter. In my first enthusiasm on abandoning the 'matter' of the physicist, I hoped to be able to exhibit the hypothetical entities that a given percipient does not perceive as structures composed entirely of elements that he does not perceive. This was suggested as a possibility in my first exposition of the theory that I advanced in the Lowell Lectures. This first exposition was in a paper called 'The Relation of Sense-data to Physics', published in SCIENTIA in 1914.[1]

G. E. Moore recognized this change in Russell's views, for he puzzled about whether to accept the "Mill-Russell" view on matter as presented in Russell's Lowell Lectures.[2] This makes it prima facie evident that in 1914 Russell took up a version of what I shall call "Constructive

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[1] Bertrand Russell, My Philosophical Development (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1959), pp. 104-05.

[2] Moore, "Some Judgements of Perception," pp. 224 and 250.



Phenomenalism."

In 1919 Russell's perceptual views changed again. This third change is represented by the article "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean," and by THE ANALYSIS OF THE MIND. The constructivist part of his perceptual theory remained intact in these works and, later, in THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER,[1] yet Russell's views about sense-data changed radically. For Russell gave up the primary doctrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. He argued that the basic distinction of the sense-datum theory was false and hence that the fundamental notion of the sense-datum was useless.[2]

I should like to give an account of these changes in Russell's perceptual views. This will involve, first, a discussion of Russell's early (pre-1914) views where I will compare Russell's thinking with that of Moore. Then I will turn to Russell's more mature and detailed position as he presented it in the Lowell Lectures and in the two articles republished in MYSTICISM AND LOGIC, "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics" and "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter." The third state in the development of Russell's perceptual views, the stage of neutral monism, shall only be briefly dealt with since Russell abandoned the ontological version of the sense-datum theory in 1919. I will show why he did so, and what this implied for his perceptual theory.

In the early stages of Russell's thinking about perception, around 1910-1912, Russell tended toward a traditional, Lockeian version of realism, modified to take account of changes in scientific thinking about the

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[1] The Analysis of Matter (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954); first published in 1927.

[2] Russell points out the change in his views in My Philosophical Development, pp. 134-35.

nature of matter. This view, while not developed in any detail, was in outline very similar to the view which Moore was working toward in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, and Russell was strongly influenced by Moore's thinking about perception. This similarity in view was characteristic of Moore and Russell in respect to other philosophical issues, too, although it often worked itself out in different ways. I shall argue that Moore and the early Russell agreed on all of the following points.

First, Russell agreed that it was necessary to make a distinction between the sensation and the sense-datum, and Russell made this basic distinction in exactly the same way that Moore did. He argued in THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, for example, that when we have a sensation of a color, the color is the sense-datum and the immediate awareness of the color is the sensation.[1] Russell analyzed sensation as a "relational occurrence in which a subject is 'aware' of an object."[2] Sensation, he said, is a complex affair, a complex of "act-acquainted-with-object."[3] The act of sensation he called "the act of being acquaquainted with" a sense-datum. Moreover, Russell took this act of acquaintance to be a cognitive act, as Moore had; he thought that acquaintance yielded knowledge of sense-data.

Russell also agreed with Moore's view about the nature of sense-data and with Moore's descriptions of what counts as a sense-datum. Thus, in a famous passage which is sometimes erroneously thought to be the first published use of the term "sense-data," Russell defined

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[1] The Problems of Philosophy, p. 17.

[2] As Russell later put it in My Philosophical Development, p. 134.

[3] See Bertrand Russell, "The Nature of Sense-data--A Reply to Dr. Dawes Hicks," Mind, n.s., XXII (January, 1913), 76.

"sense-data" as "the things that are immediately known in sensation; such things as colors, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses, and so on."[1] This is of course a definition with which Moore agreed, although Moore also came to regard certain purely mental data (such as mental images and pains) as sense-data, too, while Russell did not. Moreover, Russell believed along with Moore that sense-data were particular existents, that sense-data had parts, that sense-data were related to each other in our sense-given fields, and that they were private to the mind in a sense that did not mean that they were mental. Thus he believed that we are immediately aware of two kinds of objects: particulars and universals. He said that among the particulars are included certain existents and complexes of existents, such as particular sense-data.[2] Sense-data, he thought, were "generally, if not always complex" and contained "parts with spatial relations."[3] Saying that sense-data were "complex existents" did not always mean the same thing to Russell, nor for that matter did what he called a "sense-datum" always mean a complex object. He sometimes treated sense-data as if they were bare particulars, as if they were individual patches of colors, while at other times he treated sense-data as if they were complex objects composed of several bare particulars in relation to each other. For example, he sometimes talked as if the complex, "red patch-next-to-blue patch" were a sense-datum while at other times he talked as if the individual patches themselves were sense-data.[4]

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[1] The Problems of Philosophy, p. 17.

[2] "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description," p. 210.

[3] Ibid., p. 211.

[4] See D. F. Pears, Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), pp. 192-93.

But no matter how he dealt with them in respect to their simplicity or complexity, he always thought of them as private objects of sense. He said, for example, "sense-data are private to each separate person; what is immediately present to the sight of one is not immediately present to the sight of another."[1] Furthermore, Russell did not think of sense-data as mental existents, as Moore was also careful not to aver. He thought of them as partially mind-dependent, but he also thought of them as partially dependent upon such things as the condition of a person's nervous system and the stimulus conditions in the immediate environment of the perceiver. In 1914, Russell changed his position in this regard slightly, and made sense-data physical entities, parts of the brain of each individual, located "just outside the mind."

The third similarity we find in the early work of Russell and the work of Moore arises from the fact that both believed that when we immediately perceive sense-data, the nature of this immediate perception or awareness is the same. What Russell called "knowledge by acquaintance," Moore called "perception by direct apprehension." Both of them took this awareness to be cognitive in nature; they both took direct acquaintance to be a form of knowing. Before 1942 Moore believed that one kind of knowledge we have is knowledge of sense-data arising from the relation of direct apprehension we have to them.[2] Russell, too, thought that acquaintance was a form of knowledge. Thus he said, for example, that "the sense-data which make up the appearance of my table are things with which I have acquaintance, things immediately known to me just as they

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[1] Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, p. 32.

[2] Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 78.

are."[1] Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by direct apprehension were both conceived of as immediate, cognitive confrontations between an awareness and a sense-datum "without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths."[2]

Having given an analysis of sensation which resulted in the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, Russell used a familiar argument to help establish the other basic distinctions of the theory. This argument has been called "the argument from the relativity of perception." While Russell and Moore both used this argument in stating the sense-datum theory, neither of them used it to prove that sense-data exist. They used this argument to establish certain things about the nature of sense-data and certain distinctions between sense-data and other things. The argument from the relativity of perception was one which pointed out that since different people from different points of view and the same people from the same points of view see objects differently, it follows that what they directly see is different in each case and different from the physical objects which they all claim to see. Moore used this argument to deduce that there are two different senses of "seeing an object" and to deduce that there are two different objects of perception, the sense-datum and the physical object. Russell took it to be common sense that what we perceive are physical objects. But he also thought that this view was naive and that we do not really "perceive" physical objects at all, but only the appearances of those objects or the set of appearances which we call "the appearance of the object." Thus he felt that either there is only one legitimate sense of "perceive," the sense in which

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[1] The Problems of Philosophy, p. 74. [2] Ibid., p. 73.

we are directly acquainted with or aware of sense-data, and one kind of object of perception, the sense-datum or presentation. Or, sometimes he argued that we could make a distinction between "sensation" and "perception" where sensation was the direct acquaintance with sense-data while perception was knowledge of facts about sense-data.

It is true that Russell sometimes did use the "time-lag" argument in his early writings to arrive at certain sense-datum conclusions. But he primarily used this argument to make the corollary distinction between sense-data and physical objects. The fact that there is a time-lag between the occurrence of the physical object, such as a distant star, and the occurrence of our star sense-data, was used to show, among other things, that what we immediately see when we see the star is a sense-datum rather than the star itself. This follows, the argument goes, because it takes "X" light years for the star's light to reach us and because it is possible that the star should have ceased to have existed during that period of time while it is impossible that the star sense-data that we perceive could have ceased to have existed.[1] It is obvious that Russell intended this time-lag argument to apply to all cases of perception, and that he also took it to establish the causal character of the relation between sense-data and physical objects.

Strictly speaking, the early Russell did not believe then, as Moore did, that there are two legitimate senses of "seeing an object." There is indeed a great similarity between what Moore called "indirect apprehension" and what Russell called "knowledge by description." This similarity arose from the fact that both of these kinds of relations were, in a Pickwickian sense, "perceptual" relations. But Moore believed that it

[1] Ibid., pp. 52-3.

is true to say, with Common Sense, that we see physical objects. While Russell agreed that this was the view of Common Sense, he disagreed that we really did see physical objects. The difference between Moore and Russell on this point was in one sense slight, for they both gave similar analyses of what it means to say that we perceive physical objects. They both arrived at analyses which were far removed from what the ordinary person would claim to have meant. Nevertheless, Moore thought it was true to say that we see physical objects, while Russell thought that this "naive" view was contradicted by physics. Russell took the naive view as his analytical starting point, as Moore did. The difference is that his analysis "proved" this view to be false, while Moore thought his analysis was compatible with the common sense view.

Russell did not believe then that we really see physical objects. The only way we could really "see" physical objects would be to perceive them directly, but he did not believe that we were directly acquainted with physical objects; so he didn't believe that we saw them. Instead, we only have knowledge about them; he said we can only infer their existence on the basis of our perception of sense-data. Thus Russell said,

> The real table, if there is one is not immediately known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known.[1]
>
> Among the objects with which we are acquainted are not included physical objects (as opposed to sense-data), nor other people's minds. These things are known to us by what I call "knowledge by description".[2]
>
> There is no state of mind in which we are directly aware of the table, all our knowledge of the table is really knowledge of truths, and the actual thing which is the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 16-7.

[2] Ibid., p. 81. This passage occurs in exactly the same form in "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description," p. 214.

table is not, strictly speaking, known to us at all.[1]

We do not "see" physical objects, but we do have descriptive knowledge of them. This involves knowing truths or propositions, or, as Russell later says, knowing facts about them.[2] Our descriptive knowledge of a physical object, say of a table, "is obtained through acquaintance with the sense-data that make up the appearance of the table."[3] Knowledge by description is not itself perception of physical objects in the sense of direct acquaintance with those objects. In perceiving anything, Russell believed, "the reality is not what appears";[4] the only thing that appears to my view are sense-data. Physical objects are in some sense screened from my view by sense-data. This view is very reminiscent of Moore's interpretation of what it means to say that we indirectly apprehend a physical object.

G. Dawes Hicks accused Russell of being unclear in his early work about whether it is physical objects themselves that appear in perception or whether it is the appearances of physical objects that appear. Hicks argued that "it is one thing to say that we can only know things as they appear to us; it is quite another thing to say that we cannot know the things themselves but only their appearances."[5] Hicks stated that if we believe that only appearances appear, then "the question would at once arise whether these appearances do not require to be represented by yet other appearances, and so on ad infinitum."[6] But Russell did not perceive

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[1] The Problems of Philosophy, pp. 74-5.

[2] The early Russell took perception to be synonymous with sensation. See, e. g., Russell, "The Nature of Sense-data--A Reply to Dr. Dawes Hicks."

[3] The Problems of Philosophy, p. 74. [4] Ibid., p. 24.

[5] G. Dawes Hicks, "The Nature of Sense-data," p. 403. See also Roderick M. Chisholm, Theory of Knowledge (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 95.

[6] Ibid.

this to be a problem at all. He admitted that his remarks might have been misleading, but he also forthrightly stated that he really believed that it is only appearances which appear and not physical objects.

It can be seen then that the early Russell did make the second corollary distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, the distinction between the sense-datum and the physical object. But he did not believe that a physical object was an object of perception or that a physical object was seen in any ordinary sense. Thus, it wouldn't be strictly correct to say that Russell made the first corollary distinction of the sense-datum theory between two levels of perceptual awareness. If we keep in mind what Russell meant by "knowledge by description," it would be correct to say that there was such a thing as "perception" for Russell. But we would have to identify "perception" as perception of facts about physical objects (and facts about sense-data) and not as perception of physical objects themselves. Russell did then make a distinction between sensing and perceiving, and he did talk about the distinction between sense-data and physical objects, but what he meant was slightly different from what Moore meant.

Russell thought it a legitimate question to ask what is the relation between sense-data and physical objects. Along with Moore and Price, he believed that there was some relation between the two, but the problem was to determine what that relation consisted of. To the early Russell, this was a question about the nature of matter, as is clear from what he said in THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. In that book Russell raised the problem of the nature of matter in the following way: He gave a statement of the argument from relativity of perception and used this argument to draw certain conclusions. One conclusion he drew was that we cannot say

that a physical object is the same as the sense-data that we are acquainted with; another conclusion he drew was that it was also impossible to say that these sense-data were properties of the physical object. Therefore, he argued, we need to consider "the relation of sense-data to physical objects. The collection of all physical objects is called 'matter'. Thus our two questions may be re-stated as follows: (1) Is there such a thing as matter? and (2) If so, what is its nature?"[1]

In respect to the first question, Russell agreed with Moore that physical objects exist, even if it is only in a very Pickwickian sense that we can say that we perceive them and even if sense-data "get in the way" of our directly perceiving them. Russell said, on the other hand, that we must admit that "we can never <u>prove</u> the existence of things other than ourselves and our experiences"; in fact, there is no logical absurdity or impossibility "in the supposition that the whole of life is a dream, in which we ourselves create all the objects that come before us."[2] But, Russell, continued, there is no reason to suppose that this supposition is really true, and it is in fact that "natural view that there really are objects other than ourselves and our sense-data which have an existence not dependent upon our perceiving them."[3] This "natural view" results from a kind of "instinctive belief," and it plays a role in simplifying and systematizing "our account of our experiences." Hence we ought to accept it and reject the principle of *esse est percipi*. The Idealist thesis needs to be gotten rid of in favor of the Realist thesis, because it would involve unnecessary complications in our account of what occurs when we perceive something. In attacking the Idealist thesis, Russell was in

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[1] Russell, <u>The Problems of Philosophy</u>, p. 18.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 34. [3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 37.

sympathy with the attack of Moore in "The Refutation of Idealism," although Moore gave other reasons for believing the idealist thesis to be false.

Supposing it was established then that matter did exist, the question followed, What is its nature? Or, What is the nature of the relation between our sense-data and physical objects?

On this issue, the early Russell took a position which was remarkably similar to Locke's view in AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. Of course there were certain important changes which Russell made, changes which, Russell thought, modernized Locke's view so as to agree with the views of modern physics at the time (1912). In taking a Lockeian position about the nature of physical objects and the relation of sense-data to physical objects, Russell's rather sketchy view was in outline much like Moore's Lockeian view. Russell and Moore differed mainly in respect to certain of the details of their views.

Both Russell and Moore agreed that "sense-data...are really signs of the existence of something independent of us and our perceptions."[1] The early Russell was eager to show the falsity of that version of pure phenomenalism which had its origins in Berkeley's PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. On this version of phenomenalism, a physical object was defined as just a collection of actual and possible sense-data. The problem remained, however, What is the nature of this object which is independent of my perception? In THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY Russell said that we need to accept the view of physical science on this matter; according to physical science natural phenomena should be reduced to wave motions which cause our sensations. Russell said, "That which has the wave-motion is either aether or 'gross matter', but in either case is what the philosopher

[1]Russell, Ibid., p. 42; G. E. Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 115.

would call matter. The only properties which science assigns to it are position in space and the power of motion according to the laws of motion. Science does not deny that it may have other properties; but, if so, such other properties are not useful to the man of science."[1] Moore, on the other hand, while convinced that physical objects did exist and did have certain properties, didn't "reduce" them to wave-motions. He thought that since there was no evidence that such motions did exist, evidence which could be derived from "observations of our own perceptions, thoughts and feelings," we had not the slightest reason for believing in the existence of such motions.[2] The result is that while both Russell and Moore agreed that physical objects were the causes of our sensations, their views about the nature of physical objects (or "matter") were different. Furthermore, Moore and Russell had different views about the relation of sense-data to physical objects. While they both maintained that there was a causal relationship between physical objects and sense-data, they differed as to the nature of the "representative" relationship between sense-data and physical objects. Moore thought that there was some resemblance between sense-data and physical objects and that sense-data "represented" physical objects. But to Russell the nature of the "correspondence" between sense-data and physical objects was largely positional in nature and had nothing to do with the qualitative similarity between sense-data and physical objects.

Russell believed that we could make a distinction between the private space of a percipient and the public, physical space of physical objects. Sense-data were located in private space, he thought, while physical objects

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[1] Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, pp. 43-4.

[2] Moore, "Objects of Perception," pp. 89-90.

were located in public space. The nature of the relation between sense-data and physical objects is a relational one, rather than a qualitative one, however, for Russell did not believe that colors, smells, sounds, and the like "really" characterized physical objects. He argued that there was some kind of correspondence between public and private space. He said, "The relative positions of physical objects in physical space must more or less correspond to the relative positions of sense-data in our private spaces."[1] But even though we could inferentially know something about the arrangements and spatial relations of physical objects in public space, we could not know anything about the nature of these objects in themselves. Russell said, "We can know the relations required to preserve the correspondences with sense-data, but we cannot know the nature of the terms between which the relations hold."[2] We cannot know anything about the "intrinsic nature" of physical objects; "physical objects themselves remain unknown in their intrinsic nature, so far at least as can be discovered by means of the senses."[3] This means that the colors we perceive are not in any way properties of physical objects; in fact, there is no justification for believing that physical objects are colored at all, or that they have any of the properties we perceive sense-data to have, other than those of relative position.

Moore never did say a great deal about the nature of physical objects, nor did he ever decisively make up his mind about the nature of the relation between sense-data and physical objects. He believed that it is true to say that physical objects have colors, e.g., contrary to what Russell said in THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. But what Moore meant

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[1] Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, p. 48.

[2] Ibid., p. 50. [3] Ibid., p. 54.

by saying this was not wholly unlike what Russell believed in that book. Moore never did mean that material objects are literally colored. If anything, he tended toward the view that in saying that a lily is white, we mean "it causes us to perceive one of the sense-data which I call a 'patch of white'."[1] Of course this is an orthodox interpretation of what Locke meant by saying that a particular substance has some secondary quality. While Russell did not say exactly the same thing as this, his own view was at least compatible with this one. Russell just didn't think it was important in 1912 to consider the secondary properties of physical objects, since he didn't believe that they could help him understand what the phenomenon of wave-motion was all about.

The view that the early Russell took before his Lowell Lectures is, then, in many ways similar to Moore's views about the nature of perception. It is clear that Russell's early views were worked out with little attention to detail, but we need to remember that he was only "setting out in popular terms a general outline of my philosophy."[2] It is difficult under those circumstances to hold Russell to a careful analysis and defense of his views. Nevertheless we can see the general drift of his early perceptual views, and we can, I think, see that he was working toward a fairly orthodox scientific realism of a kind not unlike Moore's. Russell's detailed view was to be first presented in his Lowell Lectures in 1914, and it was here that he demonstrated that he had more systematically thought out such issues as the relation of sense-data to physical objects. Moreover, Russell's views changed on a number of important matters.

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[1] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 327.

[2] Russell, My Philosophical Development, p. 102.

In 1914 and 1915 Russell published three very important works on perception: OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD (the Lowell Lectures); "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics"' and "the Ultimate Constituents of Matter." It is apparent on examination of these three works that Russell had changed his views quite radically on a number of perceptual issues since the time that he had written THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. Most notably, he devised a species of phenomenalism which had many of the features of that brand of pure, Berkeleian phenomenalism that he had earlier rejected as false.[1] In devising this perceptual theory, however, he developed a theory of the nature of sense-data which was far removed from Berkeley's view about the nature of sensory ideas. In harmony with his own earlier view about the nature of sense-data, and in harmony to a lesser extent with the view that Moore was maintaining in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, he argued that sense-data are physical existents, parts of our own brain, causally dependent upon our own bodies and upon the nature of the surrounding medium. But they are also private existents, members of our own private space, and yet logically independent of our minds. Russell wanted to reject what Moore had called "the accepted view" about sense-data; he argued that it was a mistake to think that private objects of sense needed to be mental and a mistake to think that they did not continue to exist when not perceived. He went on to utilize these data, along with certain other "hard data," to construct a phenomenalistic view of the world. Russell's version of phenomenalism was unique in the sense that he tried to make his theory safe from the solipsistic objections against subjective idealism, while admitting the scientific claim that sensation is a causal process. I will

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[1] I shall call this "Constructive Phenomenalism."

not try to describe his theory in great detail, since I think Russell does a better job of it, and since it is a rather intricate and involved affair. But I will try to describe the theory in outline.

Russell's constructive phenomenalism was designed to do essentially one thing: to construct the world of physics out of certain ultimate constituents of the world. Or, to put this another way, Russell wanted to bridge the gulf separating the world of physics from the world of sense. He was early convinced that we do not directly or immediately perceive physical objects, and that physical objects are unknown to us in their intrinsic nature. Moreover, what the physicist described as a physical object was composed of entities like molecules, atoms, and electrons, he thought, and these things had none of the properties that sense-data do. The problem then was to show how these two kinds of worlds, the world of our immediate perception and the world of the physicist, could be reconciled, or how they were related to each other. To the physicist, this was a one-way problem: the problem of showing the causal relation beginning with physical objects and ending with sense-data. But Russell argued that this was the reverse of what needed to be done in order to put physics on a sound basis. He believed that the objects of the physicist needed to be verified in some sense. This could only be done by inferring the "physical state of affairs" from what we actually perceive, namely, sense-data. "Physics cannot be regarded as validly based upon empirical data," Russell said, "until the waves have been expressed as functions of the colors and other sense-data."[1] If physics is to be verified, physical objects or matter must be exhibited as functions of sense-data, rather than exhibiting sense-data as

[1] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," p. 146.

functions of physical objects.[1]

To verify physics, then, and bridge the gap between physics and our own sensory world, we need to construct the world of physics out of sense-data, Russell believed. This is the essential problem that Russell was faced with in 1914. He needed to build a construction which would utilize the "ultimate constituents" of our immediate sensory world. In practice, he relied on a number of "hard data" other than sense-data, such as certain logical truths, certain facts of memory, some facts of comparison, the sense-data of other minds, and what he called "sensibilia." Though he wanted to build this physical world using only the private data of one person, he found that he could not in practice dispense with the sense-data of other people, and, most importantly, with "sensibilia." Sensibilia were those "aspects" or "appearances" of a piece of matter which did not happen to appear to anyone. Russell believed that a piece of matter presented an "appearance" in all of those places which "were not surrounded by brain and nerves and sense-organs."[2] He thought that the principle of continuity made it reasonable to suppose this was true. These "appearances," or, more neutrally, "aspects," would become sense-data if someone were to be in the proper position and were to be aware of the object in question; if someone were to become acquainted with them. Ultimately, he wanted to establish physics on a solipsistic basis. And thus he believed that sensibilia and the sense-data of other persons were not a part of the "philosophy of physics in its final form."[3] But he also knew that solipsism was not palatable to most scientists and philosophers, and thus he utilized "sensibilia" extensively.

What Russell meant by saying that we need to exhibit the world of

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[1] Ibid., p. 146. [2] Ibid., p. 150. [3] Ibid., p. 158.

physics in terms of sense-data, was that we need to give a construction of the "thing" of common sense and the matter of physics out of sense-data and other hard data. He thought there were three main problems which he had to solve: "(1) the construction of permanent 'things', (2) the construction of a single space, and (3) the construction of a single time."[1] These three constructions were to be integrated by Russell into one program. Under problem (1), Russell included the two problems of constructing the thing of common sense and the matter of the physicist. Both of these latter two constructions proceeded in much the same way, but the ultimate definition of these two things was slightly different. The matter of a "thing" was defined in terms of the appearances of a thing, in terms of sense-data, as was the thing itself, but Russell held them to be distinct.[2]

Russell thought that there was another way of constructing matter, other than the way that utilized such notions as private world, perspective, perspective space, biography, and the like. This construction utilized points, instants, and particles, all parts of the "apparatus of mathematics," as its basic construction materials. What the relation was between the construction using hard-data and this second kind of construction is not altogether clear. It may be that Russell thought that the first kind of construction was eventually dispensable in favor of the second. This is, I think, the import of the following quotation:

> Probably the construction (of matter out of sense-data) is only in part necessary as an initial assumption, and

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[1] Bertrand Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1914), p. 104, (hereinafter referred to as Our Knowledge).

[2] See "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics, pp. 164-67 and 169-70.

> can be obtained from more slender materials by the logical methods of which we shall have an example in the definitions of points, instants, and particles.[1]

However, Russell was not sure "to what lengths this diminution in our initial assumptions can be carried," nor did he ever say how far it could be carried, and eventually, in THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER, this part of the program was dropped. The important construction was the first; this was the one that he did in fact discuss most thoroughly and most convincingly.

Russell's version of phenomenalism was unique in several respects. First, it was unique in respect of his conception of the nature of the construction elements, i.e., sense-data. Second, it was unique in respect of the way in which his construction of the thing of common sense and his construction of the matter of physics proceeded. Berkeley, too, had constructed a view of the world that was based on his notion of a "sensory idea." Berkeley, like Russell, tried to make his theory compatible with the causal nature of sensation. But Berkeley's conception of the nature of a sensory idea was different from Russell's conception of the nature of a sense-datum. Berkeley's theory of spiritual causality was radically different from Russell's scientific conception of causality. It is Berkeley's version of phenomenalism, however, which Russell took as the starting point of his own efforts at construction, although Russell's own view of the world incorporated other views, too, such as Leibniz's theory of monads.[2]

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[1] Russell, Our Knowledge, p. 97.

[2] See Russell, "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," p. 144, and Russell, "Reply to Criticisms," in The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp (3rd ed.; New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1951), p. 705.

It is in Russell's conception of a sense-datum, I think, that the contrast between Russell's version of phenomenalism and Berkeley's version of phenomenalism is the most evident. Both Moore and the early Russell believed that sense-data were the immediate objects of the act of sensing (or acquaintance), and that sense-data were private to the mind that was acquainted with them. Neither of them took this to mean that sense-data were mental in nature, however. On the other hand, the early Russell did not say that sense-data were physical either. However, in 1914 Russell emphatically denied that sense-data were mental entities, and he took some care to argue that they were physical. To arrive at this view he asked the following question, What reasons are there for thinking that sense-data are mental?

One reason given for thinking this results from a Berkeleian interpretation of the argument from perceptual relativity, Russell believed.[1] The argument from relativity was used to show that sense-data were subjective, mental objects. On this argument, if one person perceived the top surface of a table to be trapezoid, while another saw it to be rhomboid, then it was thought appropriate to ask which of the two appearances was the real appearance of the table. A problem was generated about identifying the "real" shape of the top surface of the table, given the fact that different interpretations of its shape were given from different points of view. If we believe that there is no impartial reason to identify the shape of the surface of the table with either one of these two perceived shapes or with any of its other appearances from other points of view, then we must believe that the shape it really has is something

[1] Russell mentions this argument in a number of places in 1914-1915, such as The Problems of Philosophy, Chapter 1.

different from the shapes it is perceived to have. From this it was concluded that none of the other properties of the real table, such as its color or texture, could be identified with the properties it was perceived to have either. Consequently the table itself, as the entity in which these real properties inhere, must be something which existed apart from these different subjective, mental appearances of it.

This argument gave credence to the distinction between what we immediately apprehend or perceive, certain sense-data, and what we indirectly apprehend or perceive by inference only, the table itself. But Russell thought that while the argument could be used to make this distinction, some of the other consequences resulting from this argument were mistaken. He was clearly eager in 1914 not to use the argument to arrive at a theory of perception which incorporated a "thing-in-itself" view of the nature of what we "really" perceive. The theory of perception which does incorporate a "thing-in-itself" view was, Russell argued, a common one to take. He thought it was a "fairly natural outcome" of the argument from perceptual relativity. Nevertheless, in 1914, he implicitly argued that this view was mistaken and that it rested on a mistaken conception of the nature of sense-data. Moreover, it failed to recognize and take account of "the radical nature of the reconstruction demanded by the difficulties to which it points."[1] Russell said,

> By the principle of Occam's razor, if the class of appearances will fulfill the purposes for the sake of which the thing was invented by prehistoric metaphysicians to whom common sense is due, economy demands that we should identify the thing with the class of its appearances. It is not necessary to deny a substance or substratum underlying these appearances; it is merely expedient to abstain from asserting this unnecessary entity.[2]

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[1] Russell, Our Knowledge, p. 85.

[2] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," p. 155.

Thus Russell undertook to arrive at a definition of the thing of common sense which would utilize the immediate data of sense and which would dispense with the thing-in-itself. This he accomplished by appealing to what he called "the supreme maxim in scientific philosophising," namely, wherever possible, substitute logical constructions for inferred entities.[1] Before undertaking this task, he attempted to show how the argument from relativity was used to draw unsound conclusions about perception.

Before 1914 Russell had apparently been perplexed by the argument from perceptual relativity. In THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY he accepted certain of the standard conclusions that the argument was thought to lead to. But in 1914 he claimed to have solved the difficulties which he came to see in this argument. He made clear that the argument was based on certain mistakes. First, he thought it was a mistake to assume that just because an object presents a great variety of shape-appearances, its real shape could not be identical with any one of those appearances. In THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY Russell had believed that there was no intrinsic reason to favor one set of shape-appearances over another. But he changed his mind about this, probably under the urging of Moore.

Moore said in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY that it may just be the case that the real shape of the top surface of the table is one of the ones which some percipient of the table perceives it to be. Moore did not think this could be proved, nor did Moore himself take this view.[2] But he thought it was a possibility; Russell was affirming that it was, too.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, pp. 36-8.

Second, Russell argued that a sense-datum is a particular object of which some subject is aware. Just because the awareness is mental or "subjective," it does not follow that the object is subjective too. Russell argued that since the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory was sound, "the existence of the sense-datum is therefore not logically dependent upon that of the subject."[1] Russell thought that this was a simple confusion, which, if pointed out, would be immediately rectified by philosophers.[2] This attitude of Russell's was hardly consoling to Idealists, however. The fact that Idealists had thought and argued to the contrary must show that it was not as obvious a "confusion" as Russell made it out to be.[3]

These two mistakes were woven into the traditional statement of the argument from perceptual relativity. They both were used to show that sense-data were mental and subjective objects. Perhaps the major reason why realists like Russell had been befuddled by the argument was that they could not give a satisfactory meaning to the possibility of two differently perceived sense-data co-existing in the same place in space. Russell himself thought the argument "irrefutable" until he realized that it was based on these mistakes. Moreover, he tried to destroy this argument by devising a theory in which sense-data would exist in both private and public space.

The theory of public and private space was designed to solve the following problems about the nature of sense-data: The argument from

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[1] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," p. 152.

[2] "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," p. 131.

[3] Another reason Russell gave for saying that sense-data were independent of the mind is that we perceive them to be "there" rather than "here"; we see them as spatially external to our awareness rather than spatially internal. Russell, Our Knowledge, p. 73.



relativity seemed to establish that sense-data were private, mental existents. But if this were true, then it would be impossible to identify sense-data with parts of the surfaces of objects (in Moore's terminology), or, in other words, there would be no reason to identify what appears to be the case with what is the case (in Russell's early terminology). On the other hand, it was thought that sense-data must in some sense be public, physical objects. But if they were, then there is some problem explaining how one and the same sense-datum could appear to be different to different observers.

Russell thought he had solved these problems by his theory of space. This theory required that we reject the "schooolmaster" views of a single, three-dimensional space and substitute instead a six-dimensional space composed of the private, three-dimensional spaces of individual percipients (the old three-dimensional space). Sense-data are entities which "exist" in six-dimensional space: they are assigned a place in the private space of the individual who is aware of them and a place in the public space of all perceivers. Thus, one "plots" the location of sense-data by knowing six co-ordinates: the three which determine its location in private space and the three co-ordinates which determine its place in public space.[1]

Russell could then agree with the argument from relativity when it concluded that we all do perceive different sense-data and when it concluded that no two people ever perceive exactly the same sense-data even if "closely similar."[2] But these were not grounds for making sense-

[1] See "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," pp. 138-39 and "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," pp. 158-64.

[2] "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," p. 138 and 'The Relation of Sense-data to Physics, pp. 158-59.

data mental entities, he argued.

It is true in Russell's view that sense-data are located in private worlds. Russell believed that we could locate the sense-data of each percipient in his own private world because this private, sensory world, or "perceived perspective," has spatial dimensions. In fact, "the place at which a sense-datum is, is a place in private space. This place therefore is different from any place in the private space of another percipient."[1] None of the private spaces of different percipients had any places in common, he thought, nor were these private spaces "merely different parts of one space."[2] This meant that if there was a public space, as Russell believed there was, it was not a space literally in which private spaces were contained. Rather, both private and public space were constructed from something else. The private space of an individual was a kind of logical construction from his visual space, tactual space, olfactory space, and the "spaces" of his other senses.[3] Public space was also a kind of construction: it was a logical construction out of private spaces. Russell called it "perspective space," the space in which each private world or perspective counted as an element, though not as contained in it.

As is implied, then, sense-data could be located not only in private space, but also in perspective or public space. Since perspective space was a construction out of private spaces, a sense-datum could

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[1] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," p. 159.

[2] "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," p. 138.

[3] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," p. 159 and Our Knowledge, p. 104. In The Problems of Philosophy Russell also made a distinction between public and private space, but not with the meaning it had here.

be localized in two places. There is, first, its place in the private space or perspective of some actual or ideal percipient. This was the place at which the sense-datum appeared and was also the place where the thing was of which the sense-datum was a member, though each person only perceived one member of the thing at a time. Second, the sense-datum was also part of a perspective of which it was a member. This was the place from which the sense-datum appeared. Since these perspectives could be gathered together to get perspective space, or the space of all points of view, the sense-datum had a place in public space too. Given that public space was a logical construction, it may indeed be queer to say that a sense-datum was in fact locatable in public space. But so long as we understand that public space was a construction, we will not take "location in" to mean what it ordinarily might when we say, e.g., that the chair is located in the next room.

Russell claimed to have solved the problem of the mental subjectivity of sense-data, then, by arguing that sense-data could be localized in both public and private space; they were both public and private entities. Since private space was a construction out of the spaces of each sense, and since public space was a construction out of private space, no problem arose about how different sense-data could be localized in the same place. The expression "in the same place" had no meaning if what was intended was that there was only one kind of three-dimensional, "real" space in which all objects, both sense-data and physical objects, existed. The problem of how to combine different sense-data in the same place was a problem only for this "schoolmaster" conception of one all-embracing, three-dimensional space in which everything was contained like blackbirds in a pie. The problem did not arise for the conception of a six-

dimensional, constructed space where the localization of sense-data was a matter of plotting co-ordinates.

The localization of sense-data in both private and public space was, in a sense, artificial, as Russell would have agreed. For sense-data did not <u>really</u> exist in either space. Rather, sense-data were <u>really</u> located in the body of a percipient, in his brain. They were physical entities, dependent upon the state of a person's sense-organs, brain, and nerves, and dependent upon the causal properties of "external" matter. Russell did believe after all that sense-data were spatially <u>external</u> "in the natural meaning" of this phrase. Location in private and public space then must be taken to have had a different meaning than "external location in the body." Both private and public space must have been logical constructions. Or, to put it another way, the location of sense-data in private and public space must have been much like plotting a curve in geometry. It was a kind of imaginative reconstruction of what is "really" the case, in mathematical terms.

There was another kind of argument examined by Russell, an argument quite different from the argument from relativity, from which it was similarly concluded that sense-data were subjective mental entities. This argument was a causal one according to which sense-data were said to be mental and subjective because they were the last mental events in a causal series of physical events which involved our sense-organs, nerves, and brains. This argument was mistaken, Russell believed, because it arrived at the wrong conclusions about the nature of sense-data. Russell did think that sense-data were, in a complicated way, causally dependent upon our sense-organs, nerves, and brains, but this only meant that sense-data were dependent upon our bodies and did not mean that they were

dependent upon our minds.[1] A sense-datum was in fact a physical existent; it had "physical reality."[2] It had been thought that sense-data could not be physical entities because they seemed not to exist when not perceived. When I shut my eyes, it was argued, the sense-datum I was perceiving a moment ago no longer exists. Since "matter" is permanent and persistent and since what we perceive is commonly thought to continue to exist when not perceived, sense-data could not be physical and could not be the elements out of which matter is built. Sense-data were obviously impermanent objects dependent upon the causal process which made them exist. If that causal process was interrupted in any way, sense-data of a certain sort would not be perceived.

Russell believed that this view about sense-data and matter was mistaken.[3] Physical objects are impermanent entities; they are not the permanent and enduring things that common sense takes them to be. A physical object is really only a series of momentary entities "succeeding each other in time, each lasting for a very brief period."[4] Thus the impermanence of sense-data could not be used to argue that sense-data were not physical.

The thing of common sense and the matter of physics were both constructed by Russell out of these series of particulars each lasting for a short period of time; they were constructions out of sense-data and sensibilia. This made them "systems" or "series of appearances, connected

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[1] "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," p. 134.

[2] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," pp. 154 and 159.

[3] "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter, p. 128, e.g.

[4] Ibid., p. 129.

with each other by continuity and by certain causal laws."[1] It was not enough that the sense-datum in one perspective should resemble the sense-datum in an adjacent perspective in order to be identified as part of the same system or series, nor was it sufficient that sense-data in a biography and in correlated biographies should simply succeed each other or be continuous in appearance. What was needed to determine a series, beyond resemblance and continuity in sense-data, was that these appearances should obey causal laws, or the laws of physics, Russell believed. Included in these laws were the laws which correlated the simultaneous appearances of one "thing" to different senses and the laws of dynamics.[2] There was in general only one way of grouping any set of appearances together so that they obeyed causal laws, Russell thought. Thus we could always determine what a thing was in terms of the resemblance, continuity, and causal characteristics of groups of sense-data.

A thing was constructed then not only out of correlated sense-data in different perspectives at closely related times, but also out of sense-data that appeared at different times in the same private space and in different private spaces. What permanence a "thing" had was tied down to the way sense-data could be collected together to form successive states of a "thing." Permanence was really an illusion then that resulted from our belief in the continuity of these momentary states.[3] Thus the argument that sense-data were not physical entities and could not be the elements out of which "things" were constructed because they were impermanent and subjective, rested on an illusion and a misunderstanding of the

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[1] Our Knowledge, p. 106.

[2] Ibid., p. 109 and "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," pp. 170-72.

[3] "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter," p. 128.

nature of matter.

Russell thought that his hypothetical construction of things out of sense-data and his theory of private and perspective space took care of normal sense-data. But there were other kinds of sense-data which could not in fact be constructed into things. Such "wild particulars" also needed to be accounted for in terms of his general theory. Wild sense-data were those which occurred in illusions of sense, in dreams, and in hallucinations. The question was, How could these wild series or sets of sense-data be distinguished from normal ones, from ones that were collectible into things? The sense-data of dreams, hallucinations, and illusions were as "given" as normal sense-data; they could be localized in the private spaces of individual perceivers, Russell believed.[1] And, hence, on the face of it, there was nothing noteworthy about their nature which would make them not constructible into things. Nevertheless, Russell thought, we could make distinctions between these wild data and normal data according to the kind of wild sense-datum at hand. For example, most illusions of sense could be explained away by reference to physiological and other causal conditions in perspective space, or by noting that these illusory data are thought to be constructible only because of false inferences which result from unusual correlations between the spaces of different senses. Dream sense-data presented no problem either, Russell thought, because even though they may be localized in private space, they could not be correlated with the private spaces of other percipients and hence could not be localized appropriately in perspective space. Dream sense-data lacked continuity not only with one's own past and future data, but also with the data of other private worlds, hence

[1] "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," p. 174.



they could not be collected into things. Even if they did have this continuity for a time, they still would not obey the laws of physics so far as their relations with "real" things went. But they could not be collected into things merely because they possessed the first characteristic of collectible sense-data. Again, hallucinatory sense-data could not be correlated with those of other perspectives, although the person who has hallucinatory sense-data may not perceive this, Russell said.

Wild sense-data in general failed to be collectible, then, because they either could not be correlated with and hence located in perspective space, or because they did not have the proper causal connections with normal things. These data were not "unreal" since they were in fact sensed, but they did fail to satisfy either one or the other of the conditions which any set of appearances had to satisfy if it were to be collectible into a thing.[1] Thus, if one were to raise objections to Russell's Constructive Theory by pointing to the problems of distinguishing wild sense-data from normal ones, Russell would deal with these objections in terms of the necessary and sufficient conditions for constructing sense-data into series of "things."

We can infer then that in the period of 1914 and 1915 Russell's views on the relation of sense-data to physical objects changed. In his earlier writings, such as THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, he had conceived of matter in terms of the physics of his day. He argued that all natural phenomena, such as the phenomena of light and heat, could be reduced to wave motions. Wave motion in turn was a property of "gross matter," gross matter having the properties of position in space and motion through

[1] Ibid., pp. 176-79.



space. The relation between sense-data and matter was primarily causal in nature, he argued. And he thought that sense-data had spatial correlations with physical objects. In 1914 Russell dropped certain elements of this scientific conception of matter. He still maintained that sense-data were caused by what occurs in our own sensory apparatus and what occurs in our physical environment. But he took a step toward phenomenalism and tried to define physical phenomena in terms of the appearances of those phenomena, in terms of sense-data and sensibilia. This made physical objects logical constructions out of series of sensory particulars.

A good part of Russell's philosophical effort in the thirteen years after 1914 was directed toward giving a more satisfactory account of these logical constructions. Russell continued to refine them in such works as THE ANALYSIS OF MIND and THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER. There were, however, a number of significant additions to Russell's program and a number of significant changes in his views about sense-data after 1915.

One addition to his program was his growing interest in and subsequent remarks about the psychology of perception. In 1914 Russell began to develop this interest in OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD. In that work he made clear that his analysis of what constitutes a datum for his construction program would involve both psychological and logical considerations.[1] In THE ANALYSIS OF MIND Russell supplemented his remarks about the construction program with remarks about perception as a psychological process. We can argue that he took the former remarks to belong to logic or epistemology; they were part of the logical task of analyzing the nature of physical matter. The latter remarks we can view

[1] Our Knowledge, p. 69.

as part of the psychology of perception, although admittedly they were not based on experimental data. In this psychological discussion, Russell showed how perception as a process involved a sensational core plus certain interpretative elements called "mnemic phenomena." In consequence, he made it clear, I believe, that the construction of a physical object was based on an analogous psychological process in the mind of the perceiver.

Russell analyzed perception as a psychological process into mnemic elements and non-mnemic elements. The mnemic elements in perception were those which were derived from past experience. And any attempt to explain the nature of perception had to take into account past experience as a causal factor, Russell thought.[1] The mnemic elements were the interpretive part of our perception, or the images, beliefs, and expectations we have from past experience which are correlated with and causally generated by our present sensations. The non-mnemic elements were the sensations themselves. Whenever we perceive an object, Russell believed, we perceive certain "appearances" or sensations which give rise to mnemic phenomena in us; the sensational ingredients of perception "bring up habitual associates--images and expectations of their usual correlates" which fill out or become the interpretative factor in perception.[2] On examining our perceptions or actual experiences, it is difficult indeed to determine what is pure sensation and what is not, since "so much interpretation, so much of habitual correlation, is mixed with all such experiences."[3] But by careful investigation this "theoretical core in actual

[1] On mnemic phenomena, see The Analysis of Mind, pp. 78 and 81-2.

[2] On perception, see Ibid., pp. 131-32, 139-40, and 157-58.

[3] Ibid., p. 139.

experience" can be isolated, Russell claimed. In brief, then, our perception of an object as a psychological phenomenon was a complex mental process which was affected by mnemic phenomena, by the brain, nervous system, and the sense-organs (remembering Russell's previous arguments for the physiological dependence of sense-data on these things), and by the conditions of the surrounding atmosphere (such as the reflection of light).

Another significant addition to Russell's discussion after 1915 was his program to construct the mental world out of sensations and mental images. This program was mentioned first in "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean," and was amplified in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND. Taking sensations and images as the units of construction rather than sense-data, he argued that the contents of the mental life, such as thoughts and beliefs, could all be built up out of these units. The kind of construction involved in this building process was clearly the result of an introspective analysis and synthesis of entities like beliefs, and did not involve an appeal to logical principles or to laws of perspective as his previous constructions of biographies and things had.

This last addition to Russell's construction program was intimately related to a change in Russell's views about sense-data, for the most significant change in Russell's views after 1915 came in respect to the sense-datum theory. This change is alluded to in MY PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT, where Russell says,

> During 1918 my view as to mental events underwent a very important change. I had originally accepted Brentano's view that in sensation there are three elements: act, content, and object. I had come to think that the distinction of content and object is unnecessary, but I still thought that sensation is a fundamentally relational occurrence in which a subject is 'aware' of an object. I had used the concept 'awareness' or 'acquaintance' to express this relation of

> subject and object, and had regarded it as fundamental in the theory of empirical knowledge, but I became gradually more doubtful as to this relational character of mental occurrences. In my lectures on logical Atomism I expressed this doubt, but soon after I gave these lectures, I became convinced that William James had been right in denying the relational character of sensations.[1]

As a result, Russell explicitly abandoned sense-data in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND, and in doing so gave up the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. The fundamental unit of his construction program became the sensation rather than the sense-datum. Russell transferred his old theory about the nature of sense-data to his new view about the nature of sensation. He now argued that patches of color were sensations rather than sense-data. He suggested that sensations were both physical and psychical in nature. In arguing that sensations had this dual nature, he introduced a theoretical variant of "neutral monism" into English philosophy. He stated that both the mental and the physical world could be accounted for in terms of a construction program, using mainly sensations as the building materials. Later on, in THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER, Russell changed the ultimate constructional data again. Instead of using sensations as the constituents of these constructions, he utilized "events." He defined both mental objects and physical objects in terms of classes of events.

The basic distinction of the sense-datum theory was first questioned by Russell in his article "On Propositions: What They are and How They Mean" (1919). In that article Russell "confessed" his doubt about this distinction; he said,

> I have to confess that the theory which analyzes a presentation into act and object no longer satisfies me. The act, or

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[1] My Philosophical Development, p. 134.

> subject, is schematically convenient, but not empirically discoverable. It seems to serve the same sort of purpose as is served by points, and instants, by numbers and particles, and the rest of the apparatus of mathematics. All these things have to be constructed, not postulated: they are not of the stuff of the world, but assemblages which it is convenient to be able to designate as if they were single things. The same seems to be true of the subject, and I am at a loss to discover any actual phenomenon which could be called an 'act' and could be regarded as a constituent of a presentation....It seems to me imperative, therefore, to construct a theory of presentation and belief which makes no use of the 'subject', or of an 'act' as a constituent of a presentation. Not that it is certain that there is no such thing as a 'subject', any more than it is certain that there are no points and instants. Such things may exist, but we have no reason to suppose that they do, and therefore our theories ought to avoid assuming either that they exist or that they do not exist.[1]

It is the rejection of the subject of awareness that requires a rejection of the act of awareness. Thus, Russell said, "A sensation in particular can no longer be regarded as a relation of a subject to a sense-datum; accordingly the distinction between sensation and sense-datum lapses, and it becomes impossible to regard a sensation as in any sense cognitive."[2]

If the subject of consciousness is viewed as a logical construction, as the thing of common sense was earlier, then it was, strictly speaking, no longer possible for Russell to say that a sense-datum was given to a subject. For something to be given to a subject, the subject had to be conceived of as distinct from what is given. But since there no longer was any "subject" in Russell's theory, the notion of "being given" dropped out too. This also meant that it was impossible to use the term "datum" in the sense that a datum is something, some object, that is given to somebody. Furthermore, the analysis of the self had to dispense with sense-data, since it would not have been feasible to analyze the self into

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1 "On Propositions," pp. 305-06.

2 Ibid., p. 306.

a series of particulars which were also given to the self. There no longer was any awareness of or acquaintance with sense-data.[1]

In THE ANALYSIS OF MIND Russell considered more thoroughly the implications of rejecting the basic distinction of the sense-datum theory. He argued that even though "mere seeing," or what he previously called "acquaintance," was a condition or source of knowledge, it was "a mistake to regard the mere seeing itself as knowledge."[2] Russell now denied that there was such a thing as knowledge by acquaintance, although he still thought that sensation was a source of knowledge. Put differently, factual knowledge came through sensation, he believed, but sensation did not amount to factual knowledge.[3] If there was to be cognition in the old sense, then both a subject of cognition and an object of cognition had to exist. However, the subject of consciousness was now a "logical fiction" introduced "not because observation reveals it, but because it is linguistically convenient and apparently demanded by grammar. Nominal entities of this sort may or may not exist, but there is no good ground for assuming that they do."[4] Any function that the subject performed in the old theory could equally as well have been performed by a logical construction. Thus in accordance with the "supreme maxim" of philosophizing, Russell made the subject a logical construction out of sensations via his theory of biographies and perspectives. Furthermore, if there were no subject, then distinguishing between the sensation as an

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[1] Pears has a nice discussion of some of these points. See Pears, Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy, p. 41.

[2] The Analysis of Mind, p. 141.

[3] See Pears, Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy, p. 178.

[4] The Analysis of Mind, p. 141.

act in which a subject is involved and the sense-datum as the object of that act was useless. The only thing that was left as an actual constituent of the world was the sensation.

Russell's views about the nature of sensation were fairly thoroughly elaborated in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND. Russell argued in that book that "the sensation that we have when we see a patch of color simply is that patch of color," or, "the patch of color and our sensation in seeing it are identical."[1] Apparently there could be no doubt that sensations exist, for we could observe them. Moreover, Russell argued that his former reason for believing the patch of color to be physical still held, but he added, "It does not follow that the patch of color is not also psychical unless we assume that the physical and the psychical cannot overlap, which I no longer consider a valid assumption."[2] In fact, the ultimate constituents of matter were primarily sensations; sensations were the neutral stuff out of which all other things in the world were constructed. Sensations were defined as the "intersection of mind and matter,"[3] since they were subject to both psychological and physical laws.[4] Sensations and images became the elements into which the world of the mind was analyzed by Russell in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND; all of the contents of the mental world, our thoughts, beliefs, desires, pleasures, pain, and emotions were built up out of sensations and images.[5] On the other side of the coin, sensations and sensibilia formed the construction elements of physics, as was earlier the case.

The fact that Russell could in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND, and after, maintain both a causal theory (a theory of perception as a psychological

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[1] Ibid., pp. 142-43. [2] Ibid., p. 143. [3] Ibid., p. 144.
[4] Ibid., p. 26. [5] Ibid., p. 121.

process) and a phenomenalistic theory perplexed some philosophers. There appeared to be some incompatibility between these two views. This problem was especially pertinent to THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER, where Russell seemed to beat a retreat to his early view by saying that physical objects existed external to our minds as the cause of our sensations. He allowed that we could make an inference to the existence of physical objects. But the problem was, If we can infer the existence of physical objects, does this mean that the object exists as the cause of our "percepts," external to our mind?[1] If this is what he meant, then his construction of the object as a logical procedure would seem to be superfluous in some sense, especially since a logical fiction or nominal entity could hardly be said to cause actual percepts.[2] Moreover, if the physical object was spatially external, but also a logical construction, the logical constructions could have been spatially external to our minds, a result which would appear to be absurd.

Despite the seeming implication that inference to objects was an inference to spatially external objects, this was not Russell's view. Inference to objects was inference to groups of correlated sensory events based on our memory and our expectations. These events or correlated percepts were collected together by the laws of perspective. This inferential process was indeed a part of the psychological overlay to the sensory core of perception. But even though it was not an actual part of the perceptual process itself, this makes little difference, since it accompanied whatever expectations and images that did arise in the

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[1] In The Analysis of Matter, the term "percept" was used instead of "sensation."

[2] This is a criticism which Price later made in Perception, Chapters IX and X.

perceptual process. This way of considering the problem made the inference to physical objects a part of the actual mental process that accompanied perception. Russell, of course, also thought that an inference to other "percepts" was a part of the analytical construction process carried out by the epistemologist.[1] This construction process was not an actual part of the psychological process or even of the mental overlay to that process, but it was in some sense a logical redescription of, and was grounded in, the psychological process of perception.

Thus Russell may have had in mind the view that the construction of a physical object has two variations: there is the psychological process of construction that actually takes place during perception; and there is an analogous logical construction of things out of sensations which is a reflective, analytical procedure of the philosophy of physics.

It is at any rate a mistake to confuse the inference to physical objects, which Russell allowed in THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER, with the inference to the causes of our percepts. Looking at physical objects as causes was tantamount to approaching the matter from the standpoint of the practice of physicists themselves. Looking at physical objects as logical constructions was tantamount to looking at them from the standpoint of the philosophy of physics or from the standpoint of the epistemologist. The epistemologist's task was to reconstruct the physical world in terms of our sensory particulars, Russell was maintaining, while the physicist's task was to give an account of the sensory world in terms of physical entities like wave motions. To say that physical objects were causes of sensations was to look at the issue from a standpoint which was oriented in a different way from the standpoint of the epistemologist. To the

[1] See The Analysis of Matter, pp. 215-17.

epistemologist, a logical construction was an abstract entity which could not possibly cause other things to occur. But then Russell would not have claimed that this was possible, speaking as an epistemologist.

I think it is clear that in abandoning the sense-datum theory, Russell did not see any serious implications for his perceptual theory. His views about the nature of perception as a psychological-causal process did not substantially change in the decade after 1921, nor did his analytical construction of matter and mind. At the "lower" level of his perceptual theory, a radical shift was made, certainly, from sense-data to sensations, and ultimately to events in THE ANALYSIS OF MATTER. But at the "upper" level of his perceptual theory, his views remained largely what they had been before 1919. The basic doctrines of the sense-datum theory had all been given up, and Russell could no longer be identified as a sense-datum theorist. But other basic doctrines were substituted in their place, doctrines which had some of the features of the sense-datum theory. For example, Russell argued after 1919 that sensations had some relation to physical objects instead of arguing that sense-data had some relation to physical objects. The changes at the lower level were indeed extensive, and these changes were in some respects antithetical to the sense-datum theory. They should have necessitated a corresponding change throughout Russell's perceptual theory. But the general outline of that theory remained the same for Russell.

CHAPTER FOUR

H. H. PRICE: SENSE-DATA AND PERCEPTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In 1947 A. J. Ayer read a paper on phenomenalism before the Aristotelian Society in which he noted that "Professor Price...has made himself the guardian of sense-data." Ayer stated that Price "is not their parent but it is he who has chiefly interested himself in their welfare; it is to him more than anyone that they owe their present position of honor in the philosophical world."[1] These remarks indicate the extent to which H. H. Price became the mainstay of the sense-datum theory. And it would be fair to say that Price's views on perception were largely responsible for making the ontological version of the sense-datum theory an orthodox part of English philosophical thought in the 1930's and the early 1940's. In large measure the influence of Price resulted from the attention and respect given to his book, PERCEPTION, published in 1932. In PERCEPTION, Price gave what for many years after was considered to be the definitive account and defense of the sense-datum theory. It is clear that in that book Price took his role to be that of defending the theory of sense-data from possible and actual attack. This he tried to do in great detail by showing where counter-arguments went wrong and by showing how the theory of sense-data could be incorporated into a theory of perception free from error.

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[1] A. J. Ayer, "Phenomenalism," in Philosophical Essays (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1954), p. 128; first published in PAS, n. s., XLVII (1946-47).

In agreement with Russell and Moore, Price argued in PERCEPTION that the "accepted view" about sense-data was mistaken in taking sense-data to be mental entities. He also tried to show that the two common theories of perception which were based on the accepted view, the pure Berkeleian brand of phenomenalism and the causal-representative theory, were false.[1] The interesting thing about Price's book, though, is that his own perceptual theory was the result of an attempt to wed a version of phenomenalism with a version of the causal theory. It is true that in writing PERCEPTION one of Price's avowed purposes was to "present a constructive and detailed alternative" to what he called "the causal theory of perception." He also wanted to show how phenomenalism in the purer form was in error. Yet he came up with a theory much like Russell's of 1914 and 1915, a theory in which there was a curious blend of the narrower Berkeleian version of phenomenalism and the causal theory. This is not to say that Price was either simply a phenomenalist or a causal theorist. Rather his theory, like Russell's, was an attempt to fuse the two in a broader sense. Price's theory was, however, different from Russell's in many respects. An important difference was that Price tried to account for the "thing-in-itself" as an integral constituent of a material thing, while Russell professed to do away with such a view via logical constructions.

In PERCEPTION Price agreed to all of the five basic distinctions of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. In addition he accepted without major alteration many of Moore and Russell's views about the nature of sense-data and about the nature of sensing. On the other hand, Price did not give just another analysis of perception

[1] This was also an aim of his before 1932. See H. H. Price, "Reality and Sensible Appearance," Mind, n. s., XXXIII (January, 1924), 21.

in terms of the direct apprehension of sense-data and indirect knowledge of facts about sense-data and physical objects. PERCEPTION contained in addition a very careful and detailed attempt to describe the nature of what Price called "perceptual consciousness." A thorough "phenomenological description" of perception was lacking in the work of Russell and Moore. Price therefore took it to be his philosophical duty to supply such a description. In order to carry out this "phenomenological analysis" of perception, Price argued that we needed to take the "immanent standpoint, that of the individual experient himself" rather than the external standpoint of the scientist.[1] We needed, he argued, to return to "what is indubitable" from that standpoint, namely, sense-data themselves. And our analysis of perception had to be based on certain facts about sense-data which we as individual percipients could all discover.

The general structure of Price's theory of perception is most clearly understood by looking at the two sorts of questions which Price thought such a theory ought to answer. First, there were questions about the nature of the processes that take place during perception, or questions about the workings of "perceptual consciousness" and of sensing.[2] In brief, Price's analysis of perceptual consciousness made of it a mental confirmation process in which in successful cases we move from "perceptual acceptance" to "perceptual assurance" about the existence and nature of a material object. Accompanying this process of perceptual consiousness was a direct intuitive awareness of sense-data. If, with

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[1]Price, Perception, p. 37. [2]Ibid., p. 176.

[3]To be more precise, we come to perceptual assurance about the existence of a particular sort of family of sense-data having a certain standard solid of a particular shape and size co-existing with a certain physical occupant.

Price, we conceive of the theory of perception as involving an act-object analysis, then the analysis of perceptual consciousness and of sensing was an analysis of the act of perception. This analysis revealed not only the nature of the act, but also showed whether it was a "valid" act, or, whether we could be perceptually assured about the existence and nature of material objects in perception.

The second kinds of questions which a theory of perception must answer were questions about the nature of a material object. Or, the theory of perception must involve an analysis of "material thinghood,"[1] Price thought. This analysis was divided into two subanalyses: (1) an examination of the nature of the relation of "belonging to" which Price believed to obtain between sense-data and material things; and (2) an examination of the relations that sense-data have to each other when they belong to the same material thing. This second part of a theory of perception provided the analysis of the object of perception and thus completed the full examination of the act and object of perception.

Both the analysis of the act of perception and the analysis of the object of perception were, in Price's final theory in PERCEPTION, very complex ones and involved a great deal of technical language invented by Price for the special purposes at hand. It is my intention to give a rough sketch of the important features of Price's analyses. I hope to accomplish a number of things in the process of doing so: (a) to show the extent to which Price made use of the sense-datum theory in his general theory of perception; (b) to allow of comparisons with Price's sense-datum predecessors, Moore and Russell; (c) to understand

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[1] Price, Perception, p. 177.

the critical attacks that were later made against Price's perceptual views; and (d) to substantiate the claim that Price was the primary representative of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory.

Price's Analysis of the Act of Perception

The Nature of Perceptual Consciousness

Sense-data

Price's analysis of perception began with an account of the nature of sense-data. Price thought that a theory of perception needed to begin with some "neutral" ground, with something which is "theory neutral." This neutral ground for Price consisted of the adoption of the indubitable existence of sense data; in other words, Price thought that we needed to accept the basic fact of the sense-datum theory, the fact that in perceiving something we are always acquainted with sense-data. To accept the existence of sense-data entailed no theory about the nature of sense-data, Price thought.[1] It committed us to very little save the fact that when we see something, for example, we are acquainted with colored patches, or that when we hear something, we are acquainted with certain noises. The only thing which changed from one sense-act to the next was the particular object of the act; the act of acquaintance remained the same in nature. A sense-datum was something which had a general nature, too; sense-data were the kinds of entities for which a general description could be given, whether they were visual or auditory sense-data.

Of course Price had a theory about the nature of sense-data, but he argued that this theory was a metaphysical theory which, strictly

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[1] Ibid., p. 19.

speaking, did not belong to the theory of perception.[1] And thus by implication, Price's theory about the nature of sense-data was not essentially connected to either his analysis of perceptual consciousness or to his analysis of material thinghood. The only thing we needed to accept about sense-data, aside from their existence, was that they had relations to material things and to perceptual consciousness, and that they were organized in our sense-fields in certain ways. As Price said,

> What concerns us is not the nature of sense-data, but only their relations: their relations, first, to the material things to which they somehow 'belong'; and secondly, their relation to the perceptual act, that is, their 'presentative' function, by which they help to make us conscious of these material things.[2]

And what nature sense-data had made "no difference to those relations and to that function." This meant then that a belief in the existence of sense-data entailed no claim about whether they persisted when not perceived, whether several minds could be acquainted with the same sense-data, whether they were mental, physical, or neither, or whether they had an origin in material objects or in mental processes.[3] Price admitted that in their concern with perception philosophers did ultimately diverge or agree on these very points. Price was aware that philosophers had different theories about the nature of sense-data and had sometimes called sense-data by other names. Yet he also thought that all previous writers on perception in philosophy had, in fact, shown that they believed in the existence of sense-data. So he decided that there should be little difficulty in accepting this basic fact.

The neutral facts about sense-data which Price was referring to can be described in the following way. First, Price believed that "what we are acquainted with at any one time is not one single sense-datum

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[1] Ibid., p. 105. [2] Ibid., p. 104. [3] Ibid., pp. 18-9.

but a number of generically different sense-data" which were collectively called by Price the "Totum Datum."[1] The Totum Datum was made up of the set of visual, tactual, auditory, and organic sense-data with which we are acquainted at a given point of time, and each subset of these generically different sense-data constituted a different "sense-field."[2] Thus a percipient's "field of view" was composed of sense-data from co-present but different sense-fields: from a visual sense-field; from a tactual sense-field; from an auditory sense-field, etc. Moreover, this Totum Datum consisted of two different parts: a bodily part containing "somatic sense-data" and an environmental part containing "environmental sense-data."[3] By "somatic sense-data" Price meant "those which (a person) takes to belong to (his) own body, and by 'environmental' ones, those which (he) ordinarily takes to belong to other objects."[4] These two kinds of co-present data varied "concomitantly," as in the case, for example, when visual sense-data vary in size and shape with changes in kinaesthetic sense-data as a result of change in the percipient's position.

All of these facts about the "organization" of our sense-data into sense-fields and into a field of view were part of what we must accept when we accepted the fact that we were directly acquainted with sense-data, Price believed, and they were thus by implication facts which any theory of perception must begin with. Some of these "facts" were facts which Moore and Russell also took to be entailed in accepting the existence of sense-data. Yet Moore and Russell did not quite agree on all of these facts, nor did they treat them in the same way Price did. Perhaps the major disagreement between the three pertained to the matter of how to

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[1] Ibid., p. 38. [2] Ibid., pp. 234-35. [3] Ibid., p. 38. [4] Ibid.

deal with these facts. Russell took the notion of the private space of a percipient to be a logical construction out of the spaces of each individual sense-modality. But neither Moore nor Price dealt with private space as if it were a logical construction. Price's "field of view" was nowhere indicated to be an explicit construction designed to do away with certain inferred entitites. There was no indication that Moore took "private space" to be a logical construction, either.

Despite the apparent irrelevance of Price's metaphysical theory about the nature of sense-data to Price's theory of perception, it would be fruitful to discuss this metaphysical theory anyway, especially in view of the fact that both Russell and Moore took their views about the nature of sense-data to be a part of their theories of perception. The view that Price took about the nature of sense-data strikes one as being in some respects similar to Russell's view about the nature of sensations in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND, though there were some important differences in the role sense-data played in their respective perceptual theories. The differences between Price, Moore, and Russell occurred in respect to the relations sense-data were thought to have to minds and to material things.

We can get a good indication of the character of Price's view about the nature of sense-data by considering the following statement of Price's:

> ...a sense-datum is an event of a unique order. It does not occur <u>in</u> anything, neither in a purely physical entity, nor in a complete thing, nor in a mind (or soul). And although, if non-hallucinatory, it is what may be called a basic constituent of 'total' Nature, i.e., of the world of complete things, yet it has no place in <u>Nature</u>.[1]

Sense-data were indeed unique entities in Price's theory, as they were

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[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 320.

for Russell. Sense-data were neither universals nor facts, but were rather particular existents. They were entities to which universals could be attributed and about which facts could be stated. They could be tied down temporally since they had a finite duration which, Price believed, never exceeded a few seconds.[1] They were not "substances," however, for substances had different properties than sense-data. Substances could change through time and could endure longer than a few seconds, but sense-data could do neither, Price thought. Sense-data also had spatial properties, and their spatial properties made them particularly unique. They were private to the mind which sensed them, as Moore and Russell argued. But in relation to other sense-data, they collectively exhibited publicly observable characteristics as constituents of material things.

Price described the unique spatial character of sense-data by saying that sense-data are "spatially incomplete." What he meant is that they were extended in space, having different sizes and spatial relations to each other, but they also had "no back, top, bottom, or insides."[2] They were what Price preferred to call "expanses" rather than "surfaces" or "parts of the surface of physical objects." Price argued that the Naive Realist thesis that visual and tactual sense-data are parts of the surfaces of material objects was refuted by a variant of the argument from illusion. Hence it was a mistake to hold that sense-data were surfaces or parts of the surfaces of physical objects. But sense-data were nevertheless extended in space, and they were "constituents" of the surfaces of material objects in non-hallucinatory cases. So they must have had a spatial nature of a certain unique kind for Price. This

[1] Ibid., pp. 114,115, and 145. [2] Ibid., p. 145.

nature was very curious, for sense-data did not occupy space, even though they came in different sizes and shapes and even though they had spatial relations to each other. Price said that a sense-datum as an "expanse"

> takes up no room, and keeps nothing else out, and though it may happen to be a constituent of the surface of a material object, it cannot itself be called material; for it does not possess the causal characteristics which are proper to matter, for instance, inertia or impenetrability. Further...both visual and tactual expanses exist only 'from a place', and this, though it is a way of being in space is incompatible with the occupation of space.[1]

In saying that these expanses"existed from a place," Price was saying something similar to what Russell meant by saying that there is a place at which a sense-datum appears, a place in private space. Of course "private space" was a logical construction for Russell while it was not for Price. But Russell would have agreed with Price that there was a meaning to saying that sense-data existed in space. Similarly there was some parallel between Price's remark that being in space is incompatible with the occupation of space and Russell's views about the spatial character of sense-data. For Russell would have argued that, in saying that a sense-datum appeared at a place in private space, we were not implying that sense-data occupied those places in the sense that they took up room. It would hardly be possible for an object to "occupy" a place in a logical construction in this meaning of the word. Similarly, Price was saying that sense-data did not occupy space; they did not take up any room; they kept nothing else out.

The uniqueness of sense-data also followed from certain other facts about their relation to minds and to material objects. Price believed that they were dependent in part upon minds in the sense that if there were

[1] Ibid., p. 130.

no minds to be aware of them, then there would be no actual sense-data.[1] But this in no way made them mental entities, Price inferred, following Moore and Russell. Nor did this make them wholly dependent upon our awareness of them. In fact sense-data were also causally dependent upon the brain and nervous system and more indirectly dependent upon what Price called the "physical occupants" of material things, in the sense that if certain processes in these entities were not taking place, then no sense-data would be generated. But again this in no way made sense-data physical events. In fact, Price argued that sense-data were neither "phases" of the mind nor phases of our brains and nervous systems, although they did have relations to events which were phases of our minds and brains. Price expressed this point by saying that sense-data were "intimately united with the psycho-cerebral events upon which they are wholly dependent for their origin, for their persistence, and for all of their qualities. We might express the situation metaphorically by saying that they are 'prolongations' of these phases of the psycho-cerebral compound."[2] And by the psycho-cerebral compound Price meant the compound of mind (or self) and the brain, nervous system, muscular system, etc., in short, the organism which the self "animates."[3]

Thus a sense-datum was related to a number of substantially diverse "substances" at the same time, although they neither were phases nor took the character of these substances. They were related to external objects by indirect causal dependence and by the relation of "belonging to," and they were related to the mind and to the brain of the percipient too.[4] On these points, Price's theory was very similar to Russell's theory about the nature of sensations, the theory found in Russell's work

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[1] Ibid., pp. 117 and 317. [2] Ibid., p. 136. [3] Ibid., p. 133.
[4] Ibid., p. 137.

Of 1926. Price did not talk as if sense-data were a neutral stuff out of which all substances, both minds and bodies, could be constructed, however. In fact, Price believed that the defects of Russell's Neutral Monism arose from arguing that both minds and bodies could be constructed solely out of sensations. This criticism of Russell will become more clear once Price's own thy about the relation of sense-data to material things is described.

Perceptual Acceptance

Price believed that, at any moment of time, a man's perceptual consciousness consisted of a set of different perceptual acts, all directed toward different material objects. Each of these acts was a member of a different series of perceptual acts, and each series had different material objects as objects. Moreover each series was in some stage of development in respect to that object. The stage of development depended upon the extent to which the acts in a series had collectively "confirmed" or disconfirmed both the existence of the material thing which was the object of the series and the properties of that thing. And, Price argued, one could demarcate these developmental stages of perceptual consciousness into different levels: at the simplest and most elementary level, there was the stage of "perceptual acceptance"; at a more advanced stage, there was "perceptual confidence"; and at the most advanced stage of development, there was "perceptual assurance." Thus perceptual consciousness in respect to any given series of perceptual acts was a process which in successful cases moved from perceptual acceptance to perceptual assurance about the existence and properties of a material thing. The extent to which this process was successful depended upon the way in which the sensory acts which accompanied perceptual acts revealed or

specified, via sense-data, the real properties of the material thing, if it existed.[1]

The first thing to note about an act of perceptual consciousness, no matter what its stage of development, is that Price believed it was not the same as an act of acquaintance with a sense-datum. And in believing this, he was perpetuating the distinction between sensing and perceiving which I earlier suggested was a basic feature of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. The distinction between the act of sensing and the act of perceptual consciousness is an analogue to Moore's distinction between direct and indirect apprehension, and Russell's distinction between knowledge by description and direct acquaintance. Price believed that an act of sensory acquaintance with a sense-datum occurred alongside an act of perceptual consciousness of a material thing (given that the material thing existed and was specified by that sense-datum). Thus we could not perceive an object unless we were acquainted with the sense-data which belonged to, and were indirectly caused by, that object (in a special sense of the word 'object' which will be discussed later as the 'physical occupant'). Moreover Price's views on the nature of direct acquaintance coincided closely with those of Moore before 1942 and those of Russell before 1919. Price's views about the act of perceptual consciousness were not the same as Moore's views about indirect apprehension and Russell's views about knowledge by description, however. In fact, Price's views were a great deal more complex than either the views of Russell or Moore. Thus Price was

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[1] In our daily life, we are most often in a state of perceptual confidence rather than perceptual assurance about these matters, according to Price. Ibid., p. 203.

willing to say much more about the nature of a perceptual act than Moore was willing to say about an act of indirect apprehension. Similarly Price's description of an act of perceptual consciousness was "phenomenologically" more intricate and in many respects different from Russell's depiction of the relation of descriptive knowledge.

The best way to understand what Price meant by the concept of perceptual consciousness and by the concept of an act of perceptual consciousness is to consider what was involved in Price's analysis of what occurred in a single series of perceptual acts in which one material object was present to consciousness. The first thing that was involved was the notion of perceptual acceptance. The first act of a series of perceptual acts represented perceptual consciousness in its simplest and primary form, the form of perceptual acceptance. At this stage in the consciousness of acts in the series, Price believed that perceptual consciousness amounted to the absence of disbelief about the existence and nature of the material object thought to be present to consciousness; it was a "taking-for-granted," an acceptance, that there was a material object, say an envelope, before one to which the sense-datum with which I was then acquainted belonged as a constituent, and it was a taking-for-granted that this object had a front surface of a certain sort which was "specified" by this sense-datum.[1] In subsequent perceptual acts of the series, along with subsequent acts of acquaintance, the front surface of the envelope came to be specified more fully, Price believed.

To talk about specification here may be misleading, Price thought. It might imply that we were judging that the sense-datum did specify the front surface of the envelope in the sense that we judged that the

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[1] Ibid., p. 142.

sense-datum was part of, or coincident with, the surface of the material thing.[1] But this was not what happened at the level of perceptual acceptance, Price thought. What happened was that, though we did not take the sense-datum to be identical with this front surface, we also failed to assert a difference between the sense-datum and the front surface. No cognitive matters of this sort were raised by our minds in the initial stage of perceptual consciousness.[2]

To say that in the first perceptual act of a series, we take for granted the existence and nature of some material object having a certain front surface, was not to imply that we knew that the material object did exist or that it had the surface we took it to have.[3] If this had not been true, then whenever we perceived an object, the object would have existed, which is of course absurd. Instead, Price said that "the object of any one act of perceptual consciousness is as such ostensible only and has, as it were, a prima facie character. It 'claims' to be real and to have certain characteristics, and it may in the end turn out to have them; but equally it may not."[4] The ostensible object of a perceptual act may turn out to be real, but no one act could "tell" us this. Only after subsequent acts of the series have "confirmed" this initial claim could we really be convinced that the object existed and that it had these characteristics. If this distinction between the ostensible and the real object were not made, then no place would have

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[1] Ibid., p. 143.

[2] It should be added that no single sense-datum ever could completely specify the shape, size, and position of this front surface, although it could limit the possibilities so far as these properties went. Ibid., p. 144.

[3] Ibid., pp. 146-47. [4] Ibid., p. 148.

been provided in Price's theory for cases of hallucination or any other cases in which no material object was present.

To explain better what he meant by "perceptual acceptance," Price compared it with sensing or acquaintance. Sensing is a form of intuitive knowing about which there can be no doubt, Price believed. As an intuitive act, its object must be real for when we intuit something, that thing must exist to be intuited. However, when we perceptually accept something, it need not exist, Price believed. The material thing which we take for granted may turn out, on subsequent acts, not to exist, to be an hallucination or a simple case of not really perceiving anything at all. But when we sense a sense-datum, there can be no doubt about its existence. Thus Price suggested that we call perceptual acts "pseudo-intuitive" rather than "intuitive." An act of perceptual acceptance resembles an intuitive awareness of a sense-datum, but it falls short of being the same as that awareness, since the ostensible object may never turn out to be a real object also, and since the qualities of the accompanying sense-data may never be "real." In perceptual acceptance, then, we are pseudo-intuitively conscious of a material object, and we take the sense-data we sense to be real constituents of it by failing to distinguish our sense-data from the surface of the thing.

In saying that we take for granted a material thing, what was meant was that we take certain propositions to be true about that thing. Price said,

> what is taken for granted is, after all, that so and so is the case--that a material thing exists here and now, that it has a surface of such and such a sort...---in short, what is taken for granted is a set of propositions.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 166.

In an act of perceptual acceptance, we took to be true a large set of propositions which included not only the propositions that a material thing existed, that it had a certain sort of surface, that it was called an "envelope," but also a large number of propositions which described the characteristics of the envelope, such as that it was white, that it was rectangular, etc. In taking this set of propositions to be true we were doing so without sufficient evidence because "the intuitable characteristics of the sense-datum now sensed provided no sufficient justification" for those propositions.[1] Since sense-data never completely specify the characteristics of the material thing, the evidence we had for this set of propositions was not complete. Nevertheless, this evidence could become more complete by sensing more of the appropriate sense-data.

Some critics have maintained that it is very difficult to see how we could consciously take these propositions for granted or take them to be true without in some way being involved in a judgmental activity.[2] Although Price did not elaborate on this point too heavily, he never affirmed that perceptual acceptance occurred without judgmental activity taking place alongside it. In fact, he believed that we did make judgments about what we perceive. What he denied was that expressions like "this is a table" and "this table is brown" were judgments of perception.[3] The basis of his position was his belief that perceptual

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[1] Ibid., p. 168.

[2] This was A. R. Murray's position in his "Critical Notice of H. H. Price's Perception," Mind, n.s., XLII (October, 1933), 511-12. It was also G. E. Moore's position by implication, for Moore took such statements as "That is a table" to be perceptual judgments. See Moore, "Some Judgments of Perception," p. 220.

[3] Price, Perception, pp. 162-65.

acceptance was "prejudicial" and as such only supplied the subject matter for judgments about material things. To take something for granted, he argued, is not to make a judgment about it, although in that "higher" form of consciousness which accompanies perceptual consciousness, we do indeed make judgments about material objects. Doubt about the existence and properties of a material thing was not, as such, part of perceptual consciousness itself. It was, instead, a part of the complex cognitive state of mind which existed when something was perceived and when judgments were made about it. Perceiving did not involve any doubting or judging, Price believed, but these activities certainly did accompany perceiving and sensing.

Perceptual Assurance

The ultimate or final stage in the developing process of perceptual consciousness was the stage of perceptual assurance. Perceptual assurance differed from perceptual acceptance in that the former amounted to a "settled conviction" about the existence and characteristics of a particular material object, while the latter amounted to taking these things for granted.[1] We arrived at perceptual assurance through a whole series of perceptual acts each of which progressively confirmed what was taken for granted in the original act of the series and in the acts subsequent to that original act. Thus, whenever we perceived an envelope, for example, we were constantly in the process of sensing new sense-data every few moments. The qualities of these sense-data changed in an orderly fashion as a result of changes in our position in relation to the object. Similarly, in conjunction with these successive acts of sensing

[1] Ibid., p. 171.

sense-data, we were in a constant process of perceiving different ostensible envelopes and of taking for granted that each of these ostensible envelopes represented one and the same real envelope having a front surface to which these sense-data belonged. As the perceptual acts "piled up," what we took for granted in each act became progressively confirmed by subsequent acts of being perceptually conscious of the table.[1]

From our standpoint the acts of a series needed to confirm or disconfirm each other since "every perceptual act is indefinite in greater or less degree,"[2] Price said. Our estimation of the real qualities of the material thing, if it existed, would be left incomplete otherwise. The initial act of a perceptual series never revealed clearly and distinctly all of the properties of its object; it only revealed certain properties of the surface of the object that was "turned" toward us. Even then these properties were not always clearly seen, for the conditions for optimum perception are not always present, Price claimed. This fact was described by saying that some sense-data have more specific detail than others since they are obtained under more favorable perceptual conditions. Thus we get a better look at an envelope when it is on the table in front of us, for example, than if it were across the room partially hidden under some magazines. Thus some sense-data were "better" than others, which is to say, that "a 'good' sense-datum is a relatively differentiated one, containing a relatively large amount of detail (i.e., many distinguishable parts or qualities), while a 'bad' sense-datum is a relatively homogeneous or undifferentiated one."[3] It was only subsequent acts, then, which could make things more definite, although the

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[1] Ibid., p. 172. [2] Ibid., p. 173. [3] Ibid., p. 223.

extent to which they in fact did this depended upon the initial position of the perceiver and what he did to change that position, or to change his relation to the object.

Thus, though each perceptual act of a series was only a taking-for-granted of certain things about a material thing, in relation to other members of the series, successive acts, if they were had, could confirm or make definite most of what was indefinite in the original act of the series. Price thought that we could conclude that our original act of perceptual acceptance was hallucinatory or illusory only if subsequent acts and sbusequent sense-data did not make definite (or specify) what was originally indefinite or not specific.[1] If the effort was made to determine whether we were having an hallucination or seeing an illusion, then this could be discovered by trying to confirm what was originally sensed. In cases of hallucinations we became convinced of the non-existence of the real or "ontological" material thing which was taken for granted originally in our perceptual series, although Price thought not all people who have hallucinations would try to discover this. In the case of illusions, Price believed that abnormal specification problems would arise in subsequent perceptual acts. That is, the sense-data would not turn out to specify the front surface of the material object correctly.[2] To understand fully what an hallucinatory sense-datum and what an illusory sense-datum were, the notion of a family of sense-data needed first to be cleared up.

I should note here that there is more to this process than has been discussed here, e. g., we need some way to insure that each different ostensible object presented by successive acts of a series is the

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[1] Ibid., p. 174. [2] Ibid., pp. 174 and 185, note 2.

same material object. There must be some sort of continuity present in the series of presented objects so that we can know that the same object is presented in each act. Price took this problem up in his analysis of material thinghood when he discussed the way in which "standard solids" could be constructed out of sense-data, hence I shall defer a discussion of this difficulty until that time.

The Justification of Perceptual Consciousness

As a necessary adjunct to his analysis of perceptual consciousness, Price thought that he must also discuss whether the process involved in it was a "valid" one or not.[1] This was not a validation of his analysis itself, but of whether we were justified in being perceptually assured about the existence and characteristics of an object after having had a series of connected perceptual acts. He was not throwing his analysis of perceptual consciousness into doubt; rather he was asking whether, when sense-data increasingly specify the properties of a material object, we were justified in believing that the co-existent perceptual acts successively confirm each other and make it reasonable to be perceptually assured about the existence and properties of this object.

Price argued we could believe that specification of what is taken for granted is tantamount to confirmation "if there were some independent reason for thinking that each of the specifying acts is in itself likely to be correct; i.e., for thinking it likely that the material thing presented in each case to the mind does actually exist, and does have some sort of surface which it ostensibly has."[2] We could not require that any perceptual act be certainly correct, Price supposed, since it was always possible that the ostensible object of that act was not also a real object

[1] Ibid., p. 180. [2] Ibid.

or did not really have the sort of surface it ostensibly had.[1] Hence he was looking for something less than certainty here. If he could affirm that a perceptual act was likely to be correct, that the material thing taken for granted probably existed and probably had its ostensible surface, then specification of that surface by sense-data would amount to confirmation of the existence of a material object having such a surface.

The way in which Price did claim to show that this was true was by appealing to what he called the "Principle of Confirmability." This principle stated that

> the existence of a particular visual or tactual sense-datum is prima facie evidence (1) for the existence of a material thing such that this sense-datum belongs to it, (2) for the possession by this thing of a front surface of a certain general sort.[2]

Unless this principle were true, Price argued, "no confirmation of a perceptual act by other perceptual acts would ever be possible." Or, if this principle were false, then we could never take the existence of visual and tactual sense-data to be evidence for the existence of material objects. Now Price thought that this Principle was true, but he had some difficulty in showing why it was true.

Price argued that it was an *a priori* principle in that it served to make the observation of material objects possible.[3] But it was not a self-evident principle nor was it deducible from any other principles of perceptual theory or metaphysics. We must base our acceptance of its truth on a consideration of actual instances of perceptual acts in which the principle is instantiated. We need to look at perceptual consciousness in all of its stages of development from acceptance to assurance, and

> if we do reflect on actual instances of complete perceptual consciousness, we find that it is in each case

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[1] Ibid., p. 184. [2] Ibid., p. 185. [3] Ibid., p. 186.

> evident that by further specifying our original act we do so far confirm it. The Principle of Confirmability is simply a technical way of stating this evident fact.[1]

The evidence that the Principle is true comes from looking at particular instances of series of perceptual acts. In looking at these series we discover that the existence of a material thing in fact becomes more and more likely or probable as the specification process proceeds. The Principle then has a sort of inductive certainty.

It should be observed here that this conclusion is not quite as evident as Price makes it out to be, since the possibility of taking the existence of sense-data to be probable evidence for the existence of material things rested in turn upon the question of whether there was a continuity in our perceptual acts with respect to the same material object. If we could not be certain that the sense-data which are sensed in accompaniment with our perceptual acts fit together to form a "standard solid" or a "nuclear solid," then later acts in a series could not confirm the existence of a material thing which was taken for granted in the initial act of the series. The possibility of confirmation rested in turn on the possibility of fitting sense-data together, or of knowing that sense-data fit into a series. Hence it was misleading for Price to affirm that it just is the case that in perceptual consciousness the existence of material things becomes more probable as the specification process proceeds. If there were flaws in his views about how we can know that sense-data are related to form a unified and complete solid enduring through time, then his claim that we could be assured about the existence of material things was not clearly justifiable or "valid."[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 189.

[2] J. W. Blyth argued that there were a number of reasons why we could never know that a set of sense-data had the required relations to each other, and thus concluded that Price had given no adequate reason for perceptual assurance about the existence of a material thing. See J. W. Blyth, "A Discussion of Mr. Price's Perception," Mind, n.s., XLIV (January, 1935), 59-64.

Price's Analysis of the Object of Perception: Material Thinghood

The analysis of perceptual consciousness must be succeeded by an analysis of the nature of a material object, Price believed. Included in this second analysis were examinations of the relation of "belonging to" which obtained between sense-data and material things, and of the relations which sense-data had to each other. Price believed that a material thing was really a co-incidence of two things: namely, a family of sense-data and what he called a "physical occupant." This meant that sense-data had familial relations to each other and were related to material things by being members of those families which composed part of what a material thing was. It should become clear, once this analysis is discussed, in what way Price's perceptual theory was a blend of the causal and phenomenalistic theories, without being either alone. I shall also draw some comparisons with Price's theory and that of Russell before 1919.

Price believed that a part of what it meant to say that a sense-datum belongs to a material object is that that sense-datum is a member of a family of sense-data. A family of sense-data was one of the two co-incident constituents of a material object.[1] Hence an explication of the expression, "sense-data are members of families" was a large part of the explication of the relation of "belonging to" which obtained between sense-data and material things. The family relations which sense-data had were ones which made them "collectible" into families.

To talk about collectibility did not mean, for Price, that we in any way actually did, as a matter of psychological fact, mentally collect sense-data together in the process of perceptual consciousness. Price

[1] Price, Perception, p. 303.

did believe that in taking for granted the existence of a material thing to which a particular sense-datum belongs, we were taking for granted that there was a family of sense-data of which this sense-datum was a member. He believed that in further determining or specifying the nature of a material thing, we had to determine the nature and constitution of this family--what other sense-data it consisted of, what its properties were, what sort of standard solid was its nucleus, etc. But none of this was a description of psychological fact which could be intersubjectively verified by scientific psychology. Rather Price intended his remarks to be pre-psychological, to be a description of what must logically and metaphysically be the case with respect to the nature of perception both in regard to the act and the object of perception. His analysis was similar in intent to Russell's epistemological construction of a material object in that a reflective act of the philosopher produced it. Empirical facts about perception would have made no difference to Price's analysis of material thinghood and of families of sense-data if these analyses were somehow presupposed by empirical psychology.[1] Of course, much the same could be said of the remarks which Russell made about construction as a logical process in OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD and after. The difference between Russell and Price on this matter is that Russell also thought that his logical construction was based in psychological fact, especially in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND. And thus some of Russell's remarks about perception, those having to do with mnemic phenomena in perception, for example, were subject to empirical falsification or verification.

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[1]Price believed that any physical science which tried to give an account of perception, such as physiology, was based on the philosophical theory of perception. See Ibid., pp. 2 and 37, e.g.

Price thought that if we considered all of the sense-data which belong to the same thing during a certain period of time, supposing for a moment that we knew what a "thing" is, then we would discover a large collection of sense-data, largely visual and tactual data, which differed from each other in respect to certain characteristics. This collection was called by Price a "family of sense-data."[1] A family of sense-data was a set of primarily visual and tactual sense-data, some actual and some "obtainable," consisting of a "standard solid" along with a number of "distortion series" of sense-data.[2] And there were essentially two methods by which sense-data could be collected together into families, Price thought. There was "the gradual transition method" and there was the method of "specific detail." Both methods relied on the fact that sense-data in a family exhibit certain family characteristics. In determining what a family was, Price relied most heavily on visual sense-data and the properties we visually see sense-data to have, and less heavily on tactual sense-data and tactual properties. By considering these two kinds of data, we could construct a "visuo-tactual solid" as part of a family of sense-data. Price also believed that other sense-data, such as auditory and "thermal" data, could be related to these solids, but he appeared to believe that no other kind of sense-data could be constructed into families of their own. In constructing a "standard solid" Price preferred to rely on visual sense-data supplemented by tactual data which together formed "a center of maximum intensity for sounds, smells, and thermal data."[3] If anything, gustatory and olfactory sense-data were non-constructible in the sense that they could not be collected into solids. They formed distortion series and thus could belong to

[1] Ibid., p. 218. [2] Ibid., p. 272. [3] Ibid., p. 277.

families of which visuo-tactual solids were parts, but Price didn't appear to believe that they could be fitted together for the purpose of constructing solids.

The first method of collecting visual sense-data together was the gradual transition method. This method was based on the fact that visual sense-data directly and indirectly resemble each other.[1] Thus when we walk around a table, the sense-data which occur immediately after each other in our successive set of sense-acts directly resemble each other in respect to such characteristics as shape, size, and color. If we take members from the set which are separated from each other because of the intervention of other sense-data in the series, then there are indirect qualitative resemblances between these sense-data, too. Gradual transitions in the properties of sense-data can be sensed by simply changing one's position in an orderly way. The same transitions occur in cases of illusory and of "distorted" perceiving, Price claimed.[2] In fact all of the visual sense-data which we sense when perceiving an object, whether they be illusory or not, could be ordered into gradual transition groups with the members being related by direct and indirect resemblance of shape, size, and color.

Strictly speaking, Price believed that there were two kinds of transition which took place: qualitatve transition and positional or spatial transition.[3] Sense-data resembled each other qualitatively both in respect to nonspatial characteristics like color and in respect to spatial characteristics like shape and size. But there was a difference between noticing that two sense-data resembled each other qualitatively and noticing that sense-data which adjoin each other in space resembled

[1] Ibid., p. 208. [2] Ibid., p. 209. [3] Ibid., p. 216.

each other qualitatively. And it was not enough that the transitions which were present in perceptual consciousness be just qualitative if we were to know that two sense-data belonged to the same family. We also had to know the "adjunctive" or positional properties of sense-data.

By using the method of gradual transition Price thought that we could discover a set of sense-data which resembled each other in respect of size, shape, and spatial position. These formed a family of sense-data. The members of this family differed in respect to their constructibility of collectibility, however. Some of them were constructible or "spatially synthesizable" and some were not. Those which were constructible formed what Price called a "nuclear solid" or a "standard solid." Those which did not formed "distortion series."

Whether visual sense-data were constructible or not depended upon the presence of the properties of sensible depth and sensible direction.[1] Sensible depth and sensible direction were not in any way properties which could be measured by a perceiver; they were not metric properties of sense-data. Nevertheless if we considered our field of view at any moment of time we could visually sense that some of our sense-data were "close in" while others were "further out" in that field, Price claimed. And we could also sense that some of them faced in different directions to each other. Price believed that for those sense-data which were "perfectly constructible," it was true that their other characteristics, such as shape, were independent of the "direction" which they sensibly faced in our field of view. This only occurred within a small range of sensible depths, however, so that only a certain sub-group of the sense-data composing our field of view at any moment were perfectly constructible

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[1] Ibid., p. 218.

into solids. These sense-data had what Price called "perfect stereoscopy" and formed what he called the "nuclear solid." In the case of most of our sense-data, their characteristics are not independent of their sensible direction, Price thought. These sense-data turn out to be "further out" in our field of view than the perfectly stereoscopic ones; some are at maximum depth and hence are completely flat, while others are somewhere in between maximum and optimum depth and exhibit varying degrees of "stereoscopy."

It is the perfectly stereoscopic sense-data which were important, Price thought, for they formed that small subset of a family of sense-data called the "nuclear solid." These sense-data were constructible into a single, three-dimensional, "closed" solid in our perception, collectively they composed what could in part be called "the object of perception," disregarding for the moment the causal characteristics which we perceived that object to have. Those sense-data which were less perfectly stereoscopic also were constructible into solids of a sort, but they were imperfect solids ranging in degrees of dimensionality "away from" the nuclear solid. The non-constructible, non-stereoscopic sense-data also formed groups of a sort, or "distortions series," but they did not form solids. These series were constructed by arranging the distorted sense-data according to certain of their characteristics such as shape.

Visual sense-data could also be collected together by the method of specific detail, Price thought.[1] Some sense-data are "better" than others, Price claimed, because they are obtained under more favorable perceptual conditions. Thus we get a better look at a table at twelve noon on a sunny day than we do at dusk, or a better look close up than

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[1] Ibid., p. 223.

far away. And this meant that sense-data differ in respect to the qualitative detail which we sense them to have. We could take that collection of visual sense-data referred to before as the "family" and order it according to the amount of differentiatedness which these sense-data had. The result would be quite similar to that obtained by relying on the stereoscopic characteristics of sense-data. There would be a nuclear group of sense-data which possessed the maximum amount of detail obtainable, and deviating from this group would be different series of sense-data with less and less detail.

The problem with this method was that the nuclear group that resulted from using it was not necessarily the "upper limit" of what could be obtained, Price said. If we looked at our table through a microscope close up, then we could clearly obtain a nuclear group which possessed more specific detail than the one obtained by the naked eye.[1] Hence there had to be some way of deciding which group should represent the group obtainable by this method, and there had to be a way of connecting this group with the group obtained by considering the stereoscopic characteristics of sense-data. By a piece of complicated reasoning which is too detailed for this account, Price argued that a nuclear solid could be conceived in which these problems were resolved.[2] The resulting solid was called the "standard solid" of the family of sense-data. We need to keep in mind that this "standard solid" was standard only for sight, however, and, to complete the theory, sense-data of other sense-modalities had to be taken into account. Price did do this briefly for the sense of touch, and he argued that the nuclear tactual solid could be related to the nuclear visual solid to form a "visuo-tactual solid."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 226. [2] Ibid., pp. 226-27. [3] Ibid., pp. 245 and 277.

Other sense-data, such as auditory and "thermal" sense-data, could be "related to" this solid. But Price argued that they could not be constructed into families of their own. Price said, "It is quite clear that they do not have shapes, as visual and tactual data do, and therefore they cannot possibly form families of their own in the sense in which we are using that term," but "we can...include them in the visuotactual family."[1] Nevertheless, there were certain wild sense-data which could be collected into a family in any "intimate sense," just as there were certain visual sense-data which could not be connected up either, namely, visual illusions. The role that non-visual and non-tactual sense-data played in Price's theory is not very clear, however.

The visual and tactual standard solid which formed the "center of maximum intensity for sounds, smells, and thermal data" had certain characteristics itself, apart from the characteristics which its individual sense-datum members had; it had a shape, a size, and a position in addition to having a particular color, taste, and smell. In fact, these properties were those which we perceived the object of perception to have and which were unfolded in the process of perceptual consciousness, for the standard solid was, to a large extent, the object of perception. The curious thing about these properties, is that they were collective, publicly observable characteristics which the solid possessed as a whole, even though the constituent sense-datum members of this solid, the "nuclear" sense-data, already exhibited similar properties individually which were privately sensed. Individual visual sense-data, for example, had sizes, shapes, and spatial positions, which were private to the person who sensed them. But when those that were perfectly

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[1] Ibid., p. 229.

stereoscopic were collected together in standard solids, they exhibited publicly similar properties in combination with each other.

This clearly shows that Price held a two-properties doctrine; the properties which individual nuclear sense-data had were duplicated in the normal act of perception (normal in the sense that an object was there to be perceived). It isn't true to say that the properties nuclear sense-data had were the properties which standard solids had; rather the properties of standard solids, while similar in a qualitative and positional sense, were different from the properties of their constituents.

This is a curious doctrine for several reasons. First, Price said that non-nuclear sense-data were not in physical space while nuclear sense-data were in physical space in a "limited" or special sense. Nuclear sense-data were in public space only by virtue of being related to each other, or by virtue of having collective characteristics which we all could perceive.[1] This meant that the nucelar set as a whole, the standard solid, was in public space in a "weak" sense while its individual members were in private space! But it is difficult to see why the mere fact that nuclear sense-data were in some group relation to each other should make their collective properties publicly observable. It is easy enough to admit that sense-data should have properties in common, and that they should have collective properties too. But it is an entirely different matter to allow that their collective properties should be "objective." This view certainly made the transition from private to public a rather easy affair, but Price did nothing more than assert that nuclear sense-data exhibited publicly observable qualities. No argument was given to support this doctrine, important as it was. The bare fact that sense-

[1] Ibid., p. 251.

data have relations to each other, however, does not clearly imply that they should collectively exhibit properties similar to those that they have individually.

Russell had a doctrine which was similar to this, only for Russell, private and public space were logical constructions, and there was no need to believe literally that a material object should be publicly observable. But the case was different with Price, for Price appeared to be using a more literal sense of "perceiving the properties of an object."

What Price said then is that the shape, size, color, and position of the visuo-tactual solid are those non-causal properties which the material object is perceived to have in perceptual consciousness. The properties we perceive objects like tables to have are just the same as those collective ones which nuclear sense-data exhibit by being in special kinds of familial relations to each other. These properties did not exhaust the properties which we perceived the object of perception to have, however, for there were other ones, causal properties, such as impenetrability and inertia, which these objects exhibited, too. These causal properties were ones which were not immediately properties of the standard solid, Price believed, but were properties of the "physical occupant" which was co-incident with that solid.

Before this account of the theory of standard solids is to be complete, two other matters have to be taken care of. First, we need to deal with the problem of determining how we can know that a set of sense-data fit together to form a standard solid; second, we need to consider the problem of determining how a succession of sense-data can make us aware of a standard solid, or of a family, enduring through time.

The first problem was answered by what Price called the "Method of Progressive Adjunction."[1] We need a procedure of this sort in order to get the nuclear members of our family together, or to verify introspectively or immanently that these nuclear sense-data form a standard solid. This method enabled us to connect up into a single set those successive sense-data we sensed when, for example, walking around a table. By using the procedure we could know not only that one sense-datum was beyond another in either visual or tactual space, but also "by repeating it we could know that the set of sense-data are so related as to form a closed three-dimensional surface, i.e., a standard solid."[2] What we had to do, was to sense two successive pairs of sense data (AB and BC) so that the members of each pair sensibly adjoined each other and faced in different directions, and so that the pairs had a member in common and had the same relation obtaining between their own members. If we did this, Price believed that we could know that C was beyond or behind A, even though we may not sense these two sense-data simultaneously. And we could expand the procedure with successive pairs, such as CD and DE, to gather together eventually all of the nuclear members of a family so as to form a single, complete, and closed three-dimensional solid. This meant that ultimately, in any progressive adjunction series, we should be able to sense a pair whose last member was the first member of our first pair, namely, A. Otherwise, our series would not be closed.

There are several areas of difficulty with the method of progressive adjunction which should be noted here. These difficulties result from Price's view as to the nature of sense-data, in particular his

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[1] Ibid., p. 242. [2] Ibid., p. 243.

belief that sense-data are unchanging events. First, if sense-data change in any of their properties, then a progressive adjunction series could never get started because we would not be able to obtain a member common to two successive pairs. Price thought that sense-data did not change, but he never gave an argument to show that they did not. So this could be a weak point in the process of forming solids.[2]

Moreover, Price's view that sense-data are particular events makes the completion of any progressive adjunction series impossible. As particular events, sense-data would be datable in time, and thus we could never sense exactly the same sense-datum more than once. This being so, and it also being the case that progressive adjunction takes more time than elapses during the sensing of a single pair of sense-data, we could never sense the first member of our first pair more than once. Thus, we could never complete the adjunctive series, for Price required that the first and last members of the series be identical.[3] This would make it impossible to fit sense-data together into standard solids. Price, I believe, was aware of this second difficulty, but it is not clear how he solved it.[4] This difficulty would be easily removed by requiring resemblance rather than identity of members in the progressive adjunction series. Given Price's view that sense-data could exactly resemble each other in a qualitative sense, this would probably have been a way for him to answer this difficulty. But the problem still would

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[1] Ibid., pp. 113-16.

[2] J. W. Blyth argued that since sense-data did change and were datable as events, the method of progressive adjunction would not work. See Blyth, "A Discussion of Mr. Price's Perception," pp. 61-2.

[3] This can be inferred from what Price says on p. 175 of Perception.

[4] Ibid., pp. 175-76.

remain then to determine how we could know that two sense-data were exactly similar in a qualitative sense. Price did not perceive this to be a problem, but Wittgenstein and others took it to be a serious one.

The second matter that needed to be cleared up about a standard solid is the problem of determining how a succession of sense-data could make us aware of a family, and hence a solid, enduring through time. This discussion of families and of standard solids has thus far paid no attention to the fact that Price believed that families and solids endured through time. We never do sense all of the members of a family or even all of the nuclear members simultaneously, he thought; when we do, we can do so only successively. Despite this fact, Price thought, we still tend to think of the family as a whole and of its standard solid as composed of co-existing constituents. The problem arises then of showing how a simple "succession of sense-data can make us aware of a persistent whole of co-existent parts."[1] How could a family of sense-data, and hence a standard solid, be said to exist through time when at any given moment only a small number, and sometimes none, of the constituent members of it existed? To solve this problem Price introduced the notion of an "obtainable sense-datum" into his analysis of material thinghood.

A family of sense-data is normally composed of some members which are actually existing and some which are only obtainable. A family, Price said, "is really a persistent whole of <u>possibilities</u>; it is only the <u>actualizations</u> of these which are necessarily successive."[2] And an obtainable sense-datum, he thought, is one which would be actual, if certain events were to occur in the perceiver. These events were

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 261. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 262.

> other visual data in terms of which change in point of view is defined. Thus, when I say that S is obtainable I really mean that if I change my point of view (or 'point of contact') in such and such a way, then a sense-datum of the S kind will exist and I shall sense it.[1]

When changing our point of view, however, we had to do so in such a way that we obtained a progressive adjunction series of visual data. Otherwise we would not have eliminated the possibility that we could walk away from the object completely.[2]

Price was attacked for a circularity in the procedure by which he introduced obtainable sense-data. So far as Price's actual procedure went, the definition of an obtainable sense-datum was prior to the definitions of a material thing and of a physical occupant. This is so because the definition of an obtainable sense-datum was introduced to account for that defining property of a family which signified that the family prolonged itself through time, and because there had to be a definition of what a family of sense-data was before there could be a definition of what a material thing was. Hence, in the definition of an obtainable sense-datum, there should have been no reference to the physical occupant or to the material thing to which the obtainable sense-datum belonged, since this would have led to circularity in Price's procedure. The difficulty is, Price's critics argued, that Price did need to refer to material things and to physical occupants in order to define what an obtainable sense-datum was.

In his critical discussion of PERCEPTION J. W. Blyth argued that "the real conditions of obtainability cannot be stated without reference to material things and the observer's body,"[3] though Price himself

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[1] Ibid., p. 264. [2] Ibid., p. 266.

[3] Blyth, "A Discussion of Mr. Price's Perception," p. 64.

argued that "change of point of view can be defined in purely visual terms, without any mention of the observer's body."[1] The reason why this is so, Blyth suggested, is that there must be some persistent conditions which guarantee that when I change my point of view in order to obtain sense-data, a sense-datum will be obtained. A. R. M. Murray, another critic of Price, put a similar point in the following way:

> Surely the mere placing of an observer at a point of view is not sufficient guarantee that a certain sense-datum will then be sensed by him. It is also necessary that some region... should possess the power (or contain something which possesses the power) which causes the sense-datum to occur when the observer is placed at the point of view in question.[2]

Price believed that it was the "physical occupant" which was the indirect cause or "source" of a sense-datum being sensed;[3] the physical occupant and a sense-datum were connected by the familial relation of "vertical causality."[4] In view of this fact, it was a condition of the obtainability of sense-data that this physical occupant already existed and that we understood what it was. Murray said,

> The essential difficulty which confronts Mr. Price's theory seems to be the difficulty in understanding how a sense-datum can be continuously obtainable throughout a given period of time unless during that period there is something continuously existent to 'guarantee its obtainability.[5]

This physical occupant would be such a continuously existent entity. But at this point in the logical development of Price's theory, it would also have been illegitimate to introduce the physical occupant unless that

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[1] Perception, p. 264.

[2] Murray, "Critical Notice of H. H. Price's Perception," p. 520.

[3] Price, Perception, p. 310. [4] Ibid., pp. 310 and 320.

[5] Murray, "Cricitcal Notice of H. H. Price's Perception," p. 520.

development was to be purposely circular. Price's view of the nature of the "origination" of sense-data, namely, that they are caused indirectly by physical objects, was a pre-condition, logically, for their obtainability. There were other pre-conditions which pertained to the observer's body, the condition that he have a well-functioning nervous system, for example. Hence the idea of a physical occupant and the idea of the observer's body had logically to be introduced to explain the obtainability of sense-data before it was logically permissible to do so according to Price's plan of development. The ironic point about this charge is that Price himself accused the "causal theory" of reversing the logical development required to explain the concept of perception.[1] But, if the above criticisms were valid, then the "hysteron proteron" which he accused the causal theory of falling into was actually a feature of the development of his own theory.

The notion of a family of sense-data, and consequently the notion of a standard solid, had then been defined as thoroughly as Price thought possible. He had shown, he believed, that a family was a set of primarily visual and tactual sense-data, some actual and some obtainable, consisting of a standard solid along with a number of distortion series. The question remained, What kind of entity is this family of sense-data? It was not a particular existent, he believed, at least not in the same way that the sense-data which composed it were, nor was it merely a set of such existents. Yet there is a sense, he thought, in which it did endure through time. This is not to say that a family and solid endured through time like sense-data or material objects did, for it would have been absurd to say that a "system of possibilities" physically endured

[1] Price, Perception, pp. 310 and 314.

through time. For this reason, Price said that a family and, hence a standard solid, "prolonged itself" through time.[1]

Actually there were a number of ways in which a family resembled a material object, Price thought, beside the point that they prolonged themselves through time. Families (a) were public to a number of observers; (b) were neutral as between the various senses, containing data of sight, touch, and of the other senses; (c) were not dependent upon any percipient since their members were obtainable both when no one was obtaining them and when no one ever did obtain them; and (d) contained subsets, the nuclear solids, which had spatial characteristics. All of these were characteristics which were very similar to ones which material things had.[2] Nevertheless, a family of sense-data, and its standard solid, was not the same thing as a material thing. Material things were something more than families, Price believed, since material things displayed "causal characteristics" which families did not possess.

In fact, a family of sense-data is really what Price referred to as a "construct." A construct, Price believed, "is not something manufactured by someone's intelligence; but is simply a complex idea defined in terms of certain intuited particulars having certain specified relations between them."[3] And a construct was pretty close to what Russell called a "logical construction";

> In the language of some writers, we may say that a family is a peculiar kind of <u>construct</u>; meaning by this, first, that it contains within itself a number of elements (united in a peculiar way), secondly, that it is known to us not by acquaintance or intuitive apprehension, but by an activity of 'synthesis' or 'construction', i.e., by recalling and holding before the mind a number of data successively and separately presented and then recognizing that they form a whole of a certain kind. (Such synthesis or construction is not of course

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[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 272. [2] <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 273-74. [3] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 316, footnote 1.

> a form of making, but of discovery. There are unitary wholes whether we discover them or not. To that extent words like 'construction' and 'synthesis' are misleading, and perhaps we ought rather to speak of syngnosis.)[1]

The difference between Price's "family" and Russell's "thing of common sense" lies not in the nature of the construction process but in the nature of the elements involved. Both constructions relied on sense-data, but Russell also used sensibilia while Price used obtainable sense-data. The difference between obtainable sense-data and sensibilia is that the latter existed when they were not sensed, while obtainable sense-data did not exist at all.[2] Furthermore, for Russell, the thing of common sense was not a whole composed of two co-incident parts, one being a family of sense-data and another a "physical occupant," as Price maintained. The notion of a material thing was entirely different in Russell and Price. In Russell's period of 1914 until 1919, material things were defined solely in terms of sense-data and sensibilia, while in Russell's early period material things were defined in conventional scientific terms. These differences will become important in evaluating the nature of both Russell and Price's perceptual theory.

We could hardly expect a construct like a family of sense-data to possess causal characteristics, Price believed. Constructs are mental entities which are "discovered" by the constructive activity of the mind. As such they would hardly be the sort of thing which could show a resistance to touch, Price argued. There were a number of other reasons why families could not possess causal characteristics. For one thing, causal characteristics could be actualized in spatial regions in which no sense-data were being sensed and could occur all throughout

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[1] Ibid., pp. 286-87. [2] Ibid., p. 284.

these regions simultaneously while sense-data could not.[1] Moreover, even though both the occurrence of causal characteristics and the existence of sense-data was intermittent, when sense-data ceased to be actualized, causal characteristics did not necessarily cease.[2] If there was a correspondence between the causal characteristics of a material thing and the occurrence of sense-data, Price said, and if these causal characteristics were manifested continuously throughout a period of time, then there would have been a continuous sensing of sense-data throughout that same period. But this is a condition which, while it could be possible, is hardly likely ever to have occurred in individual cases.[3] Thus Price believed that the existence of a family of sense-data occupying space and prolonging itself through time was not enough to account for the fact that objects have causal characteristics. Something else must exist to manifest these causal characteristics, something which occupies space in a physical sense, unlike a family. And this Price called the "physical occupant," or sometimes the "physical object."

A material thing was really a complex of two constituents, then: a family of sense-data (consisting of a standard solid) and a physical occupant exhibiting certain causal characteristics. And in the process of confirmation which can occur in perceptual consciousness, we took for granted and subsequently confirmed the existence of both this family of sense-data and of the physical occupant which occupied the region of public space where the family was. What we determined or further specified in this process was both those causal characteristics of the physical occupant and the sensible, non-causal properties of the family and its visuo-tactual solid.

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[1] Ibid., p. 288. [2] Ibid., p. 290. [3] Ibid., p. 291.

This theory of material thinghood can be used to evaluate other theories of perception, and Price gave some attention in PERCEPTION to "the causal theory" and to "selective phenomenalism," as he called them. As early as 1924, in his first article on perception, Price had wanted to show that these two theories were in error. In PERCEPTION, after describing in detail his own theory, he was able to more carefully show why he thought these theories were wrong. Essentially both of them were in error, Price believed, because they embodied mistaken conceptions of the nature of a material thing.

There are two main tenets of the causal theory, Price believed: first, to say that a sense-datum belongs to a material object is to say that the material object causes the sense-datum to be presented to my senses; and second, perceptual consciousness is an inference from effect to cause, or from sense-data to material object.[1] However, neither of these two principles is true as it stands, Price argued. In respect to the first principle, it is true to say, Price thought, that "a sense-datum which is a member of a family...is in point of fact partly caused by processes in the thing to which it and the other members of the family belong and that the same processes are a part-cause of our sensing it."[2] Furthermore, the occurrence of sense-data is also partly caused by processes in our own organism, in our nervous system and brain.[3] Nevertheless, Price argued that his theory and the causal theory differed in respect to the nature of causation and in respect to the role knowledge of causation plays in our assurance about the existence of material things. He said first that the view that material things cause individual sense-data was mistaken. And, second, he stated that knowledge of

[1] Ibid., p. 66. [2] Ibid., p. 309. [3] Ibid., p. 314.

causation was in no way necessary for perceptual assurance, despite what the causal theory implied. Moreover, perceptual consciousness did not involve any inference from sense-data to the causes or "differential conditions" of them,[1] even though it is true that such "vertical causality" did exist and even though we did discover in perceptual consciousness the fact that families of sense-data are coincident with physical occupants having causal powers.

The major difficulty that beset the causal theory in Price's eyes was its identification of the physical object (or "occupant") with the material thing,[2] Since a material thing is really composed of a family coincident with a physical object, the causal theory was mistaken; it neglected to take account of the family of sense-data as being partly constitutive of the nature of a material thing. The causal theory viewed a physical object in the scientific way as a set of physical stimuli such as light waves which "strike" or stimulate our sense organs to perceive something mental via the transmission of these physical stimuli through our nervous system and brain. This scientific theory did not allow that an extramental physical object could be composed of sense-data, mainly because it made sense-data the last mental links in the causal chain. And extramental objects, on this theory, could not be composed of mental objects.

We should note here that Russell was not specifically charged by Price with being a causal theorist of this sort, but Russell's early theory nevertheless closely approximated the causal theory as Price here perceived it. The difference is that Russell never took sense-data to be mental entities and thus he wasn't a causal theorist in exactly the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 309-10. [2] Ibid., p. 301.

uired mold set by Price. Price had in mind a version of the theory ch went back at least to Descartes, but which cannot be exactly iden- ied with Russell's early theory.

Price argued that phenomenalism was false, too, for it identified material thing not with the physical occupant, as the causal theory , but with the family of sense-data. The version of phenomenalism ch Price had in mind again was not that version which Russell moved ard after 1914, but was, I think, the same as that purer form of keleian phenomenalism mentioned earlier. If the identification which s theory made was sound, then, according to Price, families of sense- a would need to be "physical occupants" having causal powers or char- eristics. But, he argued, there are several reasons why the causal perties which material things exhibit could not characterize families sense-data or standard solids. Hence Price believed that this version henomenalism was false.

It is an interesting fact about Price's thinking here, that he did think that he could prove or demonstrate that his own theory was true. he had in mind seems to have been a rather strict logical proof that theory was true. He did believe, on the other hand, that rational ection on the nature of perception made it evident and, in consequence, rative that we believe that his own conception of the nature of mater- thinghood was sound. In reference to his theory that material things complexes of families and physical occupants, he said,

> I do not know how to prove that by words like 'matter' and 'material thing' we always mean complexes of this sort. It seems to me simply obvious. Yet it is certain that they have often been thought to mean just physical occupants; indeed this has been the prevalent opinion among philosophers for

the past three centuries. Why have they thought this when the evidence of reflection is so clearly against them? (my underlining)[1]

this goes for the phenomenalist theory too. There was no way to ve that the phenomenalistic identification was false either, but it evident nevertheless that this theory was false. Price believed that our utilization of the "immanent method" of reflection to determine nature of perceptual consciousness, the nature and relations of se-data, and the causal properties of material things, it just turned to be self-evident that no analysis of a material thing other than own would do.

It should be added in connection with this point that Price thought the concept of a material thing was an innate, *a priori* concept. s is perhaps what he meant by saying that the evidence of "reflection" on his side. The evidence of reflection would reveal that if per-tual consciousness of material things was to be rendered possible and lligible at all, then the concept of a material thing had to be innate *a priori*. It is a concept which we were presumably born with, al-gh Price did not specify exactly what he meant by "innate." And it ne which was automatically applied to our perception of objects, even gh it could in no way be abstracted from our acquaintance with sense-. The concept of a material thing was one which we use to approach, ectively, our sense-experience. But we only came to a "clear con-usness" of it when we applied it to the entities in perception which olified the concept, namely, to material things themselves, not to e-data. As such, the concept is one which was "essential to human iousness as we know it," Price thought. A mind in which this con-did not exist would not be a human mind. Thus the conceptions

[1] Ibid., p. 301.

material thinghood which were embodied in the causal theory and the
enomenalistic theory were fundamentally mistaken because they failed
understand and to take account of the very mental elements which made
rceptual assurance, perceptual confidence, and perceptual acceptance
ssible.

These remarks of Price's are not very illuminating, however, for
pushed the problem of deciding whether his own theory of material
nghood was sound one step back. The question is not, How did Price
w that these things were obvious? but rather, the question is, How
we know that the concept of a material thing is an innate and *a*
ori one? If Price had answered this question in detail, he might
e supplied some explanations of what he meant by "innate" and what
eant by "*a priori*." Sadly enough, despite the careful detail with
h the theory of material thinghood was revealed to this point,
e never did go into these crucial matters.

Price's theory of perception was in many general respects quite
lar to that which Russell was developing between 1914 and 1919.
e from the fact that he agreed with Russell about the basic doctrines
he ontological version of the sense-datum theory, it is clear that in
ral outline Price's theory of material thinghood was similar to the
which Russell first began to discuss in such works as OUR KNOWLEDGE
HE EXTERNAL WORLD. Both Russell and Price maintained a constructive
omenalism about material things which did not preclude causal rela-
between sense-data and their generative conditions. It is true
Price and Russell argued against a narrower version of phenomenalism,
oth advocated a broader version which took causal conditions into
nt. This general agreement between Russell and Price about the

nature of material things was not one which Moore shared, however. Moore and the early Russell, leaned toward a version of representative realism which, unlike its predecessors, made sense-data non-mental. I hope this makes it more clear, then, that the basic agreement in respect to sense-data which we find in all three of these philosophers, did not extend to the theories of perception which they based on the theory of sense-data.

CHAPTER FIVE

A. J. AYER: THE LINGUISTIC VERSION

In 1936 A. J. Ayer published a book LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC which
d a stimulating effect on English philosophy. This book made a power-
l, if injudicious, statement of the principles of Logical Positivism,
d, in the form of an attack on metaphysics, represented a threat to
ch of what was considered to be legitimate philosophy in England at the
me. The novelty of Ayer's book lay largely in the bold way he used the
rification principle to attack certain traditional and well-encrusted
ilosophical beliefs, for the positivistic theses to which he subscribed
e mostly those of other philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, Ludwig
tgenstein, and Rudolf Carnap. Ayer's contribution was to bring into
elatively compact yet comprehensive focus for English philosophers
t the Vienna Positivists thought was meaningless nonsense in philos-
y and to show in a straightforward way why the Positivists took it to
eaningless.

Among other things, Ayer was quite confident in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND
C that he could give a solution to the "problem of perception," as he
ed it. He suggested that the problem of perception was to give an
sis of what a material object is. But "to ask what is the nature
material object is to ask for a definition of 'material object',
his," he said, "is to ask how propositions about material objects
o be translated into propositions about sense-contents." This

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Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, p. 59.

roblem of specifying the nature of a material object is, he argued, no ifferent from any other philosophical problem. For all genuine philo- ophical problems of the sort, "What is the nature of X?", are really re- uests for definitions of a peculiar sort, namely, "definitions in use." hus, contrary to the traditional way of dealing with perception, Ayer rgued that the problem of translation is a "linguistic" problem rather han a "factual" one. And the problem of translation is "the main phil- ophical part of the traditional problem of perception."[1] To give an swer to the question, "What is the nature of a material object?" is, he gued, to produce certain "linguistic propositions" or propositions ex- essing "definitions in use," rather than to analyze one's perceptual perience introspectively or to provide an ontological theory of the ture of a material object. Linguistic propositions refer only to the y in which symbols are related to each other and do not refer to prop- ties of the things which these symbols denote.[2] Hence the philosophi- theory of perception is a linguistic or definitional matter and is a matter of stating introspective or immanent facts about what actu- y is the case when certain sense-data occur.

This latter view of Ayer's led in 1940 to another closely related v. In THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE Ayer argued that the sion whether to adopt one theory of perception or another must be on linguistic grounds, rather than on the grounds one would use to pt or reject a scientific theory,[3] and Ayer professed to use these nds in opting for phenomenalism. Throughout the decade after 1941

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[1] Ibid., p. 64. [2] Ibid., p. 65.

[3] A. J. Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge (London: Mac- n & Co., Ltd., 1940); hereinafter referred to as The Foundations.

yer continued to advocate "linguistic phenomenalism" in one form or nother.[1] But eventually Ayer's belief in the truth of this theory eroded way. By 1955 he decided that there were enough "fatal" flaws in the heory to warrant its rejection. His belief in the theory wavered and inally collapsed because he came to accept certain objections which were ade both by himself and by other philosophers. These objections centered out the possibility of translating sentences referring to material ob- cts into sentences referring to sense-data. Thus the time of his strong- t belief in phenomenalism is represented by LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC en he thought that a strict reduction, or a translation from "material- ject sentences" to "sense-datum sentences" employing "definitions in e," could in principle be effected. This view he modified in THE FOUN- TIONS in 1940 and in his article on "Phenomenalism" in 1947. In these latter works, Ayer still argued that a certain version of phenomen- sm was sound, but he recognized and acknowledged that there were diffi- ties with the strict translation version. Eventually, in THE PROBLEM KNOWLEDGE, he came to dissociate himself from phenomenalism completely, ing that there were enough fatal flaws in the theory to warrant its ection. And he clearly talked as if it were someone else who was the nomenalist rather than himself.

What I want to do in this chapter is to trace the development of 's views about phenomenalism and his views about sense-data in the 's and 1940's. I want to show what Ayer's special views about the e-datum theory were, how he maintained a linguistic version of the e-datum "theory," and how this affected his views about perception.

[1] "Linguistic phenomenalism" is a term which H. H. Price used to acterize Ayer's version of phenomenalism. See H. H. Price, tical Notice of A. J. Ayer's The Foundations of Empirical Knowl- ," Mind., n. s., L (April, 1941), 289.

ope to make it clear that, in a number of important respects, Ayer's sion of the sense-datum theory was radically different from the onto- cal version of Moore, Russell, and Price.

In 1936 Ayer was a strict phenomenalist, believing that the major of perceptual theory is to show how material things can be "reduced" r defined in terms of sense-data; it was one of the major inten- s of Ayer in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC, and later on in THE FOUNDA- S, to justify his adoption of a "thoroughgoing phenomenalism" as he it.[1] In contrast to his sense-datum predecessors, Ayer did not con- r a purely causal theory or a causal-representative theory as viable enders amongst philosophical theories of perception. Both of these ries treated material things "as if they were unobservable entities," laimed.[2] They both contained propositions referring to entities e existence could not be directly verified in sense-experience. And meant that they contained metaphysical propositions in them, or sitions which he preferred to call "pseudo-propositions" or, more ly, "nonsense." These theories had to be adjudged unacceptable by plication of the verification principle, then, leaving phenomenal- s the only tolerable perceptual theory. The problem Ayer set for lf, thus, was that of discovering which form of phenomenalism was and this problem he wrestled with for the next twenty years.[3]

As was stated above, in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC Ayer took the em of perception to be largely a "linguistic" problem, rather than

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[1] See the Preface of the first edition of Language, Truth and Logic.

[2] Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, p. 53.

[3] It is interesting to note that in Language, Truth and Logic there mention of naive realism as a serious theory of perception. This ght was removed in The Foundations.

"factual" or "ontological" problem. Instead of finding an analysis
f material thinghood which would describe what a material thing is by
alking about the relations which sense-data have to each other, Ayer
hought that we needed to show how sentences which contain references to
aterial objects ("material-object sentences") could be translated into
ntences which contain references only to sense-data ("sense-datum sen-
nces"). It is not the business of the perceptual philosopher to make
ctual claims or to decide factual disputes about perceptual matters,
thought. For, in Ayer's words, "The propositions of philosophy are
t factual, but linguistic in character--that is, they do not describe
e behavior of physical, or even mental, objects; they express defini-
ons, or the formal consequences of definitions."[1] Of course there are
ny factual problems in perceptual theory, but these must be decided by
e techniques of the empirical scientist in psychology. The empirical
ychologist does find it necessary to venture into speculation about
e nature of perception, but the results of his excursions can be vali-
ed or invalidated by the standard tests which are available to any
entist. They can be verified by empirical tests, by predictive fruit-
ness, and the like. These, however, are not tests available to the
ceptual philosopher, and he must not act as if his own statements
e amenable to such tests. The only role the philosopher can take in
pect to the factual statements of psychology, is that of elucidating
clarifying what they mean. His proper role is that of clarifying
theories of empirical psychology by defining the symbols which occur
hese theories. A philosopher is only a logician in this sense and
not suppose that he can make factual statements and invent theories

[1] Language, Truth and Logic, p. 57.

out the processes of perception.

In defining what "material object" means then we are giving an ucidation of the concept of material object. This should help us to derstand the meaning of the material-object sentences in which this ncept is embodied.[1] Ayer believed that "A complete philosophical elu- lation of any language would consist first, in enumerating the types of tence that were significant in that language, and then in displaying relations of equivalence that held between sentences of various types."[2] respect to the problem of perception, the language to be elucidated is t of the empirical psychologist insofar as his language contains sen- ces which refer to material objects. Moreover, one would suppose that ce the theories of the psychologist infiltrate ordinary English, that tion of ordinary English which contains references to material objects be clarified also, though Ayer was never explicit about this. Ayer ught that the elucidation could be obtained by utilizing definitions se, however, and could not be obtained by utilizing explicit defini- s.

What Ayer meant by an explicit definition was a definition in which a ol is defined by giving a definiens which is extensionally synonymous the definiendum. However, Ayer believed there would be difficulties upplying an extensionally synonymous definiens for a material-object ol "either because there is no synonym, or else because the available nyms are unclear in the same fashion as the symbol to which the con- n is due," i.e., the definiendum.[3] The purpose of a philosophical nition is, Ayer said, "to dispel those confusions which arise from mperfect understanding of certain types of sentence in our language."

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[1] Ibid., pp. 61 and 68. [2] Ibid., p. 62. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

this purpose could not be served if the above difficulties held.

e Ayer said that we needed to give an elucidation which set down a tem of definitions in use" because this system would clearly reveal structure of the language in which material-object symbols occurred. result, our understanding of this language would accordingly in- se, he argued.

When we give a definition in use of a symbol, on the other hand, we , Ayer thought, "not by saying that it is synonymous with some other l, but by showing how the sentences in which it significantly occurs e translated into equivalent sentences, which contain neither the iendum itself, nor any of its synonyms."[1] A model definition of kind can be found in the use of Russell's theory of descriptions to e and eliminate phrases of the form "the so-and-so," such as "the of Waverly was Scotch." In general terms, if E is a symbol which for a material object (e.g., "that table") and if B,C,D...are sym- hich stand for sense-data, then we give a definition in use of E e show how all of the sentences in which E occurs can be translated quivalent sentences which do not contain E or any other symbol mous with E, but do contain the symbols B,C,D.... E is then said to logical construction" out of B,C,D..., or, more generally, a mater- ject symbol (like E) is then said to be a logical construction out se-datum symbols (like B,C,D...).

e problem of reducing material objects to sense-data then becomes oblem of giving an actual rule for translating sentences about a l thing into sentences about sense-contents."[2] That is, it should ible to invent a rule which would apply to any material-object

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[1] Ibid., p. 60 [2] Ibid., p. 64.

ntence, a rule which would indicate how the sentences in which any
terial-object symbol occurs could be translated into equivalent sen-
nces containing only sense-datum symbols and other symbols not stand-
g for material objects. The difficulty is that such a rule cannot be
rmulated, Ayer believed. In ordinary language, he said, we cannot des-
be the properties of sense-data with sufficient precision or, for
t matter, name sense-data due to a lack of the necessary symbols. And
s means that there is no established terminology to which the philoso-
r can appeal in order to discuss the relationships of symbols to one
ther. Presumably, sentences containing expressions referring to sense-
a would thus be hard to come by, and hence even if a general transla-
n rule could be stated, there would be some difficulty in actually
ying the rule to particular translation cases. The impression given
yer is that the translation thesis is a sound one from a theoretical
t of view, but that due to the paucity of our language, there are
tical difficulties in the way of constructing actual translations.
ss we have symbols which can stand for the properties of sense-data,
ould have no expressions to replace those which stand for the prop-
es of material objects. In some way, Ayer seemed to be implying,
hould ideally be able to describe the properties of material objects
erms of symbols standing for the properties of sense-data. Or, we
d be able to say anything we can say about material objects by talk-
nly about sense-data. Without the proper symbolism, we couldn't
this about; with the proper symbolism this could be brought about.
The "practical difficulty" that Ayer was pointing to here is none-
ss exceedingly obscure, given what he said about it. If the diffi-
is only that of a paucity of symbols, then the mere invention of

ools to stand for the properties of sense-data would be sufficient to
ve it. However, there seems to be more to this difficulty than just
"practical" problem of inventing symbols, for Ayer later said in THE
NDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE that someone could invent symbols to
id for those properties which do not already have names and yet there
d still be a translation problem.[1] If the invention of symbols were
that was at issue, then Ayer could have used the logistic system of
CIPIA MATHEMATICA, e.g., as the language in which to translate
erial-object sentences." Ayer suggested in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC
an artificial language like the one invented by Russell and Whitehead
RINCIPIA MATHEMATICA would facilitate the process of analyzing the
rial-object language, and he thus implied that in such a language
ols would be available to refer to the properties of sense-data.[2]
if following Ayer, we admit that material-object sentences could be
slated into some artificial language, it is hard to see why the logis-
system in PRINCIPIA MATHEMATICA with a suitable interpretation in
s of sense-data and their properties would not lead to the "clarifi-
on" which Ayer desired.

However, since Ayer did not rely on this logistic system to carry this
out, or on any other artificial language, for that matter, we can
that there is more to this "practical difficulty" than meets the eye.
ps the problem lies in getting a "suitable interpretation" of the
tic system. The difficulty may lie in finding ways of attaching
to the symbols that would stand for the properties of sense-data.
ght be that Ayer found it impossible to guarantee that the statements

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[1] The Foundations, p. 238.

[2] Language, Truth and Logic, pp. 70-71.

n which these symbols were to occur would be either directly or indir-
ctly verifiable. This is just not clear from what he did say in LANG-
AGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC.

At any rate, since there is a lack of a "precise" symbolism in or-
inary language to refer to sense-data, Ayer believed that the proper
olution to the problem of reduction could not be made out in linguistic
erms. There would be no way of providing individual translations in-
olving the replacement of equivalent sense-datum sentences for material-
ject sentences. This means that Ayer had to adopt a "factual termin-
ogy" for discussing the problem of perception; he had to give a solu-
on to the problem of perception in terms of a terminology which speci-
ed the relations sense-data had to each other rather than in terms of
terminology which specified the relationships which sense-datum symbols
d to each other. And this made the problem of perception that of show-
g how material things could be constructed out of sense-data. Hence
e way in which Ayer worked out a solution to the problem of perception
s, after all, strikingly similar to the way in which Russell and Price
rked out their solutions. The terminology which Ayer actually used in
"solution" was stricly "ontological" in the sense that he talked about
se-data as if they were objects that really did exist. The terminology
chose was largely that found in the work of the ontological sense-
um thinkers.

Ayer's "solution" to this problem in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC was
intended to be a thorough discussion of how material things can be
tructed out of sense-data. What he did was to indicate only "in gen-
terms" how material things could be constructed out of sense-data.[1]

[1] Ibid., pp. 65-68. Ayer did the same general thing in The Foundations.

s involved a description of "the relations that must hold between two of one's sense-contents for them to be elements of the same erial thing."[1] Briefly, Ayer appealed to the familiar "ontological" se-datum notions of direct and indirect resemblance between sense-data, ect and indirect continuity between sense-data, and the notion of a ible sense-datum to define what it means to say of any two visual actual sense-data that they are elements of the same material thing. he showed how these separate groups of visual and tactual sense- could be correlated by utilizing the concepts of minimum visual and ual depth and the concept of "the same sense-experience." After ng some provision for the gustatory, olfactory, and auditory sense-, Ayer continued his "factual" analysis by providing a way of talking t the "real" qualities of material things, such as shape and color. uggested that we could do so by talking about certain privileged e-data, those which are experienced from the point of view which conveniently permits us to measure these "real" qualities. And last, completed his analysis by stipulating that we could define the ations of quality or position" between material things in terms of relations of quality or position between these privileged sense-data. I will not dwell on this "outline of a definition of symbols which for material things," as Ayer called it, since I do not believe what Ayer said is particularly original or well-developed, given we have already discussed in previous chapters. It is abundantly that the unique contribution which Ayer made in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND to perceptual theory in British philosophy did not lie in the par- ars of this rather sketchy analysis of the concept of a material

[1] Ibid., p. 68.

[2] Language, Truth and Logic, p. 65.

since this analysis can in most of its details be found in Russell's
rom 1914 to 1927 and in Price's PERCEPTION. Ayer's strong insis-
on the truth of phenomenalism was not new to British philosophy,
s claim that a way must be found to construct material objects out
se-data was strictly Russellian. Even his thesis that a linguistic
ust be invented for translating sentences containing material-object
into sentences containing sense-datum symbols was ultimately an
on of Russell's view that, wherever possible, logicians should sub-
logical constructions for inferred entities such as material ob-
Indeed Ayer's inspiration for suggesting that translations must
ied out surely came from his familiarity with and belief in the
veness of logical analysis in philosophy as it was so definitively
by Russell. Ayer even used Russell's theory of descriptions to
ate the process of definition in use as an analytical procedure in
phy.[1]

t there are ultimately two ideas which differentiated Ayer's views
ssell and the other sense-datum philosophers. First, there was
elief that the causal theory and the causal-representative theory
viable philosophical theories of perception and are not philosoph-
n contention. And, second, there was Ayer's belief that phen-
m is a linguistic or "syntactical" thesis having nothing to do
t actually is the case, or with the "real nature" of material ob-
This second point was brought out, I think, in the following state-
Ayer:

> we refer to an object as a logical construction out
> ertain sense-contents, we are not saying that it is
> ally constructed out of those sense-contents, or that

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[1] Id., pp. 60-61. Of course Ayer was immediately following the
of Carnap and the Vienna positivists.

> the sense-concepts are in any way parts of it, but are merely expressing, in a convenient if somewhat misleading, fashion the syntactical fact that all sentences referring to it are translatable into sentences referring to them.[1]

distinguished Ayer from Russell and Price was Ayer's claim that the
al construction of a material object is a syntactical affair. For
reason which was never made explicit, Ayer believed that phenomenal-
s a syntactical thesis, and this means that the actual procedure
anslating material-object sentences into sense-datum sentences could
rried out solely in terms of a rule describing the substitution of
ls for symbols. The rules for the invention of logical constructions,
ey could be stated, would be syntactical rules, or rules which would
in references only to the replacement of material-object symbols by
-datum symbols in sentences containing material-object symbols. And
is a point of view which cannot be found in the work of Russell and
on the logical construction of material objects, during the period
we previously considered.

What is puzzling about Ayer's claim was his justification for saying
translation is only a syntactical matter. Ayer never made it plain
NGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC why it was a syntactical rather than, say,
antical fact, that all sentences referring to material objects are
latable into sentences referring to sense-data. Perhaps if this had
clear, it would have been possible to more carefully assess why Ayer
ually gave up his claim that translation was possible. It might also
contributed to an understanding of that "practical difficulty" re-
d to before about the paucity of sense-datum symbols. In any event
likely that Ayer and other positivists thought of logical analysis

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[1] Ibid., p. 123.

onymous with syntactic analysis and that they made no distinction
n syntactic and semantic approaches to the solution of philosophical
ms.

t should also be noted that in saying that objects are not actually
ucted out of sense-contents, Ayer was implying that some philoso-
believed that a material object could actually be constructed out of
data. If, as is conceivable, this was intended as a criticism of
r sense-datum philosophers like Russell or Price, then Ayer was not
altogether fair. Neither Russell nor Price thought that material
s were actually constructed out of sense-data, in the sense that
ngs are constructed out of bricks and mortar. They argued instead
ney were giving logical analyses of the concept of material thing-
logical descriptions of material objects, and were not making
which could be empirically verified. Thus Russell thought that he
lly "reconstructing" the physical world by showing how the world
ics, the "actual world" or "real world," could be expressed in
f sense-data and sensibilia. It was not his intent to say that
l objects are actually just collections of sense-data. In fact
point he argued that there was a great deal about the nature of
l objects which we could not know. Price too was interested in
a logical analysis of the nature of material thinghood. His re-
ere designed to be philosophical or "immanent" remarks about the
of material thinghood, not challengeable on empirical grounds.
s would mean that the logical analyses of Russell and Price were
in certain respects to Ayer's intended analysis of material-object
es into sense-datum sentences, though in some respects they were
nt.

1940 Ayer published THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE in

h he focused his attention on perceptual theory. Ayer, I think, had major objectives in THE FOUNDATIONS: First, he wanted to make out thesis that a philosophical theory of perception was not a theory at but rather one language among several that could be chosen to des- e the facts of perception; and, second, he wanted to give a defense is belief in the thesis of linguistic phenomenalism by discovering principles which would govern the construction of material objects of sense-data and by showing how the construction should proceed. n LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC, Ayer dealt with the construction of rial things as if this were a factual or "metaphysical" issue rather a "linguistic" issue. Yet he still maintained that the translation is was viable.

We find in THE FOUNDATIONS, however, a significant change in Ayer's tion on the notion of translation. He no longer maintained that the truction of material things was a matter of translating material- t sentences into equivalent sense-datum sentences by the use of a al translation rule, as he had in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC. He now d that such an equivalence was impossible, due to certain features terial-object sentences and of sense-datum sentences. In fact, was absolutely no mention at all in THE FOUNDATIONS of that powerful e for translating material-object sentences, the definition in use. I think this change in position can be attributed to Ayer's doubts the relation of empirical verification to the concept of meaning. ems that in THE FOUNDATIONS Ayer was on the verge of giving up the cation doctrine of meaning, though he wasn't consistent about this. s a result, he called into question his belief that material-object ces could be translated into sense-datum sentences that are

nt in both meaning and truth-value. I think that Ayer believed
AGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC that translation into extensionally equiva-
tences would preserve meaning. Surely he took the "equivalence"
nces to mean equivalence in truth-value. But he implied that a
ense-datum sentences could be found for any material-object sen-
ich would not only be equivalent in truth-value to that sentence
l also be equivalent in meaning. In THE FOUNDATIONS Ayer came to
is belief that a single set of sense-datum sentences could be
ed which would verify a material-object sentence, or which would
lent in meaning. The result was a change in the character of
lation thesis. I will argue that this change reflected a basic
y in Ayer's earlier views about verification.

preliminary toward advancing his thesis that a philosophical
perception was not a theory at all but a language which des-
e "phenomena" of perception, Ayer discussed in THE FOUNDATIONS
ook to be the traditional method philosophers used to introduce
ot of sense-data into perceptual theory. This traditional
e said, was first to establish that there were some cases of
(the illusory cases) when we directly perceived or were aware
lata rather than material things. And then, he argued, sense-
osophers continued by giving a number of arguments to show that
es what we immediately perceive were sense-data rather than
hings.[1] From this it was thought to follow not only that we
immediately aware of material things, but also that the indirect
and knowledge that we have of material things is mediated by our
awareness of sense-data.

Ayer, The Foundations, p. 5.

e can presume that Ayer was describing here the procedure which he
ne ontological sense-datum philosophers to have historically used to
uce the concept of sense-data and to distinguish sense-data from
al things,[1] though Ayer made it clear that in one version or other
ument from illusion had also been used by such philosophers as
, Berkeley, Locke, and Descartes. I shall argue later on, when
ing Austin's criticism of Price and Ayer, that neither Moore nor
sed the argument from illusion and other arguments for sense-data
e the way that Ayer suggested that they did. Moreover, Russell was
ays guilty of doing so either.

e importance of discussing the argument from illusion was that it
d Ayer with a way of introducing his thesis that a philosophical
of perception is not a theory but a language which describes per-
phenomena. This he did by considering the validity of the con-
of the argument from illusion. The validity of this conclusion
on whether it is taken to be a "factual" statement or a "linguistic"
t, Ayer contended. When we say that we are aware of sense-data
han material objects, is this a question of fact or a question of
? Ayer asked. He concluded that it could not be a question of
was traditionally implied. And if the claim that we are never
aware of a material thing is taken to establish a factual truth,
argument from illusion is invalid.[2]

us suppose, Ayer said, that two people analyze their perception
n lying on a table differently. One says that as he moves around

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ter on Ayer argued that he was making a "true historical remark
ee Ayer, "Has Austin Refuted the Sense-datum Theory?," p. 128.
er, The Foundations, pp. 11-12.

le, the shape-appearances of the coin change though the real shape coin remains unchanged. The other person argues that as he moves the coin, the real shape of the coin changes from one point of the next, its real shape just being whatever appears to be the om some point of view. Are these two people involved in a factual ? Ayer asked. Ayer decided that there was no way to adjudicate these two analyses so long as we saw this as a question of choos- ch analysis was factually true. Ayer asked us to allow that these ividuals really did agree about the facts of the matter. The then was, What did the nature of their disagreement consist of as not factual? He decided that it must be a disagreement about nguage or terminology to use in order to describe the facts or the e appearances.[1] These two people do not disagree about the nature "sensible appearances," rather they disagree about the proper des- n of these facts, he thought. And a disagreement about the proper tion is just a disagreement about the proper language to use in ing the similar "sensible appearances" that they both directly e. This makes their disagreement a "linguistic" disagreement and ctual one which could be resolved by deciding which analysis best e facts.

eneral Ayer believed that the choice between perceptual theories sophy was not a choice which could be made on the grounds used to etween empirical theories because, as he put it, "theories of on are not theories at all, in the scientific sense."[2] Theories ption are instead linguistic proposals or linguistic recommenda- ich yield alternative descriptions of the same facts. They do le us to make any predictions about our future experience as

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[1] Ibid., p. 18. [2] Ibid., p. 48.

heories do, nor does the actual course of our experience have any
on their truth or falsity.[1] Hence the decision to choose one
of perception rather than another cannot be made in terms of the
a by which scientific theories are evaluated. Rather this choice
made on other grounds, grounds which we can presume Ayer took
linguistic." I shall outline these grounds shortly.
st I should point out that Ayer did not rest content with the
thesis that a theory of perception is not a theory but one lang-
ong several that could be chosen to describe the same set of facts.
so wanted to make a decision in favor of one of these languages,
the sense-datum "language." There was, apparently, no neutral
e for describing what the perceptual facts were, and thus a deci-
d to be made in favor of a language which had certain ontological
ents. This is not to imply that in making these commitments,
ought that we needed to believe in the existence of any "real"
over and above what we see. In fact Ayer did not believe that
ata were real objects in the way that the ontological version of
se-datum theory implied. Ayer was not, he thought, committed
traditional view that sense-data are objects or substances, or
nse-data are parts of physical objects. Ayer admitted that

> re is indeed a sense in which it is correct to say
> both sense-data and material things exist, inasmuch
> sentences that are used to describe sense-data and
> tences that are used to describe material things both
> frequently express true propositions. But it would
> be correct to infer from this that there really were
> material things and sense-data, in the sense in which
> an truly be said that there really are chairs as well
> ables, or that there are tastes as well as sounds. For
> eas, in these cases, the existential propositions refer
> ifferent empirical "facts," this does not hold good in
> case of sense-data and material things.[2]

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[1] id., p. 53. [2] Ibid., p. 229.

irse Ayer is here making it look like sense-data are different
ounds, smells, tastes, and the like, and this is not consistent
hat he always says elsewhere in THE FOUNDATIONS. His point is that
data are existents in a sense which is different from the sense in
sounds, smells, and tastes are. Despite this distinction, what he
is that sense-data do not exist in the sense that we could actually
er them in our sensory experience, as the ontological theorists
d. And they are not substances or objects. Yet they have a kind
jectival" existence, for we can, Ayer said, "regard the data of
senses as adjectival to the visuo-tactual constructs to which, on
sis of observed correlations, they are referred as qualities or
s."[1] They are entities needed in the philosophical construction of
al things, and they are introduced with the sense-datum language.
ey are not found in our actual experience, and existential proposi-
containing references to them are not "empirical" propositions.
existential propositions of this sort would be "logical" proposi-
or *a priori* propositions which are parts of a logical analysis
erial-object propositions. If the function of the philosopher is
e logical propositions, then sense-data are as much logical con-
s as the visuo-tactual constructs to which they are referred, as
t it.

denying that sense-data are objects, Ayer was largely restating
ition of another philosopher, G. A. Paul, who in his contribution
Aristotelian Society symposium, "Is There a Problem about Sense-
in 1936, had suggested that it was a mistake to believe that

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[1] Ibid., p. 255.

-data are "entities of a curious sort over and above physical ob-
." [1] Paul thought that there were no "facts of visual experience in
to express which it is necessary to use a noun functioning in the
sense-datum' does," [2] though he conceded that statements containing
xpression "sense-datum" could very well be true and that the intro-
n of the sense-datum language could help to solve some problems
perception. The word "sense-datum" should not function as a noun
e for an entity in the way that the word "fovea" does, Paul argued.
it has, then those who believe that sense-data exist in the same
at foveas do are mistaken.

here is an important way in which Ayer's views differed from Paul's
, and this is on the matter of adopting the sense-datum language.
as not interested in recommending the sense-datum language for adop-
although he admitted that it was a possible choice among others.
id want to make this recommendation, and he approved of the proce-
which earlier sense-datum philosophers used to introduce this
nge." [3] Of course earlier sense-datum philosophers had not thought
ey were only introducing a "language" when stating the argument
lusion. And this is what differentiates Ayer from the ontological
s like Russell, Moore and Price. Ayer adopted the sense-datum
e because it "embodied" a linguistic discovery about the proper
e we ought to use in describing what we perceive. He did not adopt
nguage because it embodied a true theory about what is the case

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. A. Paul, "Is There a Problem about Sense-data?," PAS, Supple-
Volume XV (1936), 69.

id., p. 69, footnote.

er, The Foundations, p. 25.

e perceive anything.

he question is then, Why choose the language of sense-data over
ternatives? What are the grounds for choosing the sense-datum
ge rather than the language of appearing, or the language of
ple location," or the language of "compound things," or ordinary
ge for that matter?[1] I think that there are two main reasons why
hose the sense-datum language. Both reasons have something to
n the clarity that this language would enable us to achieve, some-
which no other language could provide as well, Ayer implied.
he first reason is indicated in the following passages. Ayer
hat

> ince in philosophizing about perception our main object
> s to analyze the relationship of our sense-experiences to
> he propositions we put forward concerning material things,
> t is useful for us to have a terminology that enables us
> o refer to the contents of our experiences independently
> f the material things that they are taken to present. And
> his the sense-datum language provides.[2]

ably this reason is one which either applied to no other language,
it did, did not apply to any other language quite as well as it
the sense-datum language. Ayer did not say anything definite about
oint, so we can only conclude that this is probably what he meant to
when he used this as a reason for selecting the sense-datum language.
rate, it is clear that Ayer believed that, as he said, the "utility
sense-datum language depends upon our being able to make the dis-
on between sense-data and material things as sharp as possible."
we have a language which lets us talk about our sensory experience

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yer talked briefly about these languages in Chapter I, Section 5,
Foundations.

bid., p. 26. [3]Ibid., pp. 117-18.

hout also making reference to material things, then sense-data and erial things can be kept more sharply distinct. Ayer thought that sense-datum language "should enable us to deal with the problems which se from the fact that material things can appear to have qualities that y do not really have, and can appear to exist when they do not."[1] The se-datum language allowed us to "say that something real is being ex- ienced even in cases where our perceptions are delusive."[2] It per- ted us to talk about the various appearances which an object had, and enabled us to talk about something appearing even in cases when nothing "really there." And all of this could be done without making refer- to material things, though Ayer did not maintain that the sense- m language was perfect in this respect.[3]

The second reason for choosing the sense-datum language is that it Ayer said, "The advantage of laying down an unambiguous convention the use of words that stand for modes of perception, and so freeing rom the verbal problems that develop...out of the ambiguous use of words in ordinary speech."[4] What this points to is the fact that sense-datum language allowed us to avoid the confusions which arise people use the same perceptual words ("see," e.g.) in a variety of es without specifying these senses or without there being a way of rmining the sense from the context. The sense-datum philosopher d lay down certain conventions which, once understood, would make for earer and more expedient use of perceptual words. Ordinarily, the that perceptual expressions like "see" have a number of meanings

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[1] Ibid., p. 68. [2] Ibid., p. 69.
[3] See Ibid., p. 26, footnote 1. [4] Ibid., p. 26.

a source of confusion, Ayer implied, since we can usually deter-
meaning easily enough from the context. But in philosophical
ons this had been a patent source of confusion, and some means
e selected to eliminate it.[1]

very fact that Ayer should have thought that we had to choose a
at all implies that he thought there was something wrong from
dpoint of the philosophy of perception with the language we or-
use to describe what we perceive. And the implication was that
ay of talking had to be discarded in favor of the sense-datum
if we were to do our philosophy properly. Ayer said that it
that "our ordinary language is defective, in the sense that it
furnish us with the means of describing all the facts, or in
e that it obliges us to misdescribe some of them; but...it is not
an instrument as the sense-datum language for our special pur-

And thus ordinary language would not do. It is not clear,
whether Ayer would have identified our ordinary language with
age that the naive realist used or whether he would have said
naive realist had some other language. It is certain that the
um language was not a part of ordinary language while the naive
id talk in ordinary terms. Thus the sense-datum language was
minology at the very least, though some of its expressions had
been used by philosophers for many years. If Ayer was setting
ce between the sense-datum language and the language of naive

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er later argued that the use of certain words would not serve
pose at all, and further, that "clarity" meant more than just
val of ambiguity. See Ayer, "The Terminology of Sense-data,"
sophical Papers (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1954) p. 88;
first published in Mind, n.s., LIV (October, 1945).

er, The Foundations, pp. 25-6.

then he was implying that the latter language, if it existed,

preferable to the sense-datum language.

hould point out that Ayer used the term "language" and the term

logy" as if they were interchangeable in THE FOUNDATIONS, some-

lking about the "sense-datum language" and sometimes talking about

se-datum terminology." Of course these two expressions can mean

fferent things, and Ayer was seemingly insensitive to this fact.

usly wanted these two expressions to mean the same thing. Yet

ng about the "sense-datum language" he was not, I think, using

"language" in the sense that the English language or the Hopi

is a language. Rather he was using the term more in the sense

hnical and scientific German is a part of the German language.

he was thinking of a technical vocabulary or a technical term-

referring to certain special entities and used by specialists in

hy, namely, those interested in the philosophy of perception.

e-datum language was perhaps intended to be part of what we might

ilosophical English." It was not intended to serve all of the

ctions that philosophical English presumably would, just as tech-

l scientific German could not serve all of the same functions as

rts of German. The difference is, however, that technical and

ic German is a language which is actually used by certain spe-

while Ayer never seemed to imply that the sense-datum language

ually be used by philosophers, even supposing that certain diffi-

n generating this language from sets of symbols could be resolved.

ny rate, since the sense-datum language was also an "artificial

and was thus not based on any familiar conventions about the

f its terms, Ayer thought that we needed to adopt certain

ventions concerning the use of its terms. Both of the two conventions sen for adoption were adopted to serve the purpose of clarity, Ayer ied. And they both were suitable especially for the sense-datum uage rather than some other alternative.

The major convention which Ayer adopted was one for the use of the "sense-datum" itself, as we should expect. Since sense-datum sen- es are those which served as translations of the sentences in our osophical and ordinary language which referred to material things, said that we would need to lay down a general rule for the use of term "sense-datum" which would be expressed in terms of such trans- ons. Thus he said,

> The propositions we ordinarily express by saying that a person A is perceiving a material thing M, which appears to him to have the quality X, may be expressed in the sense-datum terminology by saying that A is sensing a sense-datum S, which really has the quality X, and which belongs to M.[1]

convention made it impossible to say that sense-data could appear ave characteristics which they did not really have. For if we could that they could, then we would have been extending to sense-data the distinction which applied to material objects, namely, the distinc- between appearance and reality. The original advantage of having nse-datum terminology to say that something real was being exper- ed even in delusive cases would then have been lost.[2] From this thought it followed that we needed to make it both a sufficient and cessary condition of the existence of a sense-datum that it should ally be sensed.[3]

This shows that Ayer believed that our talk about the existence

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[1] Ibid., p. 58. [2] Ibid., p. 69. [3] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

nse-data was immediately deducible from a linguistic decision. a linguistic decision on which the existence of sense-data de-. Thus, contrary to the procedure of the earlier sense-datum phil-ers, we didn't first go "looking for" sense-data, discover them, hen arrange our language accordingly. Rather we made a decision lk about sense-data only because our language for doing so served special, philosophical purposes. Of course, more ultimately, what vated Ayer's linguistic decision was a desire to make the distinc- between appearance and reality as clear and sharp as possible, and sire to have a language which would provide us with such clarity. hermore, the desire to make this distinction was in turn based on philosopher's acceptance of the argument from illusion.[1] And, thus, as not ultimately a linguistic decision at all which motivated Ayer dopt the sense-datum language rather than some other, though in the t-run Ayer was perfectly justified in saying this.

Another convention that we needed to adopt in respect to the term se-data," Ayer thought, was one which prevented us from saying that nse-datum could fail to appear to be what it really was. Not only l we not say that a sense-datum can appear to have qualities that es not really have,[2] but we also could not say that a sense-datum eally have qualities it does not appear to have. The adoption of second convention about the sense-datum language engendered a good of criticism from other philosophers, and I shall delay a discussion

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[1] This can be inferred from Ayer's statement that the argument from ion yields a "motive for adopting a new terminology." Ibid., p. 28.

[2] This is, incidentally, a position which Moore toyed with in "Some nts of Perception."

until Ayer's article, "The Terminology of Sense-data," is dealt

yer believed that the reasons which led us to adopt these conven-
about the sense-datum language were linguistic ones. Apparently
ught that we needed rules for clarifying the linguistic ambiguities
could give rise to confusion about what we should say we perceived
ordinary or even in our philosophical discourse. Thus, if we
allow that sense-data could appear to have qualities which they
really have, then it could follow that there would be little
for introducing sense-data at all. Whatever problems existed with
terial-object language as a result of applying this distinction
n appearance and reality to material objects would be reproduced
sense-datum language if we let sense-data appear to have qualities
hey do not really have. In this case, Ayer thought, the sense-
language would "eliminate none of the familiar problems, and so
om being a source of clarification, it (would) create additional
ion by suggesting that the introduction of sense-data is not just a
stic expedient, but marks the discovery of a new kind of material
."[1] We would hardly be clarifying a language by replacing it with
r language which was a source of the same confusions. This would
the expedient or convenient thing to do from the standpoint of
who were trying to understand the language. Hence we needed a
tion which eliminated these confusions.

or similar reasons Ayer also found it more convenient to adopt the
tion that sense-data cannot have properties which they do not
to have. The opposing convention would lead to a confusion

Ayer, The Foundations, p. 70.

een sense-data and material objects, and such a confusion would neither
onvenient nor lead to a clarification of the material-object lang-
. In fact, if there is a general rule which functioned to enjoin us
dopt conventions for the sense-datum language, then it is that we
: to "adopt the convention that reinforces the distinction between
e-data and material things, in preference to one that would encourage
confuse them," Ayer said.[1] Ayer apparently believed then that the
ntions he adopted reinforced this distinction, though he was not
ng to imply that other conventions, even contradictory ones, could
e adopted for the same purpose at a loss of convenience.
In adopting these conventions, Ayer was formulating conventions only
the meaning of the term "sense-datum." It appears that little
new terminology was to be introduced into philosophical discourse.
is apparent on examining Ayer's general rule for the use of the
'sense-datum." Of course other expressions were to be introduced
meaning was tied to the meaning of the term "sense-datum." But
other expressions would not need the clarification that the term
e-datum" did. This I infer from the fact that Ayer nowhere intro-
conventions for the meaning of any other new terms or expressions.
ing that the conventions he did use were designed to characterize
ature" of sense-data, it must be understood that the term "sense-
did not refer to real objects like sounds, tables, rainbows, etc.
data were introduced into philosophical discourse mainly because
ilosopher needed a sharp distinction between appearance and reality,
mplied.
esides his intention to explain and to justify the thesis that the

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[1] Ibid., p. 131.

se-datum theory is not a theory but a language, Ayer also wanted to
out his position about Linguistic Phenomenalism in THE FOUNDATIONS.
e had thought earlier, he was convinced that phenomenalism was true;
problem was to discern the sense in which it was true. We find in
FOUNDATIONS, however, a retreat from the position which Ayer took
ANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC. In both THE FOUNDATIONS and LANGUAGE,
H AND LOGIC Ayer maintained the very loose phenomenalistic position
to say something about material things is to say something about
e-data. In his own words, "any proposition that refers to a material
g must somehow be expressible in terms of sense-data, if it is to be
rically significant."[1] In LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC, however, Ayer
said that what this loose position meant was that material-object
positions must be elucidated by translating them into equivalent prop-
ions containing references to sense-data exclusively. And these
e-datum propositions were to be equivalent in both truth-value and
eaning. These equivalences would be expressed in terms of definitions
se, as we saw before. In THE FOUNDATIONS, on the other hand, there
no mention made of definitions in use, though Ayer still talked about
al constructions.

One reason why definitions in use were missing from this later work
at Ayer no longer thought that such definitions would yield sense-
sentences which preserved the meaning of the material-object sen-
they were designed to translate. The problem was that in trans-
g a material-object sentence into a set of sense-datum sentences,
lteration" of the meaning of the material-object sentence occurred.

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[1] Ibid., p. 231. Ayer usually used the terms "proposition,"
ence," and "statement" interchangeably in his various discussions
enomenalism.

eant that the set of sense-datum sentences could not be synonymous
ning, or could not be equivalent in meaning to the original material-
sentence. And the material-object sentence could not then entail
sense-datum sentences, taking "entailment" here to mean entailment
ning.

hat is behind Ayer's claim that an alteration in meaning could
was his belief that sense-datum sentences did not have the same
l form as material-object sentences. To define what "the same
l form" meant, Ayer used a criterion which later became quite com-
English and American philosophical discussions about meaning,
, the interchangeability criterion.[1] He said that

> wo sentences may be said to have the same logical form
> f they can be correlated in such a way that to each ex-
> ression that occurs in either one of them there corresponds
> n the other an expression of the same logical type; and
> wo expressions may be said to be of the same logical
> ype if any sentence that significantly contains either
> ne of them remains significant when the other is put
> n its place.[2]

serted that sentences in the sense-datum language were not of the
gical form as those which referred to material objects. Appar-
his meant that they would also have different meanings, else
uld have remained significant in the same contexts. Sentences
ing expressions of different logical types would have different
forms and hence different meanings. As a result, it could be
d that translations would alter the meaning of the material-object
es. And translation into semantically equivalent sense-datum

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is criterion had been already used in a different version by
ee Gilbert Ryle, "Categories," PAS, n.s., Vol. XXXVIII
).

er, The Foundations, p. 233.

itences would be impossible.[1]

Another reason why definitions in use were not feasible was that y did not necessarily yield equivalence in truth-value between erial-object sentences and sense-datum sentences. In LANGUAGE, TRUTH LOGIC Ayer implied that such an equivalence would obtain. But in FOUNDATIONS Ayer came to believe that this was not possible. He observed that "statements about material things are not conclusively verable."[2] Thus the truth-value of a material-object sentence was always n to future correction. The material-object sentence had an absolute th-value, but we were never in a position to declare conclusively ther the sentence was true or false. Thus the material-object sence had the status of an hypothesis, Ayer believed. And having the tus of an hypothesis, the truth-value relation between sense-datum tences and material-object sentences became that of evidence to othesis.

To put this latter point in Price's terminology, there was a cern two-sided looseness in the relationships that hold between sense-um sentences and material-object sentences.[3] Ayer himself said that was "logically necessary that any situation that in any degree estabes the existence of a material thing should also establish the exise of a sense-datum,"[4] but it was not logically necessary or a matter inguistic convention that a situation which established the existence sense-datum should also conclusively establish the existence of a rial thing.

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[1] Ibid., p. 234. [2] Ibid., p. 239.

[3] See H. H. Price, "Critical Notice of A. J. Ayer's The Foundations," 89.

[4] Ayer, The Foundations, p. 230.

Ayer said,

> The degree to which the existence of the material thing is established will depend upon the character of the sense-data in question, and especially upon the nature of the contexts in which they occur; but whatever the strength of this evidence may be, it will always be logically compatible with the hypothesis that this material thing is not in all respects what it appears to be, or even that it does not exist at all.[1]

e additional evidence which would either confirm or disconfirm the

othesis that a material thing exists consisted of the occurrence of

e sense-data. Thus, given that it was statements about sense-data

ch confirmed or disconfirmed statements about material things, "No

ite set of singular statements about sense-data can ever formally

ail a statement about a material thing, inasmuch as...statements about

erial things are not conclusively verifiable," Ayer said.[2] There was

er a stage at which a statement about a material thing was conclusively

ified or verifiable; hence there was no finite set of sense-datum

tences into which such a statement could be translated.

Moreover, Ayer said,

> There is no set of statements about the occurrence of particular sense-data of which it can be said that precisely this is entailed by a given statement about a material thing. And the reason for this is that what is required to verify a statement about a material thing is never just one occurrence of a sense-datum of an absolutely specific kind, but only the occurrence of one or another of the sense-data that fall within a fairly definite range.[3]

e there was no single set of sense-datum statements which was en-

ed by, or a part of the meaning of, a material-object statement. As

said, "The content of a statement about a material thing cannot be

ustively specified by any finite number of references to sense-data."[4]

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 239. [3] Ibid., pp. 240-41. [4] Ibid., p. 240.



What this all meant is that the relation between sense-datum atements and material-object statements was troubled by two problems. king this relation to have two sides to it, namely, the relation of nse-data to material-object statements and the relation of material- jects to sense-datum statements, there were two difficulties: (1) the ation of sense-datum statements to material-object statements was h that the former never entailed the latter, or never conclusively ified the latter; and (2) the relation of material-object statements sense-datum statements was such that no particular set of sense-datum tements was ever entailed by, or part of the meaning of, a material- ect statement. The relation between the two kinds of statements was k on both sides.

We can see then that for Ayer there were two meanings to the word tailment," corresponding to (1) and (2). Corresponding to (1) was ailment in truth-value; corresponding to (2) was entailment in mean- . Neither entailment was strong enough to get us equivalences between tences in the sense-datum language and sentences in the material-object uage, as was required by the concept of a definition in use.

We could look at this translation problem in a slightly different by noting that in THE FOUNDATIONS Ayer was calling on a set of sense- m statements to fulfill two quite different jobs: (a) to serve as aningful translation of a material-object statement; and (b) to serve vidence for that material-object statement. These two jobs were ected to each other in Ayer's way of thinking, for the set of sense- m statements could not be a meaningful translation of the material- ct statement unless the material-object statement and the sense-datum ements taken in conjunction had the same truth-value. This would

ve been the minimal requirement for a satisfactory translation. Un-
rtunately, we were never able to determine the truth-value of the
terial-object statement. And thus we had no way of getting a meaning-
translation. If Ayer had not tied truth-conditions and meaning to-
her in such a close fashion, he would not have had the difficulties
h the strict translation thesis that he did.

This did not mean to Ayer that phenomenalism was false; rather it
nt that some other version of phenomenalism must be true. What that
sion is, was not specified in terms of any simple linguistic formula,
ever. This is so, I think, because the version which Ayer advocated
THE FOUNDATIONS was not very different from the version which Price
ked about in PERCEPTION or which Russell advocated in his works from
4 to 1927. That is, Ayer reverted to a kind of "traditional" theory
henomenalism in the last chapter of THE FOUNDATIONS, a version which
still in some sense linguistic, but which was also metaphysical or
logical in tone. I am not suggesting that Ayer himself took his
ry to be metaphysical because, simply enough, he did not; he still
eved that his version was linguistic in the sense that the construc-
of material-objects is "a problem about the reference of words."
he again found it convenient "to deal with this problem as if it were
estion of constructing one sort of objects out of another."[1] We can
ine a purely linguistic phenomenalism; it would be the view that Ayer
tained in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC. And we can imagine an ontological
omenalism, something on the order of the view that Price opposed in
PTION. Ayer's version in THE FOUNDATIONS must fall somewhere in be-
these two extremes, although the positive way in which it did was

[1] Ibid., pp. 162-63.

not clear in THE FOUNDATIONS.

It is clear that Ayer did not advocate that version of phenomenalism which maintained that the term "material thing" was synonymous with a set of terms that stood for species of sense-data.[1] Nor did he think it accurate to say that material things were collections of actual and possible sense-data. A material thing did not consist of sense-data in the same way that "a patchwork quilt consists of different colored pieces of silk."[2] When Ayer said that a statement which referred to a material object could be expressed in terms of categorical and hypothetical sentences which refer exclusively to actual and possible sense-data, he was not making a claim about a relationship between entities. But he did believe that he was making a claim about the relationship between two kinds of sentences. The semantical and logical relationships between these sentences were not sufficient for "mutual entailment," yet there was still some kind of expressive relationship between them. It is in this meager sense that Ayer's version of phenomenalism was linguistic, as unilluminating as this may be. The belief that phenomenalism is linguistic did not deter Ayer from carrying out the construction of material-objects in an "ontological" manner, however.

In the last chapter of THE FOUNDATIONS Ayer went on to give what he called an "elementary construction of the material world." I will not bother with the details of this construction, but I would like to point out that Ayer's "construction" was strongly reminiscent of, and borrows heavily from, Price's version of the same matter in PERCEPTION, not including Price's remarks about the physical occupant. In Price's terms, Ayer was a phenomenalist because he believed that the causal properties

[1] Ibid., pp. 229 and 231. [2] Ibid., p. 232.

which material things exhibited could be expressed in terms of the occurrence of sense-data. In fact, in Chapter IV of THE FOUNDATIONS, Ayer specifically raised the objection which Price made against phenomenalism in PERCEPTION. We might recall here that Price argued that a family of sense-data (or a "group" as Ayer called it) could not be the subject of causal characteristics for a variety of reasons. In Chapter IV Ayer tried to evaluate Price's belief that the family must be coincident with a physical occupant whose function is to be the subject of causal characteristics, and he appraised Price's thesis that a material thing is a coincidence of a family and a physical occupant. Ayer argued that Price's view was in error because the existence of causal characteristics could, he thought, be accounted for wholly in terms of sense-data.[1] In fact, he argued that Price himself showed, unwittingly, that this was the case, and hence that Price's argument that families cannot have causal characteristics was invalid. The result was that phenomenalism was true, and there was no need to believe in the existence of these "mysterious entities" which Price called "physical occupants."

In giving his sketch of the construction of the material world in Chapter V of THE FOUNDATIONS, Ayer's problem as he set it up, differed in no important respect from the problem which both Russell and Price had set for themselves earlier, namely, the problem of showing how a continual existence can be attributed to physical objects when they are not being continually perceived. He needed to show, just as Russell and Price needed to, how we could arrive at the notion of a single, persistent material thing by referring only to sense-data and to the

[1] Ibid., p. 227.

relations which sense-data had to each other. It is in this sense, in the sense that Ayer conceived of his problem in the traditional way, that we can observe a retreat from the linguistic approach that we might have expected from Ayer after reading LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC.

In two articles published subsequent to THE FOUNDATIONS Ayer continued to develop phenomenalistic views similar to those in THE FOUNDATIONS. In "The Terminology of Sense-data" (1945) and in "Phenomenalism" (1947) he changed his mind about very little of what he had said in THE FOUNDATIONS. In particular, Ayer clearly stated in these articles that the relation between sense-datum statements and material-object statements was that of evidence to hypothesis, or of evidence-statements to theoretical statements, and he argued that a translation could be given in a suitably "vague" sense. To show what he meant, I shall consider briefly some of his remarks in these two articles which throw light on these points.

In "The Terminology of Sense-data" Ayer stated again that the problems which traditional sense-datum philosophers like Moore and Russell had about sense-data were not empirical problems and could not be resolved by empirical tests. The problem of whether sense-data are identical with parts of the surfaces of physical objects or not, the problem of whether sense-data can exist when they are not being directly apprehended, and the problem of whether sense-data can be qualitatively delusive are not empirical problems, but are problems about the meaning we are to attach to expressions like "X is a part of the surface of a physical object," "X is directly apprehended," Ayer maintained. The truth or falsity of these expressions about sense-data is not empirically decidable since philosophers disagree about how to resolve the above problems while

agreeing about the "observable facts." Hence their truth and falsity must be resolved in another manner. Ayer suggested that it could be resolved by deciding which of the expressions referring to sense-data were to be meaningful. Once we decided to make certain expressions meaningful, then by convention we could make such expressions analytically true. They would be a record of our determination to use symbols in a certain fashion, to put it in the language of LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC, or they would be *a priori* tautologies.

The best way to make these decisions about sense-datum expressions, Ayer thought, would be to "reflect on the actual usage" of the expressions in question.[1] Unfortunately there was neither an established ordinary usage nor even an established philosophical usage for expressions like "X is directly seen." Thus we could not make our decisions on the basis of an analysis of the standard usage of words. So Ayer suggested that, instead of thinking of this as a problem of determining the truth or falsity of propositions about sense-data by appealing to the way words are used, we should think of it as a question of "the advisability of making these propositions true or false."[2] That is, we simply had to prescribe a usage for such expressions as "X is directly seen." We could then go ahead and answer any problems about sense-data in terms of these prescriptions. And we could determine whether our answers were proper by ascertaining whether they were consistent with the purposes for which the sense-datum language existed. If these purposes were not fulfilled, then we had to choose other answers based on other prescriptions. These other answers would rule out as meaningless some or all of those which

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[1] "The Terminology of Sense-data," p. 76.

[2] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

did not in the first case enable us to fulfill these purposes, and they would rule in as meaningful those which did. In this way, the traditional impasse in solving problems about sense-data would be alleviated through the use of a linguistic approach. Consistent with this thinking, Ayer went on in "The Terminology of Sense-data" to argue again that the purposes for which the sense-datum language existed, such as the elucidation of material-object statements, would be better served by adopting the familiar conventions about sense-data which he adopted in THE FOUNDATIONS.

Ayer did make several novel points in "The Terminology of Sense-data," one of which was intended to explain the nature of the relationship between the sense-datum language and the material-object language. He suggested that on reading THE FOUNDATIONS one might get the impression that the language of sense-data, though philosophically convenient, did not enable us to say anything about our "perceptual experience" that we could not already express in the material-object language and hence that the sense-datum language was just a "technical substitute" for the material-object language. And, presumably, a technical substitute would be a useless device introduced merely for the purposes of formal analysis. On the other hand, Ayer claimed that he had also argued in THE FOUNDATIONS that it was a "contingent fact that the structure of our sensory experience was such as to make it possible to 'construct' out of it the world of a material thing";[1] the relations between sense-data which did enable us to do this might have been otherwise. But he went on, since he now thought that it was conceivable that there could be "an order of experience to which the sense-datum language would have application, but the

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[1] Ibid., p. 104.

physical-object language would not," the sense-datum language would have a range of application which would be "more comprehensive" than the physical-object language. And thus it would be a mistake to see the sense-datum language as just a more convenient and a merely technical, philosophical substitute for the material-object language. Instead, Ayer argued, there is "an asymmetry between the two languages which may be described by saying that the sense-datum language is logically 'prior' to the material object language." And this is shown, Ayer said, "by the fact that, while referring to sense-data is not necessarily a way of referring to physical objects, referring to physical objects is necessarily a way of referring to sense-data."[1] What makes the sense-datum language logically prior to the material-object language is the fact that reference to material objects is dependent upon reference to sense-data, but the converse is not true. Thus the truth-value of a material-object sentence is dependent on the truth-value of certain sense-datum sentences. Yet the truth-value of those sense-datum sentences is independent of the truth-value of that material object sentence. As an hypothesis, the material-object sentence is dependent on its evidence, and the sense-datum sentences <u>are</u> the evidence for that hypothesis. Presumably then, the truth of those sense-datum sentences is not determined by reference to the truth of material-object sentences. Since the evidence for an hypothesis is logically prior to the hypothesis (in the same way that premises are logically prior to conclusions) the sense-datum language is logically prior to the material-object language. This implies then that even if the sense-datum language was a technical substitute, it was a logically prior language. And, the function of phenomenalism would be

[1] <u>Ibid</u>.

to bring this fact out, not just to express material-object sentences in terms of sense-datum sentences. Ayer thought, however, that the "logical priority" of this language was a function of the fact (if it was a fact) that reference to material-objects is dependent on reference to sense-data, and not vice versa. So that ultimately, it was on the more traditional grounds of an analysis of our experience that phenomenalism made sense. Its linguistic character was really a foil for its ontological character, after all, though Ayer did not let on that he knew or was intending this to be true.

In his article, "Phenomenalism," Ayer reviewed once again the issue of translation and the different senses in which one could be a phenomenalist. In particular he again took up the strict thesis of linguistic phenomenalism that material-object statements can be translated into equivalent sense-datum statements. In a familiar vein, he argued that this strict version of linguistic phenomenalism could not be maintained, but that this was no reason to reject phenomenalism altogether since all that was required for the truth of phenomenalism was a "slight modification" of this stricter thesis. This modification, while not allowing the philosopher to translate any particular statement about a physical object into a set of statements about sense-data, did supposedly enable the philosopher to give "a general account of the way in which physical objects are 'constructed' out of sense-data," Ayer said.[1] The philosopher could maintain that a "vague translation" was possible in the sense that what one is saying about a physical object "though vague, still refers ultimately to sense-data and does not refer to anything other than sense-data."[2] In fact, Ayer gave a sketch of the form such a vague translation

[1] "Phenomenalism," p. 164. [2] Ibid., p. 142.

must take.

Ayer argued in "Phenomenalism" that so long as phenomenalists were required to show how particular physical-object statements were reducible to particular sense-datum statements, they would have difficulty giving translations, while if they were permitted to maintain only the more general thesis referred to above, it could be conceded that they would have proved their case.[1] In other words, Ayer maintained that phenomenalism had run into difficulty only because the phenomenalist's conception of what was required for phenomenalism to be true had been unnecessarily restrictive. If he were allowed to show in a general way that translation was possible, or if he could indicate "the sort of thing" we were saying about sense-data when we said something about a physical object, then Ayer thought that "the phenomenalist does not appear to meet any insuperable difficulties" in carrying out his logical constructions.[2] Of course Ayer's fluid language here masked the fact that he was changing his own view and that he was retreating from the stricter position which he had taken in LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC.

One argument which led Ayer to reject the strict translation thesis in THE FOUNDATIONS was that since no statement about a material object can be conclusively verified, there was no finite set of statements about sense-data which was equivalent to that material-object statement. The number of sense-datum statements which could be used as evidence for the truth of some material-object statement was infinite. And, thus, "however strongly one's sense-data may support the hypothesis that one is perceiving a physical object of a certain sort," Ayer said, "further evidence may show one to have been mistaken."[3] But Ayer now said that he

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 164. [3] Ibid., p. 137.

was inclined to reject this argument because it was not complete. Our belief in the existence of a physical object is never based solely on the occurrence of sense-data, he said, but is "derived also from a more general belief that I live in a world of physical objects of which things that look like this are specimens; and this belief is supported by a mass of past experiences."[1] This meant that Ayer's earlier argument against the strict translation thesis needed to be augmented in the light of his new view about the relevance of past experience to establishing the truth of material-object statements. Thus Ayer said,

> The sense data that are sufficient, in conjunction with ...previous experience, to establish the existence of the ball (or physical object) must all fall within a certain range...but the number of possible sense-data that fall within that range is indefinite, while the previous sensory experiences that may go to make the present evidence sufficient not only are indefinite in number, but themselves fall within a range that is extremely wide.[2]

Statements about material-objects are all indefinite or vague then, Ayer now thought. And "the comparatively definite statements" that we made about sense-data could not be exact translations of such indefinite statements.

In what sense then was phenomenalism true? Ayer answered that phenomenalism was true in the sense that "a suitably vague translation" of a material-object statement could be given. The phenomenalist could still maintain that what one was saying when he referred to a physical object ultimately referred to sense-data alone, even if he could not point to those particular sense-data to which reference was made. Ayer admitted that there were certain difficulties, such as that of specifying the conditions under which possible sense-data were actualized.[3] But

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[1] Ibid., p. 138. [2] Ibid., pp. 139-40.

[3] Some of the difficulties were pointed to by Price in Perception and in Hume's Theory of the External World (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940). Ayer was very probably replying to Price here.

despite these difficulties, Ayer was convinced that it was possible to sketch a kind of vague translation. He contended that the hypothetical statement which embodies

> The phenomenalist's analysis of a simple proposition about a physical object, say a proposition to the effect that there exists a physical object of a certain sort in a certain place throughout a certain period of time, should take the following form. A protasis, which will itself include a number of subsidiary hypotheticals, describing such sense-experiences as would be sufficient to identify the place and time in question, or in other words, to put the physical object in its proper setting: followed by an apodosis which would describe such sense-experiences as would be sufficient to verify the presence of the physical object in question: and this apodosis will also have to contain a number of subsidiary hypotheticals to rule out the possibility of an illusion.[1]

The truth of this whole hypothetical then would constitute a sufficient although not a necessary condition of the truth of some physical-object statement. And the relation between the physical-object statement and those sense-datum statements contained in this complex hypothetical would be like that of a theoretical statement in an empirical theory to its evidence-statements. We cannot "rewrite" or "translate" a theoretical statement soley in terms of statements about sense-data, but the theoretical statement can nevertheless function as a means of "grouping" the sense-data referred to in the sense-datum statements. Furthermore, this material-object statement would be just one of a number of theoretical statements which would comprise a theory whose function was "to explain the course of our sensory experiences," [2] Ayer maintained. The contingent way in which our sense-data occurred in our sense-fields and hence the truth of those statements which were made about our sense-data would provide the basis for judging whether the "theory" was valid or not.

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[1] Ayer, "Phenomenalism," pp. 163-64.

[2] Ibid., p. 165.

It would be appropriate to end this discussion of Ayer's linguistic phenomenalism by noting how orthodox or "ontological" Ayer's discussion of sense-data became in his article "Phenomenalism." We should observe that Ayer was saying that the truth of phenomenalism was ultimately a matter which would be discussed in terms of certain contingent facts about the occurrence of sense-data. The language Ayer used here was strongly indicative of a belief that sense-data, as existents, actually "occurred." And this leads one to believe that he was talking about sense-data in a "factual" rather than a "linguistic" manner. That is, he appeared to be describing the behavior of a mental existent, if not a mental object. Moreover, Ayer defined what a sense-datum was by stating that a visual sense-datum, for example, was "anything that is the constituent of a visual sense-field. And, in general, a sense-datum may be defined as anything that is the constituent of a sense-field."[1] It is hard to imagine Moore, Russell, or Price disagreeing that this was a true fact about sense-data, though they would have defined what sense-data were differently. Furthermore, the old quest for a neutral term cropped up again when Ayer said that "What we obtain by introducing the term 'sense-datum' is a means of referring to appearances without prejudging the questions, what it is, if anything, that they are appearances of, and what it is, if anything, that they appear to."[2]

Nevertheless, these appearances are deceiving, for, while the strict translation thesis was by now completely in disfavor, Ayer had not yet given up the belief that a vague translation could be given. And indeed, he didn't finally dissociate himself from the idea of translation until

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[1] Ibid., p. 130. [2] Ibid., p. 131.

THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE in 1956.[1] Furthermore, he had not returned to the "ontological" thesis that "The direct evidence for the existence of a physical object is always the occurrence of some sense-datum."[2] This was, after all, a matter which was true by definition; it was not something which was confirmed by introspective examinations of mental objects. In addition, we need to keep in mind Ayer's rejection of the act-object analysis of sensation throughout this whole period, especially in "Phenomenalism." This rejection was an extremely significant development in the overthrow of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. It represented an attack against the very nucleus and starting point of the sense-datum theory as conceived by Moore, Russell, and Price.

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[1] See the section on phenomenalism in The Problem of Knowledge, Pelican Books (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1956), pp. 118-29.

[2] "Phenomenalism," pp. 140-41.

PART II. CRITICISM OF THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY

CHAPTER SIX

INTRODUCTION: TWO MAIN LINES OF ATTACK

By 1955 it had become commonplace for English philosophers to acknowledge that the sense-datum theory was no longer a viable theory; that the analysis of what we perceive need not involve any claims about the existence of sense-data and that our ordinary language for talking about what we perceive need not be translated into a sense-datum language.[1] The reasons why many philosophers in England changed their minds about the theory of sense-data, or why they denied that such a language was necessary, are, of course, numerous and complex. And I could not hope to deal with all of them in any detail here. It is clear, I think, that criticisms came from all segments of the philosophical spectrum, for there were attacks made on both linguistic phenomenalism and on the ontological version of the sense-datum theory by ordinary language philosophers, by logical positivists, and by more traditionally oriented philosophers.

What I want to do in this Introductory Chapter is to give a brief account of two lines of criticism which I believe contributed most to the fall of the sense-datum theory in England: first, there is what I will call the major "internal line of criticism," namely, that stemming from the extended critique of the act-object analysis of sensation by sense-

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[1] Morris Lazerowitz says that he once attended a party in Oxford in 1953 and was "facetiously asked whether there were any sense-data in the States....Of course, the idea the philosopher wished to convey was that no competent philosopher would any longer seriously believe that there are such things as sense-data...." See Morris Lazerowitz, "Austin's Sense and Sensibilia," Philosophy, XXXVIII (April, 1963), 242-43.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION: THE [illegible]

By 1955 it had become commonplace for [illegible] philosophers to [illegible] edge that the sense-data theory was no longer a viable theory, that the analysis of what we perceive need not involve any claims about the existence of sense-data and that our ordinary language for talking about what we perceive need not be translated into a sense-datum language. The reasons why many philosophers in England changed their minds about the theory of sense-data, or why they denied that such a language was necessary, are, of course, numerous and complex. And I could not hope to deal with all of them in any detail here. It is clear, I think, that critical [illegible] attacks made on both linguistic phenomenalism and on the ontological version of the sense-datum theory by ordinary language philosophers, by logical positivists, and by more traditionally oriented philosophers.

What I want to do in this Introductory Chapter is to give a brief account of two lines of criticism which I believe contributed most to the fall of the sense-datum theory in England: first, there is what I will call the major internal line of criticism, namely, that [illegible] the extended criticism of the act-object analysis of [illegible]

datum philosophers and others; and, second, there is what I shall call the major "external line of criticism," by which I will mean that stemming from the rejection of the sense-datum approach to philosophizing by the later Wittgenstein, by Gilbert Ryle, and by J. L. Austin.

In using the words "internal" and "external," I only want to make a very general kind of distinction. By an internal line of criticism I will mean, first, a series of critical remarks having a common critical theme which was sometimes made by sense-datum philosophers themselves. Second, an internal criticism is one which was directed against specific doctrines or assumptions of the sense-datum theory rather than against the way sense-datum philosophers approached the whole issue of perception. By an external line of criticism, on the other hand, I shall mean a series of critical remarks which were directed against the way sense-datum philosophers approached the issue of perception.

Internal criticisms of the act-object analysis of sensation struck at the heart of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. The act-object analysis was, as we argued before, the basic doctrine of the ontological version, having its twentieth-century origin in Moore's "Refutation of Idealism" in 1903. And when critical attacks undermined this doctrine, the rest of the basic doctrines of the ontological theory collapsed with it. The internal attack against the act-object analysis did not do away with the sense-datum theory completely, however, for the theory was rejuvenated by G. A. Paul and A. J. Ayer in linguistic form. Moreover, Ayer himself made certain internal criticisms of the ontological version of the theory while, at the same time, developing his own version of the theory.

Internal criticisms were also made against the linguistic version of

the sense-datum theory. The linguistic version of the theory, under Ayer's guidance, was inseparably united with a form of phenomenalism which we have called "linguistic phenomenalism." And, from 1945 until approximately 1955, a large number of internal, critical thrusts were made against the central thesis of linguistic phenomenalism, namely, the translation thesis.[1] Ironically, Ayer contributed to the demise of his own version of the theory because of his doubts about the translation thesis. At any rate the massive internal attack against linguistic phenomenalism had much to do with the correlative demise of the linguistic version of the sense-datum theory, since the linguistic version was so closely associated with linguistic phenomenalism.

In addition, there were other critics of the linguistic version who objected to the very notion of an artificial language of sense-data. Those critics thought that a better understanding of our ordinary perceptual language would serve to remove any need for a translation into an artificial language. In fact, they argued that both versions of the sense-datum theory exhibited certain fundamental errors which could easily be removed by a careful look at the grammar and logic of ordinary language.

The internal line of attack, then, was largely responsible for the breakdown of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, though external criticisms contributed in some measure to this also. The external line of attack was most effective in bringing down the linguistic version of the theory, though this latter version was also weakened considerably

[1] For a summary of some of the more important internal criticisms of linguistic phenomenalism, see the article by Isaiah Berlin, "Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements," Mind, n.s., LIX (July, 1950). Ayer later replied to Berlin's paper in Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge, 1956.

by its association with linguistic phenomenalism. Neither of these statements should be taken to imply that any given critic of the sense-datum theory advanced either internal or external criticisms alone; most critics of the theory broached both kinds of criticisms, in different measure.

In calling a line of criticism "internal" or "external" nothing is to be implied about the relative potency or effectiveness of that line of criticism. I think that both of these lines of criticism were effective in different ways and at different periods of time. The internal attack against the ontological version of the sense-datum theory was effective because it was advanced within the same type of philosophical framework as that in which the ontological version itself was advanced. An external line of attack, had it been broached in the heyday of the ontological version of the theory in the three decades after 1910, would not have been as effective as it was later, in 1940, and after. The external line of attack was more effective after the linguistic version of the theory had been proposed because many important English philosophers in the 1940's had come to conceive of philosophy in terms of linguistic analysis and because many philosophers had become more sensitive about the way they used language in stating their philosophical views.

I will locate the origin of the major internal line of criticism in Russell's rejection of the act-object analysis of sensation in his article, "On Propositions," in 1919 and in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND in 1921. I shall locate the origins of the second, external line of criticism in some of Ludwig Wittgenstein's remarks about the nature of philosophy in his BLUE BOOK period and in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. I want to show that Wittgenstein played an important part in formulating both of these lines

of criticism, although it is perhaps not accurate to suggest that his views had a great deal of immediate effect on the thinking of the major sense-datum critics, Ryle and Austin.

From the "internal" standpoint, Wittgenstein's criticism of the view that such things as thinking, understanding, believing, and willing are mental processes or mental acts was an important forerunner of Ryle's attack on the "Dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" in THE CONCEPT OF MIND and of Ryle's critique of the view that seeing is a mental process or mental act. It is not clear just what actual effect this critical attack of Wittgenstein's had on Ryle. But I will try to show that Wittgenstein's criticism of the mental-process theory can be extended to include an attack against the view that perceiving is a mental process, and that Ryle's critique of the sense-datum theory was similar to Wittgenstein's in this respect. Wittgenstein also functioned as a strong critic of the view that sense-data are <u>private objects</u> or entities. And this means that Wittgenstein had something important to say against both parts of the act-object analysis of sensation.

From the external standpoint, Wittgenstein's view as to the proper way to conduct a philosophical investigation had a sympathetic rendering in certain of the critical remarks of both Ryle and Austin. His belief that philosophical problems are the result of grammatical misunderstandings and his belief that we need to treat these problems by getting a closer look at the grammar and logic of our ordinary language were advocated by Ryle in THE CONCEPT OF MIND and by Austin in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA.

In discussing these two critical lines of attack, I want to guard against giving the impression that there was some kind of unanimous revulsion felt by English philosophers against the sense-datum theory.

Furthermore, I don't want to suggest that the sense-datum theory was completely annihilated by the critical remarks of Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin. It is true that one of the major lines of criticism, the external, was associated with certain views about the value of ordinary language, views which became quite prevalent in England after World War II. But there were, of course, many other philosophers in England after the war who neither discarded the sense-datum theory in toto nor, if they did, embraced the view that an attack against the sense-datum approach to perception was the proper method of criticizing the sense-datum theory. Of course the old versions of the theory will probably never surface again in the same forms, but there is good evidence that new and revitalized versions of the sense-datum theory are slowly emerging now in England. And, in view of the durability of the theory in the history of philosophy, it would surely be rash to suggest that the theory will never rear its head again.[1]

It is necessary to stress that, among both internal and external critics, there was some general agreement in rejecting the belief that we directly perceive, are aware of, or are acquainted with sense-data rather than physical objects. Such philosophers as Barnes, Ryle, Austin, Warnock, and Quinton all objected to saying that we do not directly perceive such things as tomatoes and gateposts.[2] And there was certainly a fund of common agreement about why the sense-datum theory went wrong in suggesting that we do perceive sense-data rather than material objects.

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[1] See, e.g., Don Locke, Perception and Our Knowledge of the External World (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1967).

[2] W. H. F. Barnes, "The Myth of Sense-data," PAS, n.s., XLV (1944-45); Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1949); J. L. Austin, Sense and Sensibilia (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962); G. J. Warnock, "Seeing," PAS, n.s., LV (1954-55); and A. M. Quinton, "The Problem of Perception," Mind, n.s., LXIV (January, 1955).

Moreover, many English philosophers, all primarily external critics, took the lead of Ryle and Austin and attacked the "Cartesian" assumptions which they found in the sense-datum theory. Some of these assumptions were assumptions about the nature of the mind and about mental processes. Others were assumptions about the possibility of having knowledge of these processes and assumptions about the structure and foundations of empirical knowledge. In attacking these assumptions, and in arguing for the thesis that we perceive tomatoes rather than round, red, bulgy patches, philosophers were exhibiting a "wide-spread tendency to return to common sense," in the words of H. H. Price.[1] However, none of these facts should imply anything about a common agreement among critics as to the proper analysis of perception. In fact, many of the external critics of the sense-datum theory said very little in the way of positive theorizing about perception, and the ordinary-language analysis of perception has still barely gotten off its feet.

I will turn then to giving a brief characterization of both the major internal and the major external lines of criticism; after this I will consider in more detail the contributions which Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin made to generating these lines of criticism. I want to make it clear now that, in these subsequent chapters on Wittgenstein, Ryle and Austin, I will be dealing primarily with criticism of the sense-datum theory and not so much with the positive contributions which these philosophers made to the philosophy of perception.

The Major Internal Line of Criticism

The Rejection of the Act-object Analysis of Sensation

As I mentioned before, the major internal line of criticism began

[1] H. H. Price, "The Argument from Illusion," in Contemporary British Philosophy, 3rd Series, ed. by H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1961), p. 391.

when, under the influence of the views of William James, Bertrand Russell completely reversed his early position as to the proper analysis of sensation. The stock sense-datum view, as we saw, was originally stated by Moore in "The Refutation of Idealism" when, in reference to seeing a color, he made a distinction between the act of awareness and the object of awareness. Moore later turned this into his distinction between a mental act of direct apprehension, a sensing, and an object of that apprehension, a sense-datum. Russell, of course, embraced a similar distinction in THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and in all of the rest of his work on perception before 1919, though his terminology was different.

In "On Propositions" (1919) and in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND (1921) Russell clearly changed his mind about the plausibility of this distinction. His earlier view in 1914 had been that sense-data were "extra-mental, purely physical" entities, not in any way dependent on the mind for their existence. However, in "On Propositions" and later in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND Russell decided that while it was true to say that a patch of color was a physical entity, as he had thought earlier, "It doesn't follow that the patch of color is not also psychical, unless we assume that the physical and the psychical cannot overlap, which I no longer consider a valid assumption." And if we admit that the patch of color is both physical and mental, then "The reason for distinguishing the sense-datum from the sensation disappears," he thought.[1] In harmony with this change in position, Russell no longer talked about "sense-data" at all, and he did not attempt to construct the mental world out of sense-data. The ultimate

[1] Russell, The Analysis of Mind, p. 143. Russell traced this monistic view back through "the American Realists," mentioning John Dewey and James, ultimately to Mach.

constituents of the mental world became sensations and images rather than sense-data. Furthermore, in 1919 and after, Russell no longer thought of "mere seeing" or direct acquaintance as a form of knowledge. Sensation is not a form of knowledge, he said, although it is the source of our knowledge of the physical world. As Russell put it, "It is of course undeniable that knowledge comes through the seeing, but I think it is a mistake to regard the mere seeing itself as knowledge."[1]

On the other hand, in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND, Russell still maintained his earlier views as to the need for phenomenalistic constructions of both the mental world and the physical world. Thus he made the mental subject, the "I," a logical construction out of sensations, utilizing his earlier views as to biographies and perspectives. And all of the inhabitants of the mental world, such as our beliefs and emotions, were said to be constructible out of sensations and images. Moreover, Russell briefly hinted in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND that a physical object was a logical fiction, too, constructible out of sensations and sensibilia.

The question then is, What significance did this change in position have as an internal criticism of the sense-datum theory, especially in view of the fact that Russell still retained his program of logical construction?

I think the answer to this question is that Russell struck here at the very foundation of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory as it had been conceived by Moore and by Russell himself in 1919. The distinction between sensing and sense-datum was the fundamental distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory; it is a distinction which Moore, Russell, and later Price all made at the very outset of their several analyses of what we perceive. If the distinction

[1] Ibid., p. 141.

was not to be made, then there no longer was any reason to talk as if sense-data had a nature independent of the mind. The purpose of making this distinction had been to separate the mental part of our perception from the non-mental part. It was thought that if this separation was not made, then patches of color and flashes of light, for example, might be fallaciously conceived of as mental entities, dependent upon our awareness of them. Of course one basic principle common to all of the many "realisms" flourishing in the first half of this century in England and America was that the object of sensation is independent of the mind, contrary to the idealism of the day. Russell's notion of "sensibilia" was direct evidence of a belief in that principle.

In pointing out the independence of patches of color and flashes of light, the ontological sense-datum philosopher talked as if he had discovered a new kind of object or particular existent which could be described and characterized in the same way that a new species of insect might be described and catalogued by an entomologist. Russell went so far as to classify sense-data among the "ultimate constituents" of the universe. And, in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, Moore also conceived of sense-data as one of the important kinds of things which we knew to exist in the universe. Thus, if the distinction between sensing and sense-datum was to be discarded, as Russell thought that it should be in 1919, then it was implied that sense-data did not exist as entities or objects independent of our mind or awareness. And, while Russell did not say as much, we can take this to be an implication of his change of position in THE ANALYSIS OF MIND.[1]

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[1] This is not to say, of course, that Russell therefore thought that sense-data were dependent upon the mind. He no longer believed in the existence of sense-data at all.

So far as I can determine, the importance of this implication, indeed the very fact of the implication, was not generally recognized, or at least publicly discussed in English philosophy for some time after 1919. It is interesting to note, however, that a philosopher who was at one time closely associated with Russell and sympathetic to Russell's views, Ludwig Wittgenstein, picked this implication up, so to speak, and began to emphasize its importance. Moreover, in 1935 and 1936, G. A. Paul, a philosopher who is said to have introduced the teachings of Wittgenstein to Australia, adopted the view that sense-data were not entities or objects.[1] This latter point of view was also explicitly advocated by Ayer in THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE.

In talking about "the sense-datum notation," Wittgenstein said in the BLUE BOOK period that, "queerly enough, the introduction of this new phraseology has deluded people into thinking that they had discovered new entities, new elements of the structure of the world, as though to say 'I believe that there are sense data' were similar to saying 'I believe that matter consists of electrons.' "[2] Whether Wittgenstein's remarks here were borrowed directly from Russell or not is relatively unimportant; what is important is that Wittgenstein found it necessary to note that sense-datum philosophers had been acting as if they had discovered some new constituents of the universe and that in doing so they were deluding themselves in a "queer" way. Moreover, in view of the close intellectual connection between Wittgenstein and G. A. Paul, it is probably Wittgenstein's views in the early 1930's which inspired Paul to make out his

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[1] See G. A. Paul, "The Analysis of Sense-data," Analysis, III (October, 1935) and "Is There a Problem about Sense-data?".

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 70.

position in 1935 and 1936 as to the nature of sense-data. Some of Paul's views were similar to those which Ayer adopted in THE FOUNDATIONS, views which became the cornerstone of the linguistic version of the sense-datum theory, though there was no overt relationship between Ayer and Paul, and though Ayer very probably borrowed his own views from some of the Vienna positivists.

Ayer's rejection of the act-object analysis of sensation, like Russell's, was two-sided, for he not only denied that sense-data were objects, but he also denied that the act of sensing was introspectively discoverable in our mental experience. Ayer's rejection of the act-object analysis went back to LANGUAGE, TRUTH AND LOGIC in 1936, where he said that he did not accept "the realist analysis or our sensations in terms of subject, act, and object. For neither the existence of the substance which is supposed to perform the so-called act of sensing nor the existence of the act itself, as an entity distinct from the sense-contents on which it is supposed to be directed, is in the least capable of being verified."[1] In THE FOUNDATIONS, Ayer continued to be skeptical about such an analysis, maintaining that he doubted whether there were any such acts as acts of sensing.[2] And, finally in his article, "Phenomenalism," he went so far as to call the act-object analysis "a famous piece of philosophical mythology."[3] He suggested that it was hopelessly embedded in the ontological definition of sense-data as the objects of direct awareness. But, he went on, he didn't know what it would be like to "come upon an act of awareness. Consequently, if sense-data were defined as the objects of

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[1] A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, p. 122.

[2] Ayer, The Foundations, p. 62.

[3] "Phenomenalism," p. 127.

such acts (he) should remain unconvinced that there were sense-data."[1] Moreover, Ayer was eager to get away from any analysis which assumed that words like "seeing" and "touching" were "names for mental acts."[2]

Ayer could not have been a sense-datum theorist in the ontological sense and have believed that these critical remarks of his were true. In the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, a sense-datum was the object of a mental act, of the act of "sensing," of "direct perception," or of "immediate awareness." And it was necessary in the ontological version to distinguish between sense-data as objects and the sensory acts by which we became aware of them. Ayer accepted none of this. He was not committed to the view that sense-data were real objects of some sort. Rather, as I argued before, he tended to conceive of sense-data as adjectival entities, introduced in a sense-datum language to clarify expressions which contained "material-object" words.[3]

For neither Russell nor Ayer did the rejection of the act-object analysis of sensation necessitate a rejection of phenomenalism, though we should keep in mind Russell's allegiance to the causal theory. Russell's versions of phenomenalism, phenomenalism in respect to mental objects and phenomenalism in respect to physical objects, remained much the same both before and after his change of position in 1919. What changed in his view was not the need for a phenomenalist construction program nor the need for principles on which this program would proceed, but the basic construction elements themselves. They were no longer seen to be purely physical entities having both a private and public character, but they became neutral entities not distinguished from the acts which "intended" them. Ayer too did not think that his rejection of the act-object analysis

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[1] Ibid., p. 128. [2] Ibid., p. 131. [3] Supra, p. 181.

required a hostile view toward phenomenalism. In fact there never appears to have been a time in Ayer's published work that he did not reject the act-object analysis, though he continued to maintain until the early 1950's that some version of linguistic phenomenalism was true. Ayer eventually became skeptical about the truth of linguistic phenomenalism after the translation thesis was attacked in the later 1940's.

Gilbert Ryle and J. L. Austin also functioned as internal critics of the act-object analysis. In THE CONCEPT OF MIND in 1949 Ryle charged that the sense-datum theory was guilty of treating sensing as if it were a kind of perceiving or observing of something. Ryle argued that the concept of sensation could not be analyzed in this way, and he used an old argument to attack the view that sense-data were objects. On the other hand, the Rylean criticisms of the act-object analysis were inseparably connected with certain external criticisms of the sense-datum theory which I shall discuss later.

J. L. Austin also acted as an internal critic of the sense-datum theory. Austin pointed to many errors which certain sense-datum philosophers had made in explaining the sense-datum theory. But his most important critical remarks were external in scope, that is, remarks directed against the methods sense-datum philosophers used to talk about the issue of sensation and perception and remarks directed against the epistemological assumptions behind this theory. His external criticisms were made against both the ontological and the linguistic versions of the sense-datum theory, though he functioned primarily as a critic of the linguistic version of the theory.

I hope that it has now become clear that, since the linguistic version of the sense-datum theory, under the direction of Ayer, involved a

rejection of the view that sense-data are objects, it contributed to the demise of the ontological version of the theory. But the other part of this internal attack against the act-object analysis, the part which involved a rejection of the act of sensing, did not play as important a role in the critical views of Russell, Paul, and Ayer. I think it was Wittgenstein who brought into focus this part of the attack against that analysis in his lectures and in his work of the period from 1929 to 1945. Much of Wittgenstein's work during this period was distilled into THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS, the ZETTEL, and the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. In these works, Wittgenstein carried out a long discussion and criticism of the view that such things as believing, understanding, thinking, meaning, and seeing are mental acts or mental processes. In this way, Wittgenstein served to undermine the position that sensing is a mental act akin to perceiving. I will subsequently turn to these discussions of Wittgenstein in the next chapter in order to describe the main features of that criticism. I will also go into some more detail in respect to Wittgenstein's views about the privacy of sense-data.

External Criticism of the Sense-datum Theory

One main reason why the sense-datum theory fell into disfavor with philosophers in England after World War II was the rise of interest in what came to be called "ordinary language analysis." The leaders of this "movement" at Oxford were Gilbert Ryle and J. L. Austin, and the fact that both of these philosophers devoted a good deal of critical energy toward attacking the sense-datum theory in both of its leading forms had much to do with the more general disenchantment with the theory.

Many of the criticisms which Ryle and Austin made about the sense-

datum theory were internal criticisms. These criticisms did not deviate in style and sometimes in substance from the kind of criticisms which had been made by other philosophers more sympathetic to the sense-datum theory. But Ryle and Austin also found what they thought were serious errors in the language which sense-datum philosophers used to talk about perception. And they took the time to point out certain of the grammatical errors which they thought the sense-datum theory perpetrated. Of course Ryle and Austin were not merely interested in eliminating the grammatical mistakes of the sense-datum theory. They believed that grammatical error was evidence of conceptual error, and it was their aim to do away with the latter too. They believed that the practice of pointing to and eliminating misleading linguistic expressions in the language of the sense-datum philosophers would help to eliminate the conceptual errors behind those expressions. They implied that progress in perceptual theory could not be made until a more careful attitude was taken toward the ordinary language we use for talking about perception. Thus they proposed that philosophers should examine our ordinary perceptual language with some care in order to describe the diverse way it functions. If philosophers followed this advice, the ordinary language philosophers believed that they would not be as prone to make linguistic and hence conceptual errors.

The origins of this second line of criticism can be found in Wittgenstein's teachings in the 1930's and in the profound personal influence Wittgenstein had on a number of philosophers who came to reject the approach of sense-datum thinkers. The critical views of Wittgenstein which provided the basis for this attack began to appear in the middle 1930's. Thus in THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS, Wittgenstein took sense-datum philosophers to task for the grammatical misunderstanding to which they

had fallen heir in talking about sense-data. Sense-datum philosophers think that sense-data are entities; they think that they have discovered a new kind of entity. But, Wittgenstein said, in saying this they showed they had been misled by the grammatical similarity between sense-datum statements and physical-object statements. When they said something such as, "I believe there are sense-data," Wittgenstein argued that they noticed how similar this was to saying something such as, "I believe that matter consists of electrons." And then they misled themselves into thinking that their sense-datum expressions referred to entities in the same way that these other expressions did.

Wittgenstein did not claim that these sense-datum expressions were nonsensical in any way. In fact he believed that we could "make use of such an expression as 'pointing to the appearance of a body' or 'pointing to a visual sense-datum'."[1] But the point of introducing these expressions was lost when sense-datum philosophers began to talk about sense-data as if they were entities of some sort, for then they showed that they had forgotten the motive which was behind the introduction of these expressions to begin with. Originally philosophers used these expressions, Wittgenstein thought, in order "to model expressions referring to 'appearance' after expressions referring to 'reality'."[2] Expressions referring to appearances were needed in order to discuss those cases in which an object appeared to be before our eyes but really was not. But when sense-data philosophers began to talk about appearances as if they were something entirely separate from that of which they were appearances, then the introduction of the sense-datum expressions had engendered a misunderstanding.

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[1] Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books, p. 71.

[2] Ibid., p. 70.

The misunderstanding was basically "grammatical," Wittgenstein implied. By this he meant that it resulted from the fact that sense-datum philosophers unwittingly drew conclusions about the ontological character of sense-data from the grammatical similarities between statements about sense-data and statements about physical objects.

Another misunderstanding which was a product of talk about sense-data as objects, Wittgenstein suggested, is found in the claim that sense-data are private. This claim would never have arisen had sense-datum philosophers not first been misled by grammar into thinking that sense-data were objects. If sense-datum philosophers had not taken sense-data to be objects, then there would have been no need to inquire into their nature, into whether they were private objects or not. The claim, "A man's sense-data are private to himself," would have made no sense to him if this had not been so.

Problems about the nature of sense-data were philosophical problems, Wittgenstein argued, only because certain philosophers thought that they were dealing with issues which could be resolved by scientific means. These philosophers believed that they could solve these problems by reflection on what one really sees or by introspection of one's sensory acts. But to conceive of a philosophical problem in this way, to conceive of it as decidable by introspection or by reflection on one's mental acts and objects, was to misinterpret the proper activity of a philosopher, Wittgenstein thought. The philosopher is not a man who must compete with scientists in making empirical statements about what we perceive, Wittgenstein maintained, and philosophical disagreements about perception are not disagreements about what the empirical facts are. Thus, contrary to what he might have thought, a sense-datum philosopher was not raising

an empirical issue when he asked such questions as "Are there sense-data?" or "Are sense-data private to a mind?" What he had raised was a philosophical problem, a problem which could not be resolved by empirical techniques.

The main source of problems about sense-data was the dissatisfaction sense-datum philosophers felt about our ordinary language. They felt that ordinarily our language could not deal as well as it should with unusual cases of perception, or with cases in which someone saw something which did not really exist. Wittgenstein said,

> Our ordinary language...holds our mind rigidly in one position, as it were, and in this position sometimes it feels cramped, having a desire for other positions as well. Thus we sometimes wish for a notation which stresses a difference more strongly, makes it more obvious, than ordinary language does....Our mental cramp is loosened when we are shown the notations which fulfill these needs.[1]

Wittgenstein could very well have been describing the position which sense-datum philosophers were in when they tried to describe what happened to a person who was seeing an illusion, delusion, or hallucination. Such a philosopher found that his ordinary language was not quite adequate to express the differences between these kinds of cases and other kinds of cases, so he invented a terminology which would make these differences evident and which would make it clear that a person does perceive something even in these odd cases. But this was the false step, Wittgenstein implied; this was the source of the sense-datum philosopher's subsequent puzzlement about the nature and existence of sense-data.

Philosophical problems arise from introducing the sense-datum terminology and the only way that these problems can be cleared up is by

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[1] Ibid., p. 59.

reverting to the standpoint of common sense.[1] This is not to say that Wittgenstein thought that there were common sense answers to problems about sense-data; in fact, he explicitly said that there was "no common sense answer to a philosophical problem" of any sort.[2] Rather, Wittgenstein believed,

> One can defend common sense against the attacks of philosophers only by solving their puzzles, i.e., by curing them of the temptation to attack common sense; not by restating the views of common sense. A philosopher is not a man out of his senses, a man who doesn't see what everybody sees; nor on the other hand is his disagreement with common sense that of the scientist disagreeing with the coarse views of the man in the street. We have therefore to look round for the source of his puzzlement.[3]

And since the source of his puzzlement lay in his introduction of the sense-datum terminology, we had to do something about the sense-datum terminology. We either had to eliminate it completely, or, we had constantly to keep in mind when using it the purposes for which it was introduced and the misleading pictures to which it sometimes led.

It is not altogether obvious that, in the BLUE BOOK period, Wittgenstein wanted to eliminate sense-datum expressions completely. It is probably more reasonable to say that he was calling for a more thorough understanding of the "grammar" of sense-datum expressions. Wittgenstein said, during this period, "When one uses the word 'sense-datum', one should be clear about the peculiarity of its grammar."[4] To talk about the grammar of this word was to talk about the manifold ways in which the word was and could be used in longer expressions and in full statements to say certain things. This grammar, Wittgenstein said, appears similar to the grammar of statements about physical objects. If we were careful

[1] Ibid., p. 45. [2] Ibid., p. 58. [3] Ibid., pp. 58-59. [4] Ibid., p. 70.

to note this fact, however, and were not misled into talking about a new kind of entity, then it was safe to go ahead and use sense-datum language if it served the purpose of making certain distinctions more clear.[1]

One thing that is significant about Wittgenstein's views in the BLUE BOOK is the fact that he thought philosophers needed to be cured of their tendency to attack or to subvert common sense; they could be cured, he thought, by getting them to look back at the source of their philosophical problems, namely, at their dissatisfaction with ordinary language. The belief that philosophical problems are like illnesses in need of a kind of therapy, and the belief that it is the philosopher's duty to "talk these illnesses out," were reiterated in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS when Wittgenstein said that "There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies,"[2] and when he said that "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness."[3] Just as one aim of psycho-therapy is to get the client to see what his problem is, so it was the aim of philosophy as therapy to get the philosopher to see what his problem was. In order to accomplish this the philosopher needed to accept first that he was in a muddle, that what he had theorized was nonsensical or absurd in some way. The sense-datum philosopher, for example, had to see that his puzzlement about the privacy of sense-data was a metaphysical puzzle. When the

[1] This is also the tack that Ayer took in introducing the sense-datum "terminology." He thought it served to make certain things clearer.

[2] Philosophical Investigations, trans. by G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), Pt. I, sec. 133.

[3] Ibid., Pt. I, sec. 255.

sense-datum philosopher said, "A man's sense-data are private to himself," he was making a metaphysical statement.[1] And a metaphysical statement was a piece of nonsense. It would have been Wittgenstein's aim then, to uncover this piece of nonsense, for the nonsense would be buried in a mass of theorizing about the need for a sense-datum language. Wittgenstein said in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, "My aim is to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense."[2] And, "The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language."[3] The language Wittgenstein was talking about here was ordinary language, and we can speculate that Wittgenstein believed that the sense-datum philosopher had run up against the limits of ordinary language when trying to talk about unusual cases of perception. Ordinary language did not allow him to make as sharp and intelligible a distinction as he would have preferred between cases of illusions and cases of normal perception. So he invented a language, the sense-datum language, to do the job. But then the sense-datum philosopher began to get sick, so to speak, for he came to take the sense-datum notation to refer to entities or to objects, and he ended up with puzzles about the nature and existence of these entitites. He did not realize, in his sickened condition, that he had problems. Yet he could not seem to resolve them by the means he made available to himself (for example, by introspection). The role of the therapeutic philosopher was to step in at this point and to show the sense-datum philosopher where his trouble had begun and

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[1] The Blue and Brown Books, p. 55.

[2] Philosophical Investigations, Pt. I, sec. 464.

[3] Ibid., Pt. I, sec. 119.

what it had led to. He had to make the sense-datum philosopher aware of the absurdity which characterized disputes about sense-data. And he had to bring the sense-datum philosopher back to the point where he either gave up the sense-datum language entirely, or became more conscious of its grammar.

This reconstruction of Wittgenstein's views had what I have called a "sympathetic rendering" in the work of Ryle and Austin on the sense-datum theory. We will see that one argument Ryle used in THE CONCEPT OF MIND to attack the sense-datum theory was a close approximation of Wittgenstein's view that sense-datum philosophers had been misled by the grammar of sense-datum expressions into thinking that sense-data were entities. We will see that Ryle argued against making appearances entities or objects in much the same way that Wittgenstein did.

There is a strong connection too between this reconstruction of Wittgenstein's views and some of the things which Austin said in Lecture I, e.g., of SENSE AND SENSIBILIA. Thus when Austin said that he wanted to show that what Ayer said about the argument for introducing sense-data embodied a great mass of verbal fallacies, we are reminded of Wittgenstein's view that sense-datum philosophers have been misled by grammar into stating certain metaphysical puzzles about sense-data. Moreover, both Ryle's and Austin's respect for the distinctions which are embodied in ordinary language and their respect for the many and varied ways in which our ordinary expressions may be used was paralleled in the later Wittgenstein's own respect for ordinary language. The disdain Wittgenstein felt for artificial or ideal languages in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS is well known. Wittgenstein thought that many philosophical problems would not have arisen if philosophers had tried to understand ordinary language. This conviction was carried through by Austin in his positive

investigations of "perceptual" verbs like "seems" and "appears" in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA.

By sharing an interest in the subtleties of ordinary language, Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin all contributed to the demise of the sense-datum theory. After reading THE CONCEPT OF MIND and after hearing Austin's lectures on sense-data, it was no longer intellectually feasible for many younger English philosophers to talk about perceptual problems in the fashion of Moore, Russell, Price, and Ayer. The fact that these sense-datum philosophers themselves had sometimes talked as if the motive for taking up perceptual problems was to separate the chaff from the grain in the plain man's beliefs about what he perceived was enough to bring ordinary language philosophers closer together. What the ordinary man would say about what he perceives, and what this implied for perceptual theory, becamse of prime importance to Ryle and Austin. It wasn't that they were advocating a common-sense theory of perception, so much as they were reacting against a theory which to them had ended in an acute case of philosophical schizophrenia. Either, they implied, the sense-datum philosopher believed that we did not really perceive physical objects while acting in everyday life as if we did, or, on the other hand, the sense-datum philosopher had come to believe that the proper language for talking about what we perceive was the sense-datum language, a language which no one could speak or even construct. These alternatives led to philosophical paralysis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WITTGENSTEIN: THE MENTAL PROCESS VIEW AND THE CONCEPT OF SEEING

A very large part of Wittgenstein's post-TRACTATUS work consists of an attack against the view that expressions which refer to "so-called mental activities" such as understanding, believing, meaning, intending, wishing, and the like also refer to private mental processes or activities.[1] This attack spans the whole range of his work in the 1930's and 1940's. It begins early in the BLUE BOOK, is an important concern in the BROWN BOOK, and is strong throughout his ZETTEL and PHILSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. The object of Wittgenstein's attack is to show that private mental acts and experiences cannot serve as criteria for the employment of mental expressions, that mental words do not refer to recurrent mental processes nor to private mental objects. Rather, Wittgenstein argued, to understand mental concepts we must look at the verbal and non-verbal behavior which is an integral part of our mental experience, and we must recognize that our mental words are to be understood in terms of that behavior.

In criticizing the mental-process view, Wittgenstein clearly intended to criticize the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, for it was his belief that the sense-datum theory contains some of the pervasive errors of the mental-process view. We might even say that, for Wittgenstein,

[1] Wittgenstein had a tendency to use the words "activity" (Tätigkeit), "process" (Vorgang), and "experience" (Erlebnis) interchangeably. Thus, in the Philosophical Investigations, he talked of meaning as a mental activity (Pt. I, sec. 693), as an experience (Pt. II, p. 217), and as a process (Pt. II, p. 218), all with what seems to have been the same intent.

the ontological version of the sense-datum theory was a kind of mental-process view because it makes sensing a mental activity and because it makes sense-data private mental objects. Thus, it allows that I can describe seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting as activities or acts of my mind. And I can say in each case that what I see, what I hear, what I smell, touch, and taste are certain sense-data which are private to me in the sense that no one else can see, touch, smell, hear, or taste exactly what I do. Thus, to determine whether I see something, all I need do is to consider whether I have had the appropriate private mental experience. I only need to look inside myself to introspect whether I have been engaged in the act of seeing and whether I have sensed some sense-datum. If I have, this will be a sufficient criterion or test for saying that I have and for using the appropriate mental words to describe or express what I have seen.

The ontological version of the sense-datum theory is only one manifestation of the mental-process view, Wittgenstein believed. The mental-process view actually shows up in philosophical analyses of most, if not all, mental concepts. This means that the mental-process view is a general view about the mind; it is a view that is designed to give an account of concepts such as thinking, understanding, believing, intending, and the like. As a result, Wittgenstein's critical remarks about different mental-process analyses of mental concepts are quite similar in outline. All of these analyses go wrong, he would have said, for pretty much the same reasons that the ontological analysis of the concept of sensing did in sense-datum theory.

I think it will be instructive then to look, first, at some of Wittgenstein's general critical remarks about the mental-process view, and

then turn to a representative criticism of just one mental-process analysis, namely, the analysis of the concept of thinking. After looking at this specific analysis, I shall give a sketch of Wittgenstein's specific analysis of the concept of seeing for comparison purposes. And last, I shall integrate this latter analysis with his specific criticism of the sense-datum theory. This should enable us to get an overview of the mental-process view and a more specific analysis of Wittgenstein's positive remarks about sense-experience. I hope that it will become clear that these remarks have internal critical relevance to the ontological version of the sense-datum theory.

The mental-process view is mentioned very early in the BLUE BOOK. Wittgenstein there said by way of describing this view,

> It seems that there are certain definite mental processes through which alone language can function. I mean the processes of understanding and meaning. The signs of our language seem dead without these mental processes; and it might seem that the only function of the signs is to induce such processes, and that these are the things we ought really to be interested in.[1]

Shortly after saying this, Wittgenstein continued by saying that the advocates of this view

> ...are tempted to think that the action of language consists of two parts; an inorganic part, the handling of signs, and an organic part, which we may call understanding these signs, meaning them, interpreting them, thinking. These latter activities seem to take place in a queer kind of medium, the mind; and the mechanism of the mind, the nature of which, it seems, we don't quite understand, can bring about effects which no material mechanism could.[2]

The mental processes or acts which Wittgenstein specifically mentioned here are the processes of understanding, meaning, thinking, and interpreting. In addition, Wittgenstein focused on the first three of these

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[1] Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books, p. 3. [2] Ibid.

in a great many places in his later writings. However, he was obviously not limiting his attack against the mental-process view to these four kinds of processes, for in many other places in his post-TRACTATUS writings he expanded the inventory of such processes. Indeed, we might say that he had in mind the whole range of psychological concepts. Thus, in THE BLUE BOOK itself, in addition to the above processes, Wittgenstein mentioned the processes of wishing, intending, expecting, knowing, hoping, believing, imagining, seeing, hearing, and feeling. In THE BROWN BOOK he added the processes of comparing from memory, recognizing, deriving, reading, looking at familiar objects, recognizing as, seeing something in common, and seeing as. In the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS he further augmented this list with the activities of remembering, expecting, and negating.

It is true that Wittgenstein believed that some of the concepts in his inventory are more closely related to each other than others. Thus the concepts of meaning, understanding, interpreting, and thinking are closely related to each other because of their intimate connection with language. And he said that "The concepts of believing, expecting, and hoping are less distantly related to one another than they are to the concept of thinking."[1] Further, the concepts of sense-perception, such as seeing, hearing, tasting, etc., are obviously intimately related to each other. And the concepts of emotion have relations to each other that they do not have to other mental concepts. Yet all of these mental concepts are alike in that they are expressed in language, he thought, and the activities and experiences associated with these mental "processes" are important accompaniments to the use of mental language.

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[1] Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Pt. I, sec. 574.

A certain picture of the mind and of the relation of language to the mind is an integral part of the mental-process view, Wittgenstein thought. Wittgenstein suggested that mental processes have a certain "occult character" to the mental-process philosopher.[1] The mind appears to be a "queer kind of medium." Because the mind does seem queer or mysterious to mental-process theorists, they find it necessary to explain what does occur in our minds and to explain how mental phenomena are related causally to material objects. In order to help conceptualize these matters, they sometimes construct a model of the mind, a model which turns out to be very complicated and intricate. These philosophers invent hypotheses about the workings of the conscious and unconscious processes which they believe to occur in the mind, and work these hypotheses out in terms of a model. They conceive of the mind as a series of successive states, activated by a maze of on-going processes all related to each other in an orderly, mechanical fashion.

To help explain this, the mind is sometimes compared to a machine. Just as we can explain how a machine works by showing how its parts are related to each other functionally and how the machine's overall function is fulfilled in terms of the functions of its parts, so it is thought that we can show how the mind works by determining how its different states are related to each other through time. To understand what thinking is, or what believing or understanding are, all we need do is fix the mind-model before our eyes, manipulate the particular parts which represent thinking or believing processes, see the results, and we will have understood the processes of thinking and believing.

It is also thought by mental-process philosophers that language functions

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[1] The Blue and Brown Books, pp. 4-5.

via these mental processes; or, it is mental processes which are thought to enliven the signs of our language and to serve as criteria for the use of mental words. Whenever we would understand what such words as "thinking" and "believing" mean, we need merely to point out the particular mental processes which are associated with those words. For, on the mental-process view, there is something jointly common and jointly peculiar in all cases in which we believe something, wish for something, or understand something, and this common element is a particular mental act or process which takes place when we are believing X, wishing for X, or recognizing X. Thus there is a peculiar and recurrent mental process of believing, a peculiar mental process of wishing, a peculiar mental process of recognizing, etc. And whenever a person believes, wishes for, or recognizes X, then these peculiar processes are and must be present. These processes constitute what it means for one to think, believe, wish, recognize and know. Thus a mental process is the essential or necessary feature in explaining what a mental-activity word refers to, and if we are to understand the meaning of mental concepts, then we must point to and describe the processes associated with them. Further, if we are to have a criterion for knowing when someone is believing X, wishing for X, or knowing X, then we need to look inside, so to speak, to the processes behind these words.

Wittgenstein thought that this view is really a kind of pseudo-scientific view invented by philosophers to explain what they take to be mysterious, namely, the mind. Philosophers who espouse this view tend to think of themselves as scientists in the sense that they believe that it is their business to make empirical statements about mental processes. Wittgenstein said, "Philosophers constantly see the method of science

before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness." Wittgenstein did not object to the procedure of inventing a mind-model if it was the result of legitimate psychological investigations. But the mental-process philosopher did not conduct empirical investigations. If he understood the proper role of a philosopher, he would not have tried to do so either, for "This aspect of the mind does not interest us," Wittgenstein said. "The problems which it may set are psychological problems, and the method of their solution is that of natural science." [2]

It is not the business of a philosopher either to state scientific truths about the mind or to give scientific explanations of the mind, Wittgenstein thought. When a philosopher appears to be engaged in these activities, he is probably misleading us into thinking that the statements he makes are experiential ones when they are really metaphysical statements, statements that cannot be verified in sense-experience. This means that the mental-process view has the appearance of a scientific theory when it is advocated by philosophers. Yet mental-process philosophers are not scientists, and their puzzles about the mind cannot be taken as scientific puzzles.[3] Thus the appearances are deceptive.

It is true that a scientist concerned with the mind would be interested in giving causal explanations of what takes place in the mind, Wittgenstein believed. A mental model would make sense for him since it could serve to suggest certain hypotheses about the workings of the mind, and these hypotheses could be tested through experimentation. Yet Wittgenstein believed that it is not "the causal connections" between mental phenomena, and it

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[1] Ibid., p. 18. [2] Ibid., p. 6. [3] Ibid.

is not causal hypotheses about these phenomena that should concern the philosopher. The philosopher's business with the mind is not to explain what goes on in it, for it is not the business of the philosopher ever to explain anything. Wittgenstein said in the BLUE BOOK, "I want to say here that it can never be our job to reduce anything to anything, or to explain anything. Philosophy really is 'purely descriptive'."[1] Similarly in the BROWN BOOK Wittgenstein said, "Our method is purely descriptive; the descriptions we give are not hints of explanations."[2] This view is also prominent in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, where, by way of describing his own brand of philosophical activity, Wittgenstein said, "We may not advance any kind of thing. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place."[3]

Wittgenstein did not mean to say that philosophers ought not to be concerned with states of consciousness, and he did not mean that such states do not exist.[4] In fact, he believed that seeing, for example, is a mental state. Rather, he was arguing that certain philosophers were confused about how they ought to deal with such states.[5] What they did was treat them as if they were hypothetical mental mechanisms when this was really the proper way only for a scientist to deal with them. Philosophers tended to confuse "a mental state, meaning a state of a hypothetical mental mechanism, and a mental state meaning a state of consciousness (tooth-ache, etc.)."[6] Wittgenstein said, "We easily overlook the distinction

[1] Ibid., p. 18. [2] Ibid., p. 125.

[3] Philosophical Investigations, Pt. I, sec. 109; see also secs. 654-55.

[4] The Blue and Brown Books, pp. 6 and 18.

[5] Ibid., pp. 6, 18, and 40; see also pp. 117-18. [6] Ibid., p. 18.

between stating a conscious mental event, and making an hypothesis about what one might call the mechanism of the mind. All the more as such hypotheses or pictures of the working of our mind are embodied in many of the forms of expression of our everyday language."[1] A true philosophical description of what a mental state is does not involve formulating hypotheses which explain what mechanical processes are taking place in the mind. The interest of the philosopher should not be in explaining mental activity in terms of hypothetical processes. Rather, it should be in describing the manifold varieties of ways in which mental-process expressions are used and the manifold activities which are associated with those uses of language. In some cases, it is necessary to describe the mental processes which do sometimes accompany the use of these expressions. But in many other cases, no mental processes exist. Instead, there is a variety of other phenomena taking place, such as the modulation of our voices, certain facial expressions, hand gestures, and activites like speaking and writing. Our inner, mental acts and processes can hardly serve as a guide in describing mental states, then, when such processes are absent altogether.

This general critique of the mental-process view can be made more clear by looking at a representative Wittgensteinian critique of a particular mental-process analysis. I shall turn to his analysis of the concept of thinking, to show how he criticized the mental-process view.

If asked to explain what the concept of thinking means, Wittgenstein thought that the mental-process philosopher might say something like, "Thinking is a train of mental states which takes place in our minds," or "Thinking is a private mental activity which takes place up here (pointing

[1] Ibid., p. 40. See also pp. 117-18.

to our forehead)," or, "In thinking, we always have an idea in our mind."[1] That is, the mental-process philosopher would identify thinking with a mental-process or mental activity which always takes place in the mind when we are thinking.

But Wittgenstein thought that this kind of analysis of the concept of thinking is in part the result of a "kind of general disease of thinking which always looks for (and finds) what would be called a mental state from which all our acts spring as from a reservoir."[2] And he thought that this "disease" is brought about by the fact that the mental process picture or model of mental activity is embedded in our language and by the fact that the relevant statements in our language are grammatically misleading. In the BLUE BOOK Wittgenstein stated that when the mental-process philosopher says, for example, that the head is the locality of our thoughts,

> The existence of the words 'thinking' and 'thought' alongside of the words denoting (bodily) activities such as writing, speaking, etc., makes us look for an activity, different from these but analogous to them, corresponding to the word 'thinking.' When words in our ordinary language have prima facie analogous grammars we are inclined to try to interpret them analogously.[3]

Similarly, in the BROWN BOOK, Wittgenstein said,

> We very often find it impossible to think without speaking to ourselves half aloud,---and nobody asked to describe what happened in this case would ever say that something--the thinking--accompanied the speaking, were he not led into doing so by the pair of verbs 'speaking'/'thinking,' and by many of our common phrases in which their uses run parallel.[4]

The point is that because two general words are used in our speech and writing in similar ways, we come to think that they refer or name in a similar way. And just as speaking, for example, is an activity, so

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[1] Ibid., p. 5. [2] Ibid., p. 143. [3] Ibid., p. 7. [4] Ibid., p. 148.

thinking is thought to be one too. Of course there are differences in our treatment of these general words; speaking aloud is not thought to be a private mental activity while thinking normally is thought of in this way. Yet it is enough to conceive of both as activities for the "disease" to begin to take hold and to spread to our treatment of other mental-process words.

It was Wittgenstein's view that thinking is not in any necessary or essential way a mental activity or a mental process. In the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS Wittgenstein allowed that, "While we sometimes call it 'thinking' to accompany a sentence by a mental process, that accompaniment is not what we mean by a 'thought'."[1] For "Thinking is not an incorporeal process which lends life and sense to speaking and which it would be possible to detach from speaking and writing."[2]

But, if thinking is not a private mental activity or process, what is it? Wittgenstein said in the BLUE BOOK that "Thinking is essentially the activity of operating with signs. This activity is performed by the hand, when we think by writing; by the mouth and larynx, when we think by speaking; and if we think by imagining signs or pictures, I can give you no agent that thinks."[3] And, at another place in the BLUE BOOK, Wittgenstein said,

> It is correct to say that thinking is an activity of our writing hand, of our larynx, of our head, and of our mind, so long as we understand the grammar of these statements. And it is, furthermore, extremely important to realize how, by misunderstanding the grammar of our expressions, we are led to think of one in particular of these statements as giving the <u>real</u> seat of activity of thinking.[4]

There is something "essential" to all cases of thinking, Wittgenstein

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[1] <u>Philosophical Investigations</u>, Pt. 1, sec. 332.

[2] <u>Ibid.</u>, Pt. 1, sec. 339.

[3] <u>The Blue and Brown Books</u>, p. 6.

[4] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 16.

thought; in all cases in which we think, we are using signs. But there are many different ways of using signs, and there are many different kinds of signs. Thus our thinking might consist of using hand gestures, facial expressions, or words. And we might write these verbal signs down or vocalize them. But there is no essential way of operating with signs in order for thinking to occur. There is no unique and peculiar set of properties, features, or characteristics which is present in all cases of thinking. Thinking is no one kind of thing, or one set of things. And we cannot describe what thinking is by reducing the phenomena of thinking to some simple formula.

Instead, Wittgenstein believed that cases of thinking form a family whose members bear certain family resemblances to each other. It is true that we could discover "a great number of activities and states of mind, all more or less characteristic" of thinking, if we tried. But this discovery would not allow us to claim that we had discovered a set of unique and common activities and states which all cases of thinking shared. And, Wittgenstein said, "The more such cases we observe and the closer we look at them, the more doubtful we feel about finding one particular mental experience characteristic of 'thinking'."[1] Some of these activities and states might be common to a large number of cases, enough even to call them "typical." Yet there would still be a large class of cases in which these features would not all be present and some in which there would be no particular mental process or state at all. Thus, what connects the family of cases together is not some common set of similarities, but "a vast number of overlapping similarities."[2] We find "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: sometimes overall

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[1] Ibid., p. 86. See also p. 156. [2] Ibid., p. 87.

similarities, sometimes similarities of detail."[1]

If we looked closely enough, we would probably discover a large number of cases in which thinking is an activity of writing something out. In another large number of cases, writing may not occur at all; we might be simply saying something instead. And in another class of cases, we may be neither writing nor saying anything, but imagining pictures in our minds. There would be other cases where both writing and speaking occurred, or where speaking and imagining pictures would occur. Again, there would be different combinations of situations in which one was undergoing certain sensory experiences or certain emotions or feelings while writing, speaking, or imagining pictures, and one would be exhibiting these experiences and feelings in his tone of voice, in his facial expressions or bodily movements. In fact, the variety of cases is enormous, Wittgenstein implied. While there would be certain family similarities in all of them, this does not mean that there was anything which was essential or characteristic of all of them; there would be nothing which always occurs whenever a person was thinking. And there would be no mental acts, no mental processes or states of mind which would always be present. Thus to say that thinking is a particular kind of mental activity would be to oversimplify and to falsify what is really the case. A close attention to cases of thinking would show a complicated and intricate set of phenomena having familial relations to each other.

In the BLUE BOOK Wittgenstein indicated what he was getting at here in the following way,

> I have been trying in all of this to remove the temptation to think that there '<u>must</u> be' what is called a mental process

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[1] <u>Philosophical Investigations</u>, Pt. I, sec. 66.

> of thinking, hoping, wishing, believing, etc., independent of the process of expressing a thought, a hope, a wish, etc. And I want to give you the following rule of thumb: If you are puzzled about the nature of thought, belief, knowledge, and the like, substitute for the thought the expression of the thought, etc.[1]

Applied to the concept of thinking, this means that we must substitute the verbal expressions of thinking, the facial expressions, the bodily postures, the gestures, and, in general, the behavioral activities which are the expression of thinking, for the concept of a thinking process or mental activity. It will be especially useful to look at the linguistic or verbal expressions of thinking. Wittgenstein said,

> If we scrutinize the usages which we make of such words as 'thinking', 'meaning', 'wishing', etc., going through this process rids us of the temptation to look for a peculiar act of thinking, independent of the act of expressing our thoughts, and stowed away in some peculiar medium. We are no longer prevented by the established forms of expression from recognizing that the experience of thinking <u>may</u> be just the experience of saying, or may consist of this experience plus others which accompany it.[2]

If we pay careful attention to the grammar of our linguistic references to thinking, this will help to eliminate the tendency to think of the concept of thinking in terms of a particular and peculiar mental process. If we turn our vision onto our language instead of onto our mental experiences, we will come to visualize the concept of thinking in a different way. We will, hopefully, come to dispense with that fictitious picture of thinking which makes of it an inner, mental process detached, like a membrane, from activities and experiences like speaking and writing. And we will no longer find any point in "<u>postulating</u> the existence of a peculiar kind of mental act alongside of our expressions. This, of course, doesn't mean that we have shown that peculiar acts of consciousness do not

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[1] <u>The Blue and Brown Books</u>, pp. 41-2. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 43.

accompany the expression of our thoughts! Only we no longer say that they must accompany them."[1] And we no longer conceive of thinking solely in terms of such acts.

This attack against the mental-process analysis of thinking is representative of Wittgenstein's attack against the other mental-process analyses of mental concepts. In Wittgenstein's post-TRACTATUS work, one finds Wittgenstein consistently employing similar critical remarks to dispense with mental-process analyses of such important mental concepts as the concepts of understanding, intending, knowing, believing, remembering, wishing, and expecting. Wittgenstein also used this same critical procedure to attack the view that the concepts of sense-perception can be analyzed in terms of mental processes and activities. It was Wittgenstein's view that seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling are taken by mental-process philosophers to be essentially mental activities in much the same way that thinking, understanding, etc., are. But Wittgenstein argued that this is not the proper way to analyze these concepts. To get a clearer view of Wittgenstein's attack against the mental-process analysis of the concepts of sense-perception, I will turn to his analysis of the concept of seeing. By looking at this analysis we shall be able to see what kind of analysis is inappropriate here from Wittgenstein's point of view, and we shall be able to understand Wittgenstein's critique of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory. It was Wittgenstein's position that this version embodies a mental-process analysis of sense-perception.

Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept of seeing is in no sense a

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[1] Ibid., p. 42.

finished job.[1] And it is possible to find bits and pieces of this analysis scattered throughout his Lecture Notes of 1934-1936, THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS, the ZETTEL, and the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. Much of what one can say about this analysis must remain tentative and must involve reconstructions and extrapolations. I will only try to give a sketch of his analysis, one which will leave many points in doubt.

I think it is reasonable to believe that Wittgenstein was moving toward, though not explicitly calling for, a general investigation of all of the concepts of mental experience in his post-TRACTATUS writings. And I think that his analysis of the concept of seeing was ultimately intended to be related to his analyses of other mental concepts. The concept of seeing itself is part of a group of concepts which have close analogies and connections between them, Wittgenstein thought, and these are the concepts of sense-perception (Sinneswahrnehmungen). Of this group Wittgenstein spent most of his effort on the concepts of seeing and the related concepts of seeing as, recognizing, and recognizing as, though the concept of seeing got lighter treatment than the others. But he called for an investigation of the concepts of looking, of hearing, of touching, of smelling, and of tasting, too. What had to be done, though Wittgenstein did very little of it, was to describe the "connections and analogies" between cases of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and the other concepts of sense-perception.[2] Then the concepts of seeing

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[1] It is probable that Wittgenstein would have objected to the use of the term "analysis" here, since that term has so many different and irrelevant meanings. I am using this term in a harmless sense, hoping that it will carry no philosophical meanings with it which are alien to Wittgenstein's way of dealing with mental concepts.

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, Zettel, ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 84, secs. 474-75.

as, recognizing, recognizing as, hearing as, etc., had to be discussed and compared with these. We also needed to begin to analyze the connections and analogies between the concepts of sense-perception and the concepts of emotion. And ultimately, we had to describe the analogies and differences between the concepts of sense-perception and other mental concepts, such as the concepts of thinking, interpreting, wishing, knowing, and the like. I am not suggesting that there was any logical order in the investigation of these different groups of concepts, for Wittgenstein obviously did not believe that the conceptual analysis of sense-perception had to be completed before the conceptual analysis of the emotions begins, or that conceptual analyses of concepts like thinking and knowing had to wait on either of these other analyses. Yet he did imply that at some time all of these different groups of concepts had to be analyzed and compared insofar as they threw light on each other and insofar as the analyses would help philosophers avoid conceptual difficulties.

Just as with the concept of thinking, the concept of seeing had to be described by looking at the linguistic and non-linguistic expressions of seeing, Wittgenstein maintained. He was interested in the "grammar" of expressions which are used to talk about seeing and he was interested in the non-linguistic reactions, the "fine shades of behavior" that are closely tied to that grammar. He wanted to describe the wide variety of cases where a person sees something by describing these linguistic expressions and behavioral reactions. In the ZETTEL Wittgenstein said, "Seeing and imaging are different 'phenomena'--the words 'seeing' and 'imaging' have different meanings. Their meanings relate to a host of important kinds of human behavior, to phenomena of human life."[1] To

[1] Ibid., p. 110, sec. 629.

understand the concept of seeing, we must look at these human phenomena; we must look at what people say, and we must look at what people do. And we must describe cases of seeing in terms of these expressions of the experience of seeing. We must look at the "language game" of seeing.

In Wittgenstein's "Notes for Lectures on 'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'," we find rhetorical objection to this behavioristic approach to describing the concept of seeing. It is conceivable that a person might object to this approach by arguing that we can see something without ever saying or showing someone else that we are. And we can also say that we see something without ever really seeing it. Wouldn't these cases indicate that the behavioral expressions of what we see are not always clear indices to what we see? And doesn't this imply, then, as Wittgenstein rhetorically suggested, that "Seeing is one process and expressing what we see another, and all that they have to do with one another is that they sometimes coincide"?[1]

Wittgenstein replied to this in his "Notes for Lectures" by arguing that this objection is "obviously not quite true and not quite false." He said,

> It is clear that in our language we use the words 'seeing red' in such a way that we can say 'A sees red but doesn't show it'; on the other hand it is easy to see that we should have no use for these words if their application was severed from the criteria of behavior. That is, to say: to the language game which we play with these words it is both essential that the people who play it behave in the particular way we call expressing (saying, showing) what they see, and also that sometimes they more or less entirely conceal what they see.[2]

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Notes for Lectures on 'Private Experience' and 'Sense-data'," The Philosophical Review, LXXVII (July, 1968), 286. (Hereinafter referred to as "Notes for Lectures").

[2] Ibid., p. 286.

If people should conceal what they see, or if they should claim to see something when they do not, then they are engaged in certain kinds of behavior too. And a full analysis of the language game of seeing would have to describe these cases.

Sometimes philosophers have a tendency to think of what "seeing red" means in terms of some peculiar mental experience that a person has when looking at a red object. And having an experience of this kind is surely not the same as uttering certain words; is not tantamount to expressing anything. But, Wittgenstein replied, "The words 'seeing red' means a particular experience are useless unless we can follow them up by: 'namely this'----(pointing)."[1] Unless we can engage in a certain kind of behavior, then, unless we can show someone a sample of what we have seen, it usually does not make any sense to say that we have seen something which is red, though we might purposely say this in order to deceive someone. Wittgenstein was interested in the logical criteria for expressions like "I see a red barn" or "He sees an old friend coming in the door." What are the logical conditions for someone's being able to say that he sees something or someone? What are the logical conditions for someone's having had a certain visual experience? No matter what they are, these logical criteria must be formulated in terms of what people say and what people do, Wittgenstein believed, in terms of their linguistic and non-linguistic behavior.

As we would expect, Wittgenstein believed that the concept of seeing is a complicated matter. There are a great many things that can be meant and there are a great many different behavioral activities going on when someone says that he sees something and when someone describes what he

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[1] Ibid., p. 287.

sees. This is what Wittgenstein means when he said in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS,

> The concept of 'seeing' makes a tangled impression. Well it is tangled---I look at the landscape, my gaze ranges over it. I see all sorts of distinct and indistinct movement; this impresses itself sharply on me, that is quite hazy. After all, how completely ragged what we see can appear! And now look at all that can be meant by 'description of what is seen'---But this just is what is called description of what is seen. There is not one genuine proper case of such description---the rest being just vague, something which awaits clarification, or which must just be swept aside as rubbish.[1]

There is no unique set of characteristics which all cases of seeing share in common. Rather, there is a great variety of things we say when we say that we see something or when we say that someone else sees something, and there is a great variety of things that we do when saying these things. Furthermore, a great variety of concepts get tangled up with the concept of seeing; there are many other concepts, such as the concept of seeing X as Y and the concept of looking at X, which have familial characteristics in common with the concept of seeing. For these reasons, Wittgenstein's account of the concept of seeing is similar to his accounts of other mental concepts such as the concept of thinking.

To understand how Wittgenstein might ideally have dealt with the concept of seeing, had he discussed this concept in more detail, it might be fruitful to look first at his ZETTEL. In the ZETTEL Wittgenstein described in highly compressed, note-form a "Plan for the Treatment of Psychological Concepts." Wittgenstein said,

> Plan for the treatment of psychological concepts,
> Psychological verbs characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be verified by observation, the first person not.

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[1] Philosophical Investigations, Pt. II, p. 200.

> Sentences in the third person of the present: information. In the first person present: expression. (not quite right.)
> The first person of the present akin to an expression.[1]

After putting these notes down, Wittgenstein began to discuss the concepts of sense-perception, and, shortly thereafter, took up the concepts of emotion. Very little is said in the ZETTEL about the concept of seeing, but I think Wittgenstein's plan implies that we need to analyze concepts like seeing by looking at the way the verb "to see" is used in the first and third person present, namely, by considering the various uses of expressions such as "I see X" and "He sees X." Then we have to describe "I see X" much like we might describe "Ouch!" Just as "Ouch!" is an expression of pain, so "I see X" is much like an expression of seeing, though this should not be taken to imply that Wittgenstein thought that there are two activities going on when we see, a seeing and an expressing. Further, we have to investigate what it means to know that one sees X; we must determine when we can say "I know that I saw X." But this cannot be done by thinking of this as a matter of verifying my linguistic expressions by appealing to internal observations of my visual impressions or sense-data. Rather, as Wittgenstein said in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, we need to determine whether we can give a representation of what we see. Wittgenstein believed that the criterion of a visual experience is the <u>representation</u> of what is seen.[2] And a representation of what is seen is a description of my visual experience.[3] He believed that I am entitled to say, "I see X," when I can represent this to

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[1] <u>Zettel</u>, p. 84, sec. 472.

[2] <u>Philosophical Investigations</u>, Pt. II, p. 198.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., Pt. II, p. 199.

someone else, and when I can say---"This is an X" or "This is what is called an X." Usually I describe my visual impression by drawing it, by copying it, or by showing someone a sample of it.

In Wittgenstein's "Notes for Lectures," he asked rhetorically, "Under what circumstances do I say that I'm entitled to say that I'm seeing red? The answer is showing a sample, i.e., giving the rule."[1] When I claim to see something, I must be able to show someone else what I have seen and I must know what this thing I see is called. Wittgenstein in his "Notes for Lectures" said,

> The knowledge of what it is I see must be the knowledge that it is so-and-so I see: 'so-and-so' standing for some expressions, verbal or otherwise (But remember that I don't give myself information by pointing to something I see with my fingers and saying to myself I see this). 'So-and-so' in fact stands for a word of a language game.[2]

The concept of seeing is an integral part of a form of human life in which certain linguistic and certain non-linquistic activities occur.

When Wittgenstein said that "'I see X' is not quite an expression, but akin to an expression, he may have been referring both to his point that I represent X when I describe it and to his point that my description of X is an expression of what is seen. A drawing of what I see and a statement such as "This is a red barn" are expressions of what I see. And when I am able to represent what I see and tell what it is, then I can logically be said to have seen it, and was warranted in saying that I did.

Similarly, the criteria or the third-person-present expression, "A sees X," are certain behavioral expressions that A exhibits while seeing X or that A is prepared to exhibit if challenged about his claim to have seen X, supposing that he makes one. A must be prepared to give us a

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[1] "Notes for Lectures," p. 301. [2] Ibid., p. 305.

description of his visual experience by drawing us a copy of what he has seen or by pointing to some sample of what he has seen. Thus we are learning something new, we are becoming informed about something, when we hear A's claim, "I see X," or when A tries to show us what he has seen. And the criterion for knowing that A sees the same thing as I do, is that he normally agrees with me in giving the same name to X as I do.[1]

We can say then that the concept of seeing must be understood in terms of the language-game of seeing, or the language-games of seeing. To understand this concept we must describe the enormous variety of ways that linguistic expressions such as "I see a red barn" and "He sees a black cat" are used to indicate that something is seen. And these descriptions will include reports of the nonlinguistic, behavioral expressions of seeing. The descriptions will be varied because, Wittgenstein thought, "The concept of a representation of what is seen, like that of a copy, is very elastic, and so together with it is the concept of what is seen."[2] There are many, many ways of representing what we see, and thus there are many things that can be meant by "representation of what is seen." Similarly, there are many different things that we see, and there is a variety of ways the expression "what is seen" may be applied.

This is what we would expect Wittgenstein to have believed about the concept of seeing, given what he said about other mental concepts. The variety of ways humans may describe what they see and the things they may do while describing what they see or expressing what they see are endless. Similarly, the variety of experiences, emotions, and feelings that people may have in these cases is limitless. Thus, while it is true

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[1] Ibid., p. 283.

[2] Philosophical Investigations, Pt. II, p. 198.

to say that many cases of seeing share features which are "more or less" common, it is more accurate to point out that there will be no peculiar or essential features which they all have in common with each other. They will have family resemblances to each other, but they will not have essential similarities to each other.

To show that this is a fair reconstruction of Wittgenstein's thinking about the concept of seeing, it is revealing to consider what Wittgenstein said in the BROWN BOOK about seeing a familiar object. Wittgenstein asked in the BROWN BOOK whether "We have a feeling of familiarity whenever we look at or see familiar objects" or whether we only "usually" have such a feeling.[1] Is the feeling of familiarity an essential feature of all cases in which we look at familiar objects? Wittgenstein answered that it is not, in a discussion which is long and complex and which takes up a good part of Part II of the BROWN BOOK. Toward the end of that discussion Wittgenstein indicated that the feeling of familiarity is not essential when he asked, "But is there no such thing as a feeling of familiarity?" He answered by saying, "I should say that there are a great many different experiences, some of them feelings, which we might call 'experiences (feelings) of familiarity'."[2] He then continued by describing a series of cases in which different experiences of familiarity are present, with the intention of substantiating his claim that there is no one kind of feeling of familiarity which is always or even usually present in situations in which we are looking at familiar objects.[3]

This discussion in the BROWN BOOK is representative of Wittgenstein's general position about mental concepts, for it shows that he thought that there is nothing about our analysis of the concept of seeing which should

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[1] The Blue and Brown Books, p. 127. [2] Ibid., p. 181.
[3] Ibid., pp. 181-82.

imply that all cases of seeing have features in common with each other. It is likely that in many cases when we look at a familiar object, we will have a feeling of familiarity, but this need not be the case, he implied. And even when this feeling is present it need in no sense be exactly the same in all cases.

Wittgenstein particularly intended to argue that there is no peculiar, inner mental process or act which always occurs when we see something. There may be mental experiences which are "more or less" characteristic of some cases of seeing an object. But none of them is characteristic of all cases. Thus, it makes no sense to appeal to mental experiences as criteria for saying that one has seen something.

To further substantiate this sketch of Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept of seeing, I should like to turn briefly to his analysis of the concept of "recognizing X as Y" and more extensively to his analysis of the concept of "seeing X as Y" in the BROWN BOOK and the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. While these latter two concepts are not exactly the same as the concept of seeing, they are closely related to that concept and share some important features in common with it. This procedure of looking at these other concepts is necessary because Wittgenstein did not provide much in the way of positive analysis of the concept of seeing in his post-TRACTATUS writings. He spent most of his effort in criticizing the mental-process analysis of the concept of seeing rather than in giving his own analysis. When he did give positive attention to this concept, he expended most of his effort on the concept of "seeing X as Y." Thus his analysis of concepts analogous to the concept of seeing will have to serve to help reveal what the general character of his analysis of the concept of seeing would have been. I hope to show that my brief sketch of this latter analysis is sound because it is similar to Wittgenstein's

actual analyses of these analogous concepts. Let me begin then with the concept of recognizing X as Y and then turn to a more thorough look at the concept of seeing X as Y.

In Wittgenstein's discussion of the concept of looking at familiar objects in the BROWN BOOK there is a consideration of what happens when someone recognizes something as something else, for example, when someone recognizes an object as a pencil.[1] Wittgenstein mentioned a variety of cases in the BROWN BOOK in which a person may be said to have recognized something as something, implying that there is no unique set of features which all of these cases share in common and especially, by implication, not any particular experience or process such as a process of recognizing. In fact, in describing a case in which a person is shown a pencil and says, "Oh! This is a pencil," Wittgenstein suggested that we can take the person to have recognized the object as a pencil simply because he "reacted" in this particular way by saying the word "pencil."[2]

At another point in the BROWN BOOK Wittgenstein discussed the case of recognizing someone as Mr. So-and-so. He said that we have a tendency to represent recognizing in this case as "a process of identification by means of a picture" whereby we compare the person with a mental picture of ours. However, Wittgenstein said, "In most cases in which we recognize someone, no comparison between him and a mental pictures takes place" at all.[3] Thus the mental process of making a comparison is not an essential feature of cases of recognizing X as Y. What we really must do when analyzing this concept is to look at what is said; we must avoid trying to introspectively describe some mental process of comparison. We must, Wittgenstein said, describe "the kind of thing that happens in your mind and otherwise when

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[1] Ibid., p. 127. [2] Ibid., p. 128. [3] Ibid., p. 165.

you recognize a person coming into your room by means of what you might say when you recognize him." This may simply consist of saying, "Hello!" to the person. Thus, "We say that one kind of event of recognizing a thing we see consists in saying 'Hello!' to it in words, gestures, facial expressions, etc."[1] And this need not involve any mental act or process of comparing the person with a mental image.

The concept of seeing X as Y is discussed in both the BROWN BOOK and the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS in some detail. One reason why Wittgenstein took up this kind of seeing in the BROWN BOOK was to argue that in seeing X as Y there are not two mental processes involved; an act of seeing X plus another act of seeing X as Y. For example, in seeing a group of dashes on a piece of paper as a face and in saying that we see these dashes as a face, Wittgenstein said that we are not involved in making a mental act of comparison between the group of dashes and a real human face.[2] Or, to take another example, Wittgenstein asked us to

> Take the experience of seeing a sad face, say in a drawing--we can say that to see the drawing as a sad face is not 'just' to see it as some complex of strokes (think of a puzzle picture). But the word 'just' here seems to intimate that in seeing the drawing as a face some experience is added to the experience of seeing it as mere strokes; as though I had to say that seeing the drawing as a face consisted of two experiences, elements.[3]

But, Wittgenstein continued, later on,

> Although the expression that seeing a drawing as a face is not merely seeing strokes seems to point to some kind of addition of experiences, we certainly should not say that when we see the drawing as a face we also have the experience of seeing it as mere strokes and some other experience besides.[4]

It is incorrect to analyze cases in which we see an object or figure as

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[1] Ibid., pp. 165-66. [2] Ibid., p. 164. [3] Ibid., p. 168.
[4] Ibid., pp. 168-69.

something, as involving two kinds of mental acts or processes, namely, a mental act of seeing and a mental act of comparing or of seeing as. The same would hold for the analogous case of recognizing X as Y. It is a mistake to say that recognizing X as Y involves an act of looking at or of seeing X and an act of comparing X with Y. For example, consider a situation in which I see a man whom I have not seen for many years. At first I fail to recognize him, but when I recognize who he is, Wittgenstein asked, "Is this a special sort of seeing? Is it a case of both seeing and thinking? or an amalgam of the two, as I should almost like to say? The question is, Why does one want to say this?"[1] This passage implies that it would be inappropriate to describe this case of recognizing A as B, as a case in which two different acts occur, an act of recognizing or seeing A and an act of recognizing A as B.

We might reasonably ask, then, What is involved in the analysis of the concept of seeing X as Y if it is not to be analyzed as a combination of two mental acts or processes? Is seeing X as Y a mental process, nevertheless, of a unique kind?

From what Wittgenstein said about the concept of seeing X as Y in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS it is clear that he believed that to see X as Y we must first see X. And thus, "seeing as" involves "seeing" in the same way that recognizing X as Y involves looking at X or seeing X. In one use of the word "see," as we have seen, we use the word to refer to the fact that we have had a visual experience or a visual impression. And if asked to describe what we see, we might report, "I see a red circle," followed by some representation such as a drawing, or a sample of a red circle.[2] And whenever we see X as Y, we see X in this sense.

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[1] Philosophical Investigations, Pt. II, p. 197. [2] Ibid., Part II, p. 193.

But the concept of seeing X as Y is more complicated than this. In some cases, we can look at a certain configuration of lines and see something different each time we look at it. We could call these configurations "ambiguous figures" for sometimes they are seen as one thing and sometimes they are seen as another. And sometimes we see them as different things during the same period of time. Wittgenstein mentioned several examples of ambiguous figures in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. The most celebrated case is that of the duck-rabbit figure which we can see either as the figure of a rabbit's head or as the figure of a duck's head. If asked to represent what we see when we look at this figure, we might reply that we see a rabbit's head or we see a duck's head. It might seem then that we would in either case be giving a report of a visual experience in the same way that we were when we reported seeing a red circle. And, if two people looked at the same ambiguous figure and were asked to represent what they saw in a drawing, they would draw much the same figure. But let us suppose that we had also asked what they saw, and one replied that he saw a duck while the other said he saw a rabbit. This would show that the representation of what is seen is not enough to gauge the difference between a case of simple seeing, such as seeing a red circle, and a case of seeing an ambiguous figure. Thus, the fact that we are reporting a perception does not in itself mean that there is something identical about these two kinds of cases, Wittgenstein believed, for in the second case someone else could say that I was seeing the duck-rabbit as a rabbit's head while he certainly could not say that I was seeing the red circle as a red circle. In both cases, we are giving reports of perceptions, Wittgenstein said, but the cases obviously differ.

A third case could be described by altering the circumstances of

this second case. We could imagine that we should suddenly happen to notice that the figure of the duck-rabbit is no longer a rabbit's head but is now a duck's head. If it should dawn on us that the duck-rabbit is an ambiguous figure, then we would probably not report our perception of the duck-rabbit in the same way that we would when unaware that it was an ambiguous figure. We would probably say, "Now I see it as a duck's head," or "Now I see it as a rabbit's head," instead of "I see a rabbit's head" or "I see a duck's head." And this would indicate that we are seeing the figure of the duck-rabbit according to an interpretation. We are seeing it "Now as one thing, now as another--so we interpret it, and see it as we interpret it," Wittgenstein said.[1]

In this third case, there seems to be an additional element or experience involved, an element that was not involved in the case of simply seeing a red circle, or in seeing a rabbit's head. In addition to seeing the figure of a duck's head, we now seem to be seeing the figure as a duck's head. We seem to be making an interpretation of the figure as we see it. And, in reply to the question--What do you see?--we would no longer just be reporting a simple perception, but would also be reporting the fact that we had noticed something that we had not noticed before. The question is, Wittgenstein said, "What is different: my impressions? my point of view?--Can I say? I describe the alteration like a perception, quite as if the object had altered before my eyes."[2] But the figure of the duck-rabbit has not changed, so that in a sense, I am having a new perception while in another sense I am not.[3] And in this latter sense, it is misleading to describe what I now see as simply a new visual

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 195. [3] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 196.

experience.

At this point in his discussion of the concept of "seeing as" in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS Wittgenstein said, " 'Seeing as...' is not part of perception. And for that reason it is like seeing and again not like."[1] What Wittgenstein was getting at here is not very clear, but I think that he was at least trying to compare the concept of "seeing as" with the concept of simple seeing. And part of what he wanted to suggest in that comparison is that "seeing as" is not a part of perception when perception is taken in the sense of the simple seeing of shapes, lines, and colors. Seeing the duck-rabbit as something does involve seeing lines and dots, but it also involves something which has nothing to do with simple seeing, namely, interpreting the lines and dots as something. Thus "seeing as" is not a part of perception because seeing in this rudimentary sense does not involve interpreting, while "seeing as" does. This means that "seeing" is a part of perception. On the other hand, what Wittgenstein means by saing that "seeing" is like "seeing as" in not being part of perception is hard to determine in this context, and I am afraid that I am puzzled about what I think he means.

I think enough has been said to show that Wittgenstein was arguing that it would be a mistake to think that "seeing as" is a matter of two mental acts, the act of seeing and the act of interpreting. It is true that seeing and interpreting are involved in cases of seeing as. Yet this should not imply that there are two mental elements or processes or experiences involved, a seeing and an interpreting, which are conjoined or combined together in some fashion.

The question still remains, then, Is seeing X as Y a mental process

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[1] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 197.

of a unique kind nevertheless? Or, in seeing X as Y, is there some peculiar mental process taking place? As with his other analyses of mental concepts, I think Wittgenstein would have said, "No." Instead he would have maintained that there is a wide variety of cases of seeing as, having family resemblances to each other. Wittgenstein mentioned and described a number of these cases in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. There is the case of a cube which we can see simply as a cube, or as an inverted open box, or as three wood boards forming a closed angle.[1] There is the case of the duck-rabbit figure; the case of the puzzle-picture;[2] the case of seeing and recognizing an old acquaintance;[3] the double cross;[4] and several more. As in the case of thinking and the case of simple seeing, there is a great family of cases of seeing X as Y. These cases are similar overall in that a "change of aspect" is involved, yet to say this is much like saying that in all cases of thinking, signs are being used. Just as there is a variety of waysin which signs can be used, there is also a variety of ways in which changes in aspect may occur, and a variety of ways in which aspects are related to each other. For example, the figure of the duck-rabbit differs from the figure of the double cross in respect to the way in which we can report the aspects of those figures.[5] Thus there is nothing essential to cases of seeing X as Y and especially not any peculiar experiences, activities, or processes. As in the case of simple seeing, there is a variety of ways people would describe what they see X as, or, there is a variety of ways X would be represented, and a variety of behavior associated with those representations. In this respect, cases of seeing X as Y are like cases of seeing X. Thus, while

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[1] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 193. [2] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 196.
[3] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 197. [4] Ibid., Pt. II, p. 207. [5] Ibid.

the two kinds of cases differ from each other in the family characteristics that we would notice in them, such as whether some kind of interpreting is going on or not, they are similar in the fact that there are families of characteristics present in each kind of case. And from this I think it is clear that the concept of seeing X as Y was taken to be analogous to the concept of simple seeing.

I should add that in both cases, the case of simple seeing and the case of seeing as, some sort of visual impression is had. Yet knowing this is not a sufficient basis for differentiating cases of seeing X from cases of seeing X as Y. At any rate, there are no unique visual experiences whenever we see X or whenever we see X as Y. And this visual impression is not something inside of me, a kind of inner picture or copy of what I see that I cannot show to someone else, and that I could use as a criterion of whether I had seen X or had seen X as Y.

This latter point is one on which Wittgenstein claimed to part company with the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, though I should make it clear that he mentioned none of the ontological theorists by name. His attack against the idea that the concepts of sense-perception can be analyzed in terms of mental processes or acts is part and parcel of his attack against the sense-datum theory, for he appeared to conceive of the sense-datum theory as involving a mental-process view about the concepts of sense-perception. The ontological version of the sense-datum theory uses private, inner experiences as the criterion for the concept of sensing. Wittgenstein suggested that this theory asks us to look inside of our minds to some mysterious, visual, tactual, or oral datum to determine whether we have seen, touched, or heard something. It asks us analyze our private experience in order to discover those objects

vhich indicate whether we have seen a red circle. If we are sensing a roundish, red sense-datum, then we can say that we are seeing a red circle.)ur immediate knowledge that we are sensing this datum will count as adequate evidence to us that we are seeing the circle.

Wittgenstein suggested that this sense-datum view has a curious asymmetry about it to those who accept it. He said,

> There seems to be an undoubted asymmetry in the use of the word 'to see' (and all words relating to personal experience). One is inclined to state this in the way that 'I know when I see something by just seeing it, without hearing what I say or observing the rest of my behavior, whereas I know <u>that</u> he sees and <u>what</u> he sees only by observing his behavior, i.e., indirectly.' [1]

e think that we can easily determine that we are seeing X, Wittgenstein uggested, and that we can determine what we are seeing, by directly observing" our private experiences. Yet we think that we can determine hat someone else is seeing only by looking at his behavior. Thus, relying on private experience as the source of our understanding of the oncept of seeing leads us to use a direct-indirect metaphor about our ccess to that source. I think of myself as having "privileged access" o my experience, and I think of person B as having privileged access to s experience. And neither of us thinks that he is privileged to see actly what the other person does, or to hear or smell what the other es even when we are looking at, hearing, or smelling the same thing. us we choose to believe that a person can only have indirect access to other person's experience. This access consists of looking at what the her persons says and does when he has his experience, or having him show what his experience has been like. It's almost as if we had to ask to turn himself inside out and to show us something that was inside

[1] "Notes for Lectures," p. 278.

im, Wittgenstein said,[1] in order to determine what he saw. And in
g this the other person "seems in an indirect way to show us the
:t which he sees, the object which is before his mind's eye. We
: look at it, it is in him," we like to think. Thus we come to think
:he idea of a private object of vision, appearance, sense-datum."[2]
object is something private to each individual who sees X. And his
ng that this object is present is supposed by sense-datum philosophers
: sufficient logical evidence that he is seeing something, Wittgen-
implied.

Wittgenstein said that there is another metaphor that goes with the
-datum view. This is the inside-outside metaphor.[3] The sense-datum
y suggests that what I see is inside me, what person B sees is in-
im. And when either of us reveals what he sees, he indirectly
ls something that is inside him.[4] By showing someone else what I
t looks as if I am making a private matter public, on the sense-
theory; by keeping it to myself, it looks as if I am not letting
ing private become public. In any event, on the sense-datum theory
tgenstein represented it, what is inside me is directly open to my
nd to no one else's view, and what is inside someone else is
ly open to him alone. What another person sees is outside me and
le to me indirectly if at all, while what I see is outside some-
e and available to him only indirectly if I choose to make it

is view was vigorously attacked by Wittgenstein in his "Notes for

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bid., p. 279. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., pp. 279-81.
bid., p. 279.

:ures on 'Private Experience' and 'Sense Data'," in the BLUE BOOK,
in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS. In the "Notes for Lectures"
genstein argued that, contrary to what the ontological version of
sense-datum theory implies, the matter of knowing what I see and
ing what someone else sees is strictly a "grammatical" one.[1] The
osed asymmetry in expression between "I know what I see" and "B
s what he (B) sees" need not exist, Wittgenstein thinks, and is in
ense a necessary reflection of the nature of personal experience.
xpression, "The sense-datum is private," is only an arbitrary "rule
ammar," not a statement which is empircally true or an "experiential
sition" as he put it in the BLUE BOOK.[2] The point of Wittgenstein's
k is clear in the following quotation. He said,

> The statement 'I know only indirectly what he sees, but directly what I see' embodies an absolutely misleading picture. I can't be said to know that I have toothache if I can't be said not to know that I have toothache. I can't be said to know indirectly what the other has if I can't be said to know it directly. The misleading picture is this: I see my own matchbox but I know only from hearsay what his looks like. We can't say: 'I say he has toothache because I observe his behavior, but I say that I have because I <u>feel</u> it.'[3]

cannot claim to <u>know</u> that I am sensing a sense-datum if I cannot
not to know that I am sensing a sense-datum. And, Wittgenstein
d, on the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, it makes
se to say that I am in doubt about whether I am sensing some sense-
Thus it follows, according to Wittgenstein's reasoning, that it
o sense on the sense-datum theory to say that I know that I am
some sense-datum. This of course does not mean that Wittgenstein

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bid., p. 278.

bid., p. 317. See also <u>The Blue and Brown Books</u>, p. 55.

Notes for Lectures," p. 319.

lf believed that we could not be in doubt about what we see. In this is possible on Wittgenstein's theory.[1] But it did mean to enstein that the sense-datum theory was in difficulty when it ed that expressions like "I know what I see" made reference to the and undoubting apprehension of sense-data.

uthermore, Wittgenstein was suggesting here that it makes no sense e sense-datum theory to say that I know indirectly what another sees if it is impossible to say that I know directly what he sees. cannot directly know that another person is seeing red, then we indirectly know it either. Moreover, indirect knowledge is not on the sense-datum theory, while direct knowledge or apprehension ain. Thus, if we can know something only indirectly, then we would e certain about what another person had seen or heard or smelled. s is ridiculous, Wittgenstein believed, because we often do know certain about what another person is seeing or has seen. And es we know what another person has seen or is seeing when that imself does not know for certain what he is seeing. This is the fact that I may know what color it is that another person g when he uses the wrong word to refer to it and when I am able im to agree to my word for it. Or, another person, if asked to t what he sees may point to the wrong sample and I might get dentify the color using a different kind of sample.[2] The point knowing what one sees is knowledge that it is "so-and-so" that ittgenstein believed, where "so-and-so" is some word in a game. And it is certainly evident that I can look at the same t another person does and know what it is called when he does

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1., p. 305. [2]Ibid., p. 315.

All of this implied, for Wittgenstein, that the asymmetry between
ow what I see" and "B knows what he sees" is not fixed in the nature
ings. The reason sense-datum philosophers think that it is, is that
elieved that in seeing some object they are sensing some other
t, a sense-datum, which only they can see or sense for themselves.
s was pointed out in the Introduction to Part II, this is only a
of grammar, Wittgenstein believed. And we could as well argue
e know what another person sees with the same certainty that he
or "directly" for that matter) if we wanted, so long as we weren't
ously misled into thinking that this view expressed anything about
ture of things.

n THE BLUE BOOK Wittgenstein attacked the ontological version of
nse-datum theory, too, for he suggested that it tends towards sol-
n respect to the concept of the privacy of sense-data. He said
ere is a tendency for some philosophers to say that only their
nce is real, to say something like, "I know that I see, hear, feel
etc., but not that anyone else does," [1] or, "I can only know that
personal experiences, not that anyone else has." [2] Further, he
ed, "Another form of our metaphysical statement is this: 'A
ense-data are private to himself.' And this way of expressing it
more misleading because it looks still more like an experiential
ion; the philosopher who says this may well think that he is ex-
a kind of scientific truth." [3] Wittgenstein then went on in the
K to suggest that this solipsistic position is really a "puzzle"

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e Blue and Brown Books, p. 46.

id., p. 48. [3] Ibid., p. 55.

results from a misunderstanding about the "surface grammar" or
atical form of the expressions which the solipsist or the sense-
philosopher uses. And he argued that this puzzle can be solved
ting the sense-datum philosopher to understand the peculiarities of
ammar of the sense-datum language and by asking him to examine the
e relevant expressions in his ordinary language are actually used.
e does this, he will come to understand that to talk about sense-
s not to talk about entities or objects of any kind, but is just
of talking about certain kinds of unusual cases of perceiving.
er, an examination of the way expressions like "I see X" or "B is
at Y" are used in ordinary language will help him to get rid of
dency to espouse solipsistic doctrines. Presumably, he will dis-
hat it makes little sense to claim that only one person can know
sees a red circle.

the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS Wittgenstein also attacked the
at sense-data are private entitites both in Part I and in the sec-
the concept of "seeing as" in Part II. In a revealing section
I, Wittgenstein carried on the following imaginary dialogue,

> when I imagine something, or even actually see objects,
> ave got something which my neighbor has not--I understand
> . You want to look about you and say: 'At any rate only
> ave got THIS.'---What are these words for? They serve no
> pose.---Can one not add: 'There is here no question of
> eing"---and therefore none of a "having"--nor of a subject,
> therefore of "I" either'? Might I not ask: In what sense
> you got what you are talking about and saying that only
> have got it? Do you possess it? You do not even see it.
> you not really say that no one has got it? And this too
> lear: if as a matter of logic you exclude other people's
> ng something, it loses its sense to say that you have it.[1]

genstein was arguing that if one wants to talk about what only

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[1] losophical Investigations, Pt. I, sec. 398.

on can see or "have," then one is talking nonsense, for, first,
not make any sense to talk about seeing one's own visual im-
[1] and second, it does not make sense to talk about having some-
ich cannot have an owner. In connection with this second point,
tein said that in believing that we can have the impression of a
are logically excluding anyone else from having that impression.
person cannot have this impression either, he said, for "Surely
of the visual room would have to be the same kind of thing as
t he is not to be found in it, and there is no outside."[2] Witt-
seemed to think that having something in the sense of possessing
as having a sense-datum, cannot apply to cases in which we are
mething. Of course no one would claim that we possess a room
use we see it; but some sense-datum philosophers think that in
impression or a sense-datum of a room, we are possessing a
oom---something which no one else can see. But Wittgenstein
at this view wouldn't work, for to see something is not to
, hence in seeing a visual room, we are not possessing anything.
e, if one owns a room, then he must be able to walk into it,
, paint the walls, and so on. Otherwise it does not make sense
out owning a room. So it must not make sense for sense-datum
rs to talk about the room that they sense in their visual
t is impossible to walk into this room, or hang pictures in it.
k about a visual room is not, Wittgenstein believed, to talk
iscovery of some object which no one has seen before. Rather

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enstein says something similar to this in The Blue and Brown
can't look at the impression." See p. 176.
sophical Investigations, Pt. I, sec. 399.

ly be a "new way of speaking."[1] Wittgenstein said that we "have
ception and interpret it as seeing a new object. You interpret
ical movement made by yourself as a quasi-physical phenomenon
are observing (Think, for example, of the question: 'Are sense-
aterial of which the universe is made?')."[2] In the very asking
tter question, sense-datum philosophers show that they have
ood the grammar of the sense-datum language. To reiterate some
e in the Introduction to Part II, they have come to take the
m language to refer to entities or objects; then they ask
e questions, or questions in which the word "sense-datum" takes
antive role. What they have really done, however, and what
t that they have done, is to introduce a new language or a new
they have not discovered a new kind of object or entity in the

nstein also attacked the notion of the privacy of sense-data
sing the concept of "seeing as" in Part II of the PHILOSOPHI-
GATIONS. In talking about seeing a drawing as something,
n said, "And above all do <u>not</u> say 'After all my visual im-
n't the <u>drawing</u>; it is <u>this</u>---which I can't show to anyone.'
e it is not the drawing, but neither is it anything of the
y, which I carry within myself."[3] One wonders just what a
ession" was for Wittgenstein, but I think it is at least
e did not think it was a private or inner object or inner
h only one person could see or possess. At any rate, he
t we ought to try and "get rid of the idea of the private

Pt. I, sec. 400. [2]<u>Ibid</u>., Pt. I, sec. 401.
Pt. II, p. 196.

And he gave us a method for doing so. He said, "Assume that
ntly changes, but that you do not notice the change because your
nstantly deceives you."[1] If we assume this, then it would be
ossible ever to say anything true about a private visual or
gustatory sense-datum; it just wouldn't serve any purpose to
sense-data. And talk about sense-data and private experience
could be ignored.

act that Wittgenstein should have asked us to assume this, shows
to which he thought there is something basically wrong with
of a private sense-datum and, further, the extent to which
mething basically wrong with the notion of a private mental
ess by which that sense-datum is apprehended. And this assump-
the sense-datum language useless. In THE BLUE BOOK Wittgen-
ot seem to object to using sense-datum expressions so long as
od what we were doing. But in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS
slight alteration in opinion, and Wittgenstein appeared to be
sophers to give up the sense-datum theory completely. The
privacy of sense-data perhaps became too distracting to Witt-
ause he saw that sense-datum philosophers took the idea ser-
when they pretended to hold a linguistic version of the theory,
pretended to be introducing a sense-datum language and not a
logical view about the nature of personal experience.

want to give the impression that Wittgenstein came to deny
re private, inner experiences. In fact, it seems difficult,
ible, to deny that there are some kinds of private experiences,
-images. And this is perhaps why some sense-datum philosophers

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[1] Pt. II, p. 207.

Moore came to refer to after-images as the paradigm example of
se-datum. But to argue that Wittgenstein believed that there are
ivate experiences would be to saddle him with an extreme position
he need not and did not hold. What Wittgenstein did want to deny
at we can use private experiences as the criteria for knowing that
seeing X, hearing X, thinking about X, or recognizing X. To
tand mental concepts we need rather to think in terms of linguis-
d non-linguistic behavior.. We need to consider the variety of ways
talk about what they see and the sundry kinds of things they do
ey talk about what they see, even when they see something and do
k about it. We shall find the logical criteria for perceptual
ions in these kinds of behavior, not in the private experiences,
data and impressions that people claim to have when seeing things
in the mental processes or acts that they think take place in
inds.

us the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-
eory between the mental act of sensing and the sense-datum made
ense to Wittgenstein because it is an oversimplification of what
ace mentally; and further, it is an insufficient basis to use for
ing the criteria for the application of mental concepts.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ILBERT RYLE: THE CONCEPTS OF SENSATION AND OBSERVATION

ilbert Ryle's attack against the sense-datum theory in Chapter VII CONCEPT OF MIND is part of a more general and well-known attack Ryle leveled against the "Official Doctrine" of the nature of the or the "Dogma of the Ghost in the Machine," as he called it. This e or dogma has its modern origins in the writings of Descartes and cessors, Ryle believed, though it goes back much further in the of philosophy. As Ryle conceived it, it consists essentially of stic theory of the nature of the mind and of the body which, in nakes of a man's body an external, publicly observable, spatial- entity subject to mechanical laws while it makes of a man's internal and private, temporal but non-spatial existent which ubject to mechanical laws. On the Official Doctrine a person direct and indubitable knowledge of the workings of his own introspecting or observing what is taking place in it, though ave no direct or "privileged" access to the workings of other What knowledge he has of anything else, such as other minds, otten by inference, in this case by analogical inference from person's behavior. It is further a part of this doctrine that ssions which are used to describe the operations of minds refer to private episodes or to private processes in the mind, to which has mental existence in much the same way that physical processes have physical existence. Mental verbs such as "know,"

"feel," and "imagine" refer to the occurrences of certain on-going
ations in a person's mental history. And the criteria for knowing
such mental verbs are correctly applied must be formulated in
f one's direct awareness of the mental episodes or processes going
is mind. Only the person who undergoes these mental processes
or certain whether he is, though someone else could infer that he
a high degree of success by using certain behavioral tests. On
cial View, then, Ryle believed, the mind is a kind of respository
ations, feelings, and images, all of which are either "in" the
some sense or have some kind of "mental" status. In fact, it
imes held that sensations are partially constitutive of the basic
which minds are composed.

eiving a physical object, on the Official View, is thought to
he having of sensations, where the word "sensations" is used
i-physiological, semi-psychological" sense, Ryle said.[1] The
sensations is only one process or episode that takes place in
g, for a process of inferring must also occur. We infer that
ct exists and has certain qualities on the basis of the observa-
ave made of our sensations, for it is a central assumption of
that the owner of sensations is conscious of them or can
them if he so desires, Ryle believed. Thus, perceiving is
f two processes: a process of observing sensations and a
inferring discursively to the properties of physical objects.
f these processes are mental in nature, though backed up
y certain physiological processes in the brain and nervous sys-
hat a person really observes or perceives then are certain

The Concept of Mind, pp. 200-01.

nsations. These sensations he uses as tools to become indirectly aware physical objects. He infers that these objects exist on the basis the sensations that he has intuited, been acquainted with, or sensed. , hence, it is only in a Pickwickian sense, ultimately, that he can be d to see or hear or touch objects such as red circles, duck-rabbits, envelopes, though in a "vulgar" sense, we all talk about perceiving h things. On this view, then, the mind is a kind of prison and a son is somehow imprisoned in it, Ryle thought.[1]

Ryle thought that this Official Doctrine of the mind is wholly taken, that it is mistaken not merely in detail, but in its basic mptions. The Official View about sensations is especially the source ome fallacious doctrines, he believed. In Chapter One of THE CONCEPT IND Ryle criticized the general Dogma of the Ghost in the Machine by ng that it is the product of a category mistake. As he succinctly it in one place in that chapter, the official theory "represents facts of mental life as if they belonged to one logical type or cate- (or range of types or categories) when they actually belong to er."[2] What Ryle means by the expression "category-mistake" is per- not too difficult to understand intuitively, in the light of the al examples he gives of such mistakes in THE CONCEPT OF MIND and here in his writings, though a full understanding of this expression require a detailed examination of the various things Ryle said logical categories and about the "logical grammar" of concepts in er of essays dating from 1931.[3] I will not go into this matter here

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[1] Ibid., p. 223. [2] Ibid., p. 16.

[3] See Gilbert Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions," PAS, XXXII (1931-32); "Categories," PAS, n.s., XXXVIII (1937-38); phical Arguments, Oxford Inaugural Lecture (Oxford: The Clarenss, 1946); the Introduction to The Concept of Mind; and Chapter Dilemmas (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1954).

ce I do not think it necessary to give an account of Ryle's reasons
rejecting the Ghost in the Machine Doctrine in this thesis. Ryle's
ack on both the sense-datum theory and the several varieties of per-
tual theory which arise in connection with this theory can be under-
od without going into his more general attack against this doctrine
t applied to such concepts as the concept of imagination, of thinking,
f emotion. And I think one can understand his attack without con-
ring in depth what he means by a category-mistake or by a category.
all confine my remarks then largely to his specific assault against
sense-datum theory in Chapter VII of THE CONCEPT OF MIND. But I shall
try to integrate that attack with other things Ryle said about sen-
on and perception in the chapter on perception in DILEMMAS, and in
rticle, "Sensation," in CONTEMPORARY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY, THIRD SERIES.[1]
In the chapter entitled, "Sensation and Observation" in THE CONCEPT
ND, Ryle gave an exposition of the "Sense-Datum Theory" which makes
ear that he was addressing his remarks not just to contemporary,
eth century exponents of this theory but to earlier advocates of
heory, too, though Ryle never mentioned any sense-datum philosophers
e or examined any one version of the theory in any detail. Thus
sed such terms as "direct awareness," immediate acquaintance,"
ng sense-data," "sensum," "sense field," and "sensibilia." And
kes it clear, I think, that he was talking about such contemporary
phers as Moore, Russell, Price, C. D. Broad, and others. Moreover,
ested that "phenomenalism" is a theory which makes the basic assump-
the sense-datum theory, so it is also clear that he was talking

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ilbert Ryle, "Sensation," in Contemporary British Philosophy, Third
ed. by H. D. Lewis (2nd ed.; London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.,

bout the linguistic version of the sense-datum theory and A. J. Ayer. ut Ryle also used such terms as "object of sense," "sensible object," nd "secondary quality," and this makes it just as clear that he was re- rring to earlier thinkers such as John Locke, Bishop Berkeley, and scartes.

No matter who they may be, Ryle thought that there are certain sumptions which all advocates of the sense-datum theory hold in common, d these assumptions are what Ryle wanted to bear down on. In a passage ich has since become quite justifiably well-known, Ryle stated that he uld "try to prove that this theory rests upon a logical howler, the ler, namely, of assimilating the concept of sensation to the concept observation."[1] Or, as he put it at another place in THE CONCEPT OF D, the sense-datum theory represents "the attempt to give to concepts sensation the jobs of concepts of observation."[2] Ryle wanted to show t "This assimilation makes nonsense simultaneously of the concept of sation and the concept of observation," as he put it.[3]

For Ryle the sense-datum theory was "primarily an attempt to eluci- the concepts of sense-perception, a part of which task consists in idating the notions of sensations of sight, touch, hearing, smelling, tasting."[4] There is some difficulty involved in doing this since "everyday verbs like 'see', 'hear', and 'taste' are not used to des- te sensations 'neat'," Ryle said.[5] So sense-datum philosophers look some other expressions to report and to talk about these sensations. hey come to think that we can "talk about sensations 'neat' by

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[1] The Concept of Mind, p. 213.

[2] Ibid., p. 221. [3] Ibid., p. 213. [4] Ibid., p. 210. [5] Ibid.

alking about 'looks', appearances', 'sounds', 'flavors', 'whiffs', 'ting-
es', 'glimpses' and so on."[1] On the sense-datum theory then, Ryle claimed,
aving a visual sensation can be described as getting a momentary look,
visual appearance, of something, and having an olfactory sensation as
tting a momentary whiff of something."[2] And when a person has a visual
nsation, while looking at a bowl of oyster stew, for example, then this
nsation consists of his sensing a sense-datum, a patchwork of colors
his sensory field. These patches of color occupy that person's pri-
e visual space though sense-datum philosophers disagree about whether
s means that sense-data are mental in status or not. Since sense-data
seem generically dependent on certain physical and physiological con-
ions in a person's brain and nervous system, and dependent on the en-
onment in some way, sense-datum philosophers hesitate to call sense-
a "mental."

As Ryle saw it, the basic assumption or principle of all sense-datum
ories is the principle that having a sensation is a kind of observing,
essing, or espying of a sensible object or sense-datum. The sense-
m theory maintains that there is a sense of "observe" or of "perceive"
hich it is meaningful to say that a person perceives and observes his
e-data; he sees colored patches, he hears loud sounds, he smells pun-
whiffs, he tastes chocolate flavors, he feels tingles or tickles.
e sense-datum theory, these are all different ways of perceiving
serving sensations, Ryle believed.[3] Further, it is sometimes alleged
ense-datum philosophers that we do not really perceive bowls of oyster
or dry white wines, but sense patches of milky-gray colors and dry
rs, though sense-datum philosophers allow that there is a vulgar

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., pp. 210-11. [3] Ibid., p. 211.

nse of "perceive" in which this is possible. In more technical lang-
ge, Ryle said that sense-datum philosophers talk about our being dir-
tly aware of milky-gray color patches or our being immediately acquainted
th dry flavors, or, in general, our sensing sense-data.

Of course, Ryle continued, sense-datum philosophers disagree as to
t is the relation between patches of color and bowls of oyster stew.
they do think, nevertheless, that there is some relation between these
mon objects and sense-data. And they believe that the clarification of
concept of sensing sense-data will throw light on the concept of per-
ving common objects.

Ryle attacked the sense-datum theory, as he conceived it, by arguing
it unnaturally makes the concept of sensation too similar to the con-
of observation. There are three arguments that he used to show that
"logical howler" of assimilation is involved in the sense-datum
ry: (1) he attacked what he took to be the "basic principle" of the
e-datum theory, the principle that having a sensation is observing or
lving a sensation, arguing that having a sensation is not observing
ing because the acceptance of this principle leads to an infinite
ss; (2) he argued that the concept of sensing is not like the concept
serving since the expressions which are used to describe sensing are
nterchangeable in most linguistic contexts with those which describe
ving; and (3) he argued that when sense-datum philosophers use such
sions as "It looks like.Φ.," or "It looks as if.Φ.," or "It has the
ance of.Φ.," or "It seems to be.Φ.," it does not follow that there
e object, some "look" or "appearance," or "sense-datum" which is.Φ.
te and distinct from the object which looks or appears to be.Φ..
ıe argument Ryle gave for discarding the sense-datum principle that

aving a sensation is a kind of observing of something, is one which hows that on this sense-datum view we must continue ad infinitum to nalyze what we mean by observing something in terms of the having of a ensation. On the sense-datum theory, Ryle said, when a percipient has sensation, say when he gets a glimpse of a horse-race,

> His having this sensation consists in his finding or intuiting a sensum, namely, a patchwork of colors. This means that having a glimpse of a horse-race is explained in terms of his having a glimpse of something else, the patchwork of colors. But if having a glimpse of a horse-race entails having at least one sensation, then having a glimpse of color patches must again involve having at least one appropriate sensation, which in its turn must be analyzed into the sensing of yet an earlier sensum, and so on forever.[1]

thus it must logically be inadmissable to say that having a sensation a kind of observing or that sensation is observation if observing some-ng always involves the having of a sensation.[2]

Ryle allowed that a sense-datum philosopher might defend his theory inst the infinite regress argument by saying that sensing a sense-um does not itself involve being "sensitively affected" in any way. thus in seeing a patchwork of colors, we are not having some other, r sensation, ad infinitum. But, Ryle argued, this defense "in effect ains the having of sensations as the not having any sensations. It ds the imputed regress by the heroic device of suggesting that sensing cognitive process which does not require its owner to be susceptible timuli...."[3] And this makes simultaneous nonsense of both the concept ensation and the concept of observation, he thought.

Though this first attack against the sense-datum theory was perhaps yle's main attack, it is nevertheless misguided on several accounts.

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[1] Ibid., p. 213. [2] See this same argument on Ibid., p. 207.
[3] Ibid., p. 215.

irst, Ryle had an annoying tendency to use the word "sensation" either
n a way that ontological sense-datum philosophers rarely did, namely,
n the sense of perceiving an object. Or he used it in a way that sense-
atum philosophers never did, namely, as identical with a sense-datum.
sually sense-datum philosophers like Moore used the term "sensation"
o mean the complex relation between the act of sensing and the sense-
atum, or the complex whole composed of the act, the relation, and the
atum. In fact Ryle himself had a tendency to use the word to mean some-
imes the act of sensing and sometimes the datum, and this often resulted
n making his arguments ambiguous.

Even more important than this, is the fact that sense-datum philoso-
ers did not conceive of the act of sensing as a perceptual act or as a
ind of perceiving. It is true, e.g., that in some of his earlier writ-
gs, Moore sometimes used the term "direct perception" as synonymous with
irect acquaintance" or "direct apprehension." Nevertheless, neither
oore nor the other sense-datum philosophers typically maintained or in-
nded to maintain that sensing a sense-datum is a kind of perceiving in
e sense that Ryle seems to have been using the term. As I argued earlier,[1]
e act of sensing a sense-datum was normally considered by sense-datum
ilosophers to be an abstraction, of which different specific activities
re instances. These different acts were different ways of being acquaint-
with different kinds of sense-data, though all of these acts had some-
ng in common, namely, "consciousness" or "awareness." And all of these
a had certain ontological similarities, too; for example, they were
entary in temporal character. Sense-datum philosophers believed that
re are different ways of being conscious of something, and sensing was

[1] See Supra, Introduction to Part One.

ıe way, but to say that this common element in all sensory acts was a ind of "perceiving" or "observing" is not an accurate representation of ıat sense-datum philosophers meant by "awareness." Ontological sense-ıtum philosophers did not take sensing to be identical in nature with ɔrceiving or observing since they believed that perceiving involved ɔre than just sensing sense-data. Moore, Russell, and Price all took ains to distinguish carefully between sensing and perceiving. And this istinction, as I argued earlier, while similar in Moore, Russell, and rice, was not the same. In fact, this distinction was one of the basic octrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory in the arly twentieth century. And there is solid evidence to show that such arlier sense-datum philosophers as Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley also ade a similar kind of distinction. It is therefore difficult to see how n infinite regress can exist if having a sensation does not mean perceiv-ng a sense-datum. Sense-datum philosophers would have argued that per-eiving involves sensing sense-data. But they did not intentionally iden-ify sensing with perceiving, and they did not believe that having a sen-ation involved perceiving or observing a special kind of object.

The second argument Ryle used to attack the sense-datum theory is, n the face of it, a linguistic argument, though it is ultimately an ttack against certain concepts which are embodied in the language sense-atum philosophers use to talk about sensing. Sensing is not a kind of ɔserving, he suggested, and hence the concepts of sensation and of ob-ervation are categorically different, because the expressions which des-ribe sensing are not always interchangeable with those which describe ɔserving.[1] The ways we have in ordinary language and life of

[1] The Concept of Mind, p. 214.

characterizing the exercises of (our) powers of observation" cannot be applied to the having of sensations, Ryle said.[1] To indicate that this is the case, Ryle pointed out a number of things as to what we can and cannot say about observing and sensing. He said, for example, that

> One can listen carefully, but not have a singing in one's ears carefully; one can look systematically, but one cannot have a dazzle-sensation systematically; one can try to discriminate flavors, but one cannot try to have sensations of taste. Again we observe, very often, from inquisitiveness or obedience, but we do not have tickles from this or any other motive. We observe on purpose, but we do not have sensations on purpose, though we can induce them on purpose. We can make mistakes of observation, but it is nonsense to speak of either making or avoiding mistakes in sensation....[2]

All of these facts about what we can and cannot say indicate that the having of a sensation is not an observing or perceiving of something. If, as is impossible, this were the case, then we would be able to describe having a sensation as observing something. But the expressions we use to describe the having of a sensation are not interchangeable with those which we ordinarily use to describe the observing of something; nonsense results from interchanging such expressions. Hence the concepts which, so to speak, lie behind these expressions must be of different types or categories. The concept of observation is related to the concept of sensation, Ryle admitted, at many places in "Sensation and Observation," but it is mistaken to conceive of a sensation either as the object of an observation process or as itself an observing of something. And any view which assumes that this is true is mistaken. Since Ryle believed that the sense-datum theory does assume these things to be true, he concluded that it is fundamentally in error.

The second argument is a paradigm of a common type of reductio

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[1] Ibid., p. 204. [2] Ibid.

argument which Ryle used in THE CONCEPT OF MIND to show that certain philosophical theses of the Official Doctrine are mistaken. The sense-datum assumption is false and must be rejected because it would enable us to say certain things which are intuitively meaningless or absurd from the standpoint of the ordinary way we use and understand words. To borrow an expression which Ryle used elsewhere in a slightly different connection, the sense-datum theory is the product of "inattention to grammar." [1] That is, many of the things which sense-datum theorists say about sensing and observing are misconstruals and misappropriations of our ordinary language for perceiving or of the "logical grammar" which characterizes such language. When the sense-datum theorist uses such technical expressions as "sensible object," "sense-datum," and "immediate acquaintance," he distorts the meaning and logical force which ordinary perceptual expressions already have since he must use those ordinary expressions in explaining what he means by these technical expressions. What must be done, then, in order to eliminate these technical sense-datum expressions, is to point out the semantic absurdities and confusions which result from this inattention to the correct meanings of ordinary perceptual expressions. Perhaps sense-datum philosophers will refrain from using a technical vocabulary when they understand what it does to our ordinary perceptual language and to the conceptual scheme which backs that language up.

Ryle was not merely suggesting, then, that once these absurdities are pointed out, his task was done; the object of his linguistic criticisms was not only to exorcise technical expressions from philosophical discussion. He also believed that the ordinary ways we have of talking about sensing and observing, and the ways in which our ordinary statements are related

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[1] Ryle, Dilemmas, p. 104.

to each other, demarcate the logical boundaries in which the concepts of sensing and observing successfully operate and have significance. If we can work out in detail the logical relations which obtain between such ordinary perceptual statements, the statements in which these concepts are embodied, we shall be on our way toward understanding the logical powers of such concepts. Or, to put it another way, we shall understand the perceptual theory of which these concepts are a major part. It is not just linguistic distortion, then, or "inattention to grammar" that is at issue since linguistic distortion is an indication that concepts are being distorted.

The most extraordinary thing about Ryle's position here is that it only allows conceptual change or conceptual restructuring to take place in the context of ordinary language and the natural evolution of ordinary thinking about perception. This makes it impossible for philosophers to re-orient or replace a set of concepts that may only be poorly worked out in ordinary language with concepts having a fairly specific grammar invented by philosophers themselves. The job of philosophical clarification cannot then involve the redesigning of language to account for gaps and inadequacies in our ordinary perceptual thinking, supposing that the latter exists in the first place. The important task of concept formation in psychology is likewise thrown into doubt. Does Ryle intend that psychologists should take their conceptual understanding of perception from what people ordinarily think? Must philosophers wait for conceptual changes in psychology to filter down into ordinary speech and thinking before they can begin the job of working out the grammar of these concepts? These things seem unclear, given Ryle's remarks.

Ryle continued his offensive against the sense-datum theory by

suggesting that it might be said in reply to his criticism of the thesis that sensing is a kind of observing that whatever may be true in respect to the logical grammar of the concepts of sensation and of observation, or whatever may be true in respect to what we can and what we cannot say about these matters, it still remains independently true that whenever we see something, a patchwork of colors is presented, or that whenever we hear something, auditory sense-data are presented; that sensing is in general an immediate discerning of a particular sensible object which we ordinarily do not notice due to our "preoccupation" with common objects. In other words, the sense-datum reply could be that truths about sense-data are independent of linguistic considerations about the grammar of perceptual language. And thus if these considerations lead to the view that having a sensation is not like observing something, then "so much the worse for those considerations since having a visual sensation certainly is a non-inferential discerning of a particular sensible object."[1]

To answer this reply, Ryle brought a third argument to bear against the sense-datum theory, an argument which is really quite old in twentieth century English philosophy.[2] This is an argument which again does not rely only on certain linguistic features of our ordinary language for sensing and perceiving, for the argument goes beyond such features to the theory behind ordinary language. It claims to show that from the fact that some object X appears to be ϕ to a percipient, it does not follow that there is some other object Y, distinct from X, which really is

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[1] The Concept of Mind., p. 216.

[2] This is an argument which goes back at least to the first decade of this century. John Passmore says that it is one which John Cook Wilson made during that period. See Passmore, One Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 249. I have discovered that H. A. Prichard made this same argument in 1906. See H. A. Prichard, "Appearances and Reality," Mind, n.s., XV (April, 1906), 225.

ϕ . It is an argument against the view that in talking about sensations we are talking about things which exist as the immediate objects of sense rather than about common objects such as tables and tomatoes.

On the sense-datum theory, Ryle said, when we look at a round plate which is, say, tilted away from us at an angle and which as a result appears to be elliptical instead of round, it follows that there is something, some sense-datum, which really is elliptical. The question at issue here then is, Ryle believed, Does the fact that the plate looks elliptical imply that there is something, some look or appearance, which is elliptical? To answer this question, Ryle asked us to consider what a "person without a theory" would say in this situation; Ryle appealed to the opinion of the common man to resolve this question.[1] And he was convinced that while such a person would "feel no qualms" about saying that the round plate looks elliptical, or that it looks as if it were elliptical, or that it appears to be elliptical, he would feel qualms about concluding that he is seeing an elliptical look of a round plate.[2] Usually it does not make sense to talk about seeing the looks of things, and in consequence this is not what would ordinarily be implied by saying that the plate has an elliptical look. Normally what would be meant is only that the round plate looks as an elliptical but untilted plate would look. Thus, Ryle said, "In saying that the plate looks elliptical, he (common man) is not characterizing an extra object, namely 'a look', as being elliptical,

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[1] The Concept of Mind., p. 216.

[2] Konrad Marc-Wogau testily pointed out that these "pure linguistic arguments...cannot convince anyone outside the Oxford circle!" Whether a person without a theory would feel qualms "cannot be adduced as serious objection against the use of technical terms in philosophy," he maintained. See Konrad Marc-Wogau, "Gilbert Ryle on Sensation," in Philosophical Essays Dedicated to Gunnar Aspelin (Lund: CWK Gleerup Bokfoerlag, 1963), p. 97. Of course Ryle was not giving a "pure linguistic argument" here at all.

(rather) he is likening how the tilted round plate does look to how the untilted elliptical plates do or would look."[1] In fact, the ordinary man, Ryle thought, is "applying to the actual look of the plate a rule or a recipe" about how untilted, elliptical plates typically look to people who could place themselves in the position of observing such plates.[2] He is not suggesting that he has discovered a new kind of object, an elliptical look, which exists alongside the elliptical-looking plate.

Moreover, a misconstrual of our ordinary language for describing how objects look is involved in this transition from the way objects look to their "looks," Ryle believed. Sense-datum philosophers are abusing our ordinary language since they are making certain ordinary expressions do linguistic jobs for which they were not designed or intended. Thus, Ryle said, while ordinarily there is a use for such expressions as, "I see a patch of white," it is not an expression-type which can function in all contexts in which we are referring to what we perceive by vision. This expression can only be used in certain special contexts such as those which are used to describe looking through a gap in a hedge and seeing a patch of white or looking at a splash of white paint on an abstract canvas.[3] Ryle did not deny, in other words, that such an expression has a typical use; he did deny, however, that it can be used to describe all of the ways physical objects are found to look or appear. When the sense-datum philosopher uses an expression like, "I see a patch of white," he is guilty of talking as if he had discovered some new kind

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[1] The Concept of Mind, p. 217. [2] Ibid.

[3] In this connection it is interesting to recall that in The Problems of Philosophy Russell said that, for most practical purposes, the distinction between the way things look or appear and the way things really are is not important, and that it is only the painter who wants ordinarily to know the way things look. See Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, p. 12.

of object which he is now describing to us; he is misappropriating certain normal expressions to serve a referential function for which they are not constructed or intended. In truth there are no sensible objects, Ryle thought. Sense-datum philosophers, in talking about the looks of physical things, are only really describing the way ordinary objects look, and no existential inference to looks is warranted by such descriptions.[1]

What Ryle thought that he had accomplished, then, by these three arguments was the destruction of a basic principle which he believed all ontological sense-datum philosophers like Moore, Russell, and Price had accepted. He believed that he had shown that to have a sensation is not to observe, perceive, detect, or intuit anything, and that sensation is not a cognitive relation between an act of the mind and a sensible object.[2] "Sensations," Ryle said, "are not perceivings, observings, or findings; they are not detectings, scannings, or inspectings; they are not apprehendings, cognizings, intuitings or knowings."[3] These claims are false, Ryle believed, because having a sensation is not like observing something. In observing something a person is trying to find something out.

> His scrutiny is accordingly describable as careful or careless, cursory or sustained, methodical or haphazard, accurate or inaccurate, expert or amateurish. Observing is a task which can be one of some arduousness and we can be more or less successful in it and more or less good at it.[4]

On the other hand, Ryle stated, "None of these ways of characterizing the exercises of one's power of observation can be applied to the having of visual, auditory, or gustatory sensations."[5] It does not make any sense to talk about making or avoiding a mistake in sensation. For, Ryle thought,

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[1] The Concept of Mind, pp. 214, 216-19.

[2] Prichard made the same point in "The Sense-Datum Fallacy."

[3] The Concept of Mind, p. 214. [4] Ibid., pp. 203-04. [5] Ibid., p. 204.

"Sensations can be neither correct nor incorrect, veridical nor non-veridical. They are neither apprehensions nor misapprehensions."[1] Thus having a sensation is not logically a mental task. And in fact there is nothing "mental" about sensations at all, thought Ryle.

These considerations about the ways in which we use perceptual expressions in ordinary language show, then, that the concepts of sensation and of perception are quite distinct and that it is logically impossible that sensing or having a sensation should be a kind of perceiving, even though perceiving does involve the having of sensations. But let me return to this later on when discussing Ryle's positive view about sensing and observing.

It would be relevant here to point out that Ayer did not accept an act-object analysis of sensation, hence he did not accept all of the same sense-datum theses which Ryle claimed the other sense-datum theorists did. In fact, Ayer tried to make it clear on a number of occasions that he rejected not only the view that sensing is a mental act but also the view that sense-data are objects. And he thought that the problem of perception needed to be restated in linguistic terms. Ryle believed, nevertheless, that Ayer's version of phenomenalism clearly involved the assumption that in having a sensation something is revealed.[2] Ryle allowed that one of the "commendable motives" of linguistic phenomenalism was to rid perceptual theory of "occult agencies and principles," such as the thing-in-itself or the "physical occupant."[3] But he added that this theory also "assumed the principle of the Sense Datum Theory, that having a sensation is itself a piece of observing and indeed the only sort of observing which, being proof against mistakes, merited the name 'observation'."[4] Therefore, linguistic

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 236. [3] Ibid., p. 235. [4] Ibid., p. 236.

phenomenalism was as much in error as the ontological version of the sense-datum theory was.

Furthermore, if there are no sensible objects or sense-data, then it does not even make sense to talk about "propositions which refer to sense-data," as the linguistic version of the sense-datum theory does. The translation program would not fail then for lack of a vocabulary for sense-data, or for want of equivalences, but it would fail because our ordinary language does not enable us to even formulate the propositions into which propositions about physical objects must be translated.[1] In fact, Ryle believed we cannot even talk about or describe our sensations without utilizing "the vocabulary of common objects."[2] Hence it would seem that, contrary to what Ayer avowed, the sense-datum language is not logically prior to the physical-object language, if, as is unlikely, there is a meaningful sense-datum language at all.

Furthermore, both the linguistic and ontological versions of the sense-datum theory err in arguing that we really cannot say that we observe tables and tomatoes but can only say that we perceive sense-data. Ryle thought that what we ordinarily say to be the case about what we perceive must contain some truth, that our ordinary language embodies a true concept of perception. This does not mean that everyone ordinarily has a theory of perception. But there is a certain collective understanding about perception in our ordinary language, nevertheless, which backs up our ordinary perceptual expressions. And since ordinarily we say that we perceive tables and tomatoes, and not sensible objects or sense-data, there must be something sound about the ordinary view. As Ryle put it, "The ordinary use of verbs like 'observe', 'espy', 'peer at', and so on

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 237.

is in just such contexts as 'observe a robin', 'espy a ladybird', and 'peer at a book'," not in the artificial contexts invented by sense-datum theorists.[1] Ryle stated that the sense-datum theory in both versions borrows the

> ...ordinary force of verbs like 'observe', 'scan', and 'savor' for its solemnized verbs 'intuit', 'cognize' and 'sense'. The difference is that while laymen speak of observing a robin and scanning a page of THE TIMES, this theory speaks instead of intuiting color patches and having immediate acquaintanceship with smells.[2]

Philosophical analysis of perceptual concepts must take the ordinary force of perceptual verbs into account, however, and must not be led to deny obvious facts about what we ordinarily say we observe. By inference, then, Ayer's claim that the language of Naive Realism is not convenient must be mistaken, for the theory of Naive Realism must embody some true concept of perception if it is the theory that backs up our ordinary perceptual language. We do not have a choice, then, Ryle was implying, between a terminology in which we say that we perceive or sense sense-data and a terminology in which we say that we perceive physical objects. It is common objects like tables and tomatoes that we ordinarily say that we observe, not sensible objects, and it makes little sense to deny this.

I think it is apparent then that Ryle thought that he was striking at the very heart of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory when he denied that sensing was a cognitive relation in which a sensible object is observed or perceived. And it is clear that he thought that Ayer's version of the theory also rested on the mistaken assumption that something is revealed in having a sensation. And if this attack against the "basic principle" of the sense-datum theory is sound, then Ryle thought

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[1] Ibid., p. 224. [2] Ibid., p. 212.

that certain other sense-datum theses must fall with it. Thus he thought that the heralded antithesis between the public, physical world (or the external world) and the private, mental world (or the mind) is spurious.[1] Along with this antithesis must go that between public and private space, and the distinction between the properties objects have in private space (sometimes called "secondary qualities") and the properties objects have in public space (sometimes called "primary qualities"). In fact, Ryle believed that "The properties which we ascertain by observation...to characterize the common objects of anyone's observation cannot be significantly ascribed to, or denied of sensations. Sensations do not have sizes, shapes, positions, temperatures, colors, or smells."[2] And it follows, Ryle thought, that "The reputed problem...of finding out what are the connections between the occupants of the public world and those of any such private worlds" does not exist.[3]

Thus I think we could say that Ryle was claiming to have destroyed all of the basic doctrines of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, as he conceived them. And he would have argued that he had shown that the linguistic version of the theory rests on the same basic mistake that the ontological version does. Nevertheless, I have argued before that the ontological version of the sense-datum theory does not have as a basic principle, or as a derived principle for that matter, the thesis that sensing is a kind of observing or perceiving. So it is not correct to say that the basic doctrines of the ontological version were eliminated by Ryle's arguments. It would also be mistaken to argue that the linguistic version of the theory involved this principle since Ayer denied the existence of mental acts of sensing and hence could not have believed that

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[1] Ibid., pp. 207-08. [2] Ibid., p. 208. [3] Ibid.

sensing was a mental act of perceiving.

Before turning to Ryle's positive analysis of perceiving in THE CONCEPT OF MIND and elsewhere, I should like to discuss another argument against traditional theories of perception which occurs in Ryle's DILEMMAS. This is the argument that perceiving, and in particular, seeing, is not a physical or mental process. This argument is in outline very similar to Wittgenstein's argument against the mental-process analysis of seeing, so I will deal with it briefly.

Ryle stated in DILEMMAS that some philosophers have asked questions about the nature of perception which have misled them into the mistaken view that perceiving is a physiological or a mental process. They have illogically construed questions about perceiving to be like questions about digestion or blood circulation. As a result they have come to think of perceiving as a kind of organic process which is amenable to scientific investigation in optics, acoustics, and neurophysiology. Of course, scientific investigation into the nature of physiological processes is surely legitimate. But it is not the philosopher's job to be asking scientific questions about perceiving, and when philosophers do this, they are apt to misconstrue what perception is.

Philosophers are misled when they ask questions like, "How do we see trees?" or, "What happens in us when we see trees?"[1] In asking these kinds of question they are calling for answers which will describe how we see and what happens in us when we see in terms of certain "modifications in some of our internal states or processes."[2]

But, "There is something which is drastically wrong with the whole program of trying to schedule my seeing a tree either as a physiological

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[1] Ryle, Dilemmas, p. 100. [2] Ibid.

or as a psychological end-stage of processes," Ryle said.[1] Seeing a tree is not a phenomenon that can be observed, or unobserved, for that matter. "To put the point much too crudely," Ryle stated, "seeing a tree is not an effect--but this is not because it is an eccentric sort of state or process which happens to be exempt from causal explanations but because it is not a state or process at all."[2] The reason why seeing is not a process, Ryle maintained, is that it is not something that is undertaken or something that one undergoes; it is not a mental episode. Rather, it is the termination or end of a process. It represents the successful completion of some process, just as scoring a touchdown may represent the successful termination of a pass play. In short, Ryle said,

> A lot of biographical verbs like 'find', 'see', 'detect', and 'solve' share with a lot of other verbs of starting and stopping, which have no special biographical connotations, the negative property of not standing for processes taking place in or to things, or for states in which things remain. The program, therefore of locating, inspecting, and measuring the process of seeing, and of correlating it with some other states and processes, is a hopeless program--hopeless not because the quarry wears seven-league boots or a cloak of invisibility, but because the idea that there was such a quarry was the product, almost of inattention to grammar.[3]

If we look closely enough at the "grammar" of perceptual verbs like "see," then we will discover that they do not refer to processes but to the end-products of such processes. And thus the concept of seeing cannot be thought of in terms of processes.

This argument is not specifically directed by Ryle against the sense-datum theory, nor is it directed against any particular philosopher. In fact in his article, "Sensation," Ryle distinguished between the sense-datum theory and the causal theory. Ryle claimed that the causal theory of perception "operates naturally with the notions or propagation,

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[1] Ibid., p. 101. [2] Ibid., p. 102. [3] Ibid., p. 104.

transmission, impulse, stimulus, and response rather than with the notions of data, premisses, evidence, and conclusions," as the sense-datum theory does.[1] Nevertheless, Ryle believed that both the sense-datum theory and the causal theory have the same aim, namely, "to postulate sense impressions." And these two theories do "interlock," so it is reasonable to suggest that Ryle intended this argument to apply to the sense-datum theory insofar as it did involve, in individual cases, a causal account of the origin of sensation. It is at any rate clear that the ontological version of the sense-datum theory was thought to be compatible with a causal theory of perception.

We can discover in Ryle's critical remarks about the mental-process view some of the theses which make up Ryle's own view about the concept of perception. And I shall turn then to his positive theory to make it more clear why he rejected the mental-process view.

Despite his claim in THE CONCEPT OF MIND that it is not any part of the object of that book "to swell the ranks of theories of knowledge in general or of theories of perception in particular," Ryle did offer the outlines of his own analysis of perception or "observation."[2] He said that he would talk about "observation" rather than "perception" because the word "perception" is too narrow and covers only achievements, while "to observe" can mean either that something has been achieved or it can mean that someone is trying to perceive something.[3] The basic element in this analysis is the idea that there is a logical relationship between the concept of having a sensation and the concept of observation.

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[1] Ryle, "Sensation," p. 439.

[2] The Concept of Mind, p. 222.

[3] Ibid.

This logical relationship makes it meaningful to say that observation involves the having of sensations. This view Ryle adopted quite clearly both in THE CONCEPT OF MIND and in "Sensation." It is, he said, "very hard to avoid saying that hearing, seeing, and tasting could not happen unless appropriate sense-impressions were received."[1] However, Ryle was not altogether satisfied with this basic doctrine, for to say that observing involves the having of sensations is to use the word "sensation" in a sophisticated and highly technical sense. To this extent Ryle had fallen in with the "Official View" of the nature of perception, the very view that he was trying to combat. Further, if Ryle were to be consistent, he would have sought to stop using technical expressions on the grounds of conceptual distortion. Thus Ryle was unsatisfied and uneasy about his acceptance of this point, and indicated this at several places in the chapter, "Sensation and Observation," in THE CONCEPT OF MIND. He made it clear that in the ordinary sense of the word "sensation," it is not true that whenever we see or hear something we are also having sensations.

That Ryle did not wholeheartedly approve of his acceptance of this technical point is shown, for example, by his remark that "Impressions are ghostly impulses, postulated for the ends of a paramechanical theory."[2] Taking "impressions" to be synonymous with "sensations" here, Ryle was arguing that having sensations is a feature of the causal-scientific theory of perception. And he was implying that the causal theory is a part of the Ghost in the Machine Doctrine. In line with his sustained

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[1] "Sensation," p. 427.

[2] The Concept of Mind, p. 243.

attack on that doctrine, he appeared then to want to do away with the technical sense of the word, or to set it aside as irrelevant to the philosophy of perception. He wanted to construct a theory which takes into account only the ordinary uses we have for the word "sensation," but his dilemma was that he found himself quite unable to do this.

Ryle admitted, then, that "To describe someone as trying to make out whether what he sees is a chaffinch or a robin...is to say something about his visual sensations, but," he continued, "it is to say more than that."[1] The question then is, What more is being said? Now this is not, Ryle thought, to ask, What is the person doing besides having sensations?, but it is to ask, "What does the description of an observer embody over and above the description of him as having those sensations?" Ryle wanted to make out what it is for a person to perceptually recognize, identify, or detect some common object such as a mosquito, and this was, in his words, to ask questions about "how the logical behavior of 'he detected a mosquito' differs from that of 'there was a singing in his ears', from that of 'he tried in vain to make out what was making the noise', and from that of 'he mistook it for the noise of the wind in the telephone wires'."[2] It was to ask questions about the logical relationships between perceptual descriptions, descriptions which refer to the same set of events.

Ryle said that he wanted philosophers to consider what are the logical powers or the logical force of certain perceptual descriptions, such as "He saw a robin," or "He heard a mosquito." And this means that Ryle wanted us to concentrate our attention on how we actually use certain kinds of expressions, and on how these expressions are logically related to each other.[3] This attention to perceptual language is not, as we saw

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[1] Ibid., p. 224. [2] Ibid., p. 225. [3] Ibid.

before, an end in itself, for the purpose of examining such language, or, to put it in another way, the purpose of examining the grammatical boundaries of concepts, is to map out the theoretical or logical boundaries of the concepts of perception and sensation. In the process of mapping out these boundaries, it is to be expected that certain other concepts involved in the domain of perception will also have to be mapped out. In this way a sort of logical geography of perception concepts will result.

It is "perceptual recognition" then, Ryle believed, which is involved in observing over and above the having of sensations. When a person hears a mosquito he not only has a singing in his ears, he also recognizes or identifies what he hears as the noise of a mosquito.[1] Contrary to what might be thought, perceptual recognition is not, Ryle said, the thinking of certain thoughts, or the subsuming of the singing in the observer's ears under some concept, or a kind of inferential process from the singing to the mosquito. In general, Ryle thought that perceptual recognition is not a conceptual or discursive process, as it has been conceived in so many traditional and modern theories. As Ryle said, in "Sensation," "I maintain not only that perceptual recognition, identification, etc., need not embody any inferential thinking, but that they need not embody any thinking at all."[2]

The reason why perceptual recognition need not embody any inferential thinking is presented only tentatively in "Sensation," though in THE CONCEPT OF MIND Ryle was more straightforward about this point. In "Sensation" he said, "If it is not true that all thinking is inferring, then it need not be true that the thinking which enters into perceptual

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Sensation," p. 438.

recognition, identification, comparison, etc., is inferring."[1] This is, however, a very weak way of showing that perceptual recognition is not in fact a kind of inferring, since Ryle only comes through with a counter-assertion. In THE CONCEPT OF MIND Ryle was less mysterious about this point. He said that the sense-datum theory maintains "the assumption that whatever is known is learned either by inference from premises or, in the case of the ultimate premisses, by some sort of non-inferential confrontation called 'consciousness', 'acquaintance', or 'immediate awareness'."[2] Since the properties of sense-data are known by direct acquaintance, the existence and nature of physical objects must be derived from that direct, non-inferential knowledge via the process of inference. Physical objects are not known "directly," then, but only by a process of discursive or inferential thinking. However, this view is mistaken, Ryle thought, because it is based on an improper theory about sensation. On the sense-datum view, sensations are clues that we can discover and observe. And these clues are utilized to detect whether physical objects exist and to detect what properties physical objects have. But, Ryle said, "having sensations is not discovering clues," since clues are things that we can observe while sensations cannot be observed.[3] It is improper then to ask how we can use our sensations or sense-data as clues to inferentially detect anything about common objects. Thus, the perceptual recognition of robins or mosquitoes does not involve inferential thinking, Ryle maintained.

But, further, Ryle believed that perceptual recognition need not involve any kind of thinking whatsoever, whether it be inferential or

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[1] Ibid., p. 437.

[2] The Concept of Mind, p. 239. [3] Ibid., p. 232.

not. He said,

> It seems to me false or at least highly misleading to say that a man who detects a misprint or a farmer who identifies the green crop with growing wheat is necessarily thinking at all. For one thing, the misprint and the nature of the crop might be discerned at sight or in a flash...(and)...there might be no moment, however short, in which he could be described as pondering, reflecting, or putting two and two together.[1]

If philosophers were to suggest that thinking can very well be done at lightning speed, we should then "mistrust" what they say, for it would be a "queer property" of thinking if it were to take no time for its performance, Ryle asserted. This argument, however, is hardly likely to appeal to philosophers who believe that thinking may actually take place at lightning speed, especially if they are impressed with the analogies between high-speed digital computers and human brains.

The question remains then, What does perceptual recognition involve if not thinking? Ryle suggested that it involves "the possession and exploitation of knowledge previously acquired."[2] Perceptual recognition is an acquired skill in which we apply what Ryle called "perception recipes" to the common objects around us and so identify them or recognize them as being mosquitoes or robins.

To understand what this means Ryle believed that we must first note an important linguistic and conceptual fact about such perception-words as "perceive," "recognize," "identify," "see," "hear," and their noun-cognates. There are of course many verbs and cognates that we use to describe "the inquisitive life of human beings," Ryle said, but there has been a widespread failure among philosophers "to notice that some of these verbs are achievement verbs while others are task verbs."[3] And

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[1] "Sensation," p. 437. [2] Ibid., p. 438.

[3] The Concept of Mind, p. 151.

this failure has been "the source of some gratuitous puzzles and, accordingly, of some mystery-mongering theories," such as the sense-datum theory.[1]

Ryle stated that a major difference between "the logical force of a task verb and that of a corresponding achievement verb is that in applying an achievement verb we are asserting that some state of affairs obtains over and above that which consists in the performance, if any, of the subservient task activity."[2] In using achievement verbs we are asserting not only that "some performance has been gone through, but also that some thing has been brought off by the agent going through it."[3] An achievement verb signifies an accomplishment or the termination of some process or activity. And, correspondingly, there are failure verbs, such as "misperceive," or "misidentified," or "did not detect" which signify that some state of affairs does not obtain or has not been brought about, that some activity or process has not been fruitfully terminated. This is not to say that all achievements are preceded by the performance of some task-activity, since we are sometimes successful in something without having undergone anything or done anything to be successful. Sometimes no purposive performances are gone through in order to achieve some result. But in the case of seeing, for example, it is usual, Ryle seemed to believe, for the "corresponding task activity" of looking to precede it.[4] We cannot see without looking, though we can look without seeing, Ryle was implying.

In respect to perception-verbs, we find that while some verbs such as "watch," "listen," "probe," "scan," and "savour" are used to indicate perceptual explorations or "to record observational undertakings the success of which may still be in question," there are other verbs such

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 150. [3] Ibid., p. 130. [4] Ibid., p. 149.

as "see," "hear," "detect," "discriminate," "recognize," and "identify," which are used to record observational successes and not the performance of some act or process that one has undergone.[1] Some perception-verbs, such as "observe," can be used in both ways, Ryle said. But, "The words 'perception' and 'perceive'...cover only achievements, as do the specific verbs of perception 'see', 'hear', 'taste', 'smell' and, in one sense, 'feel'."[2] At any rate, it is the concept of an "achievement verb" that Ryle was using in his explanation of what perceptual recognition is.

The importance of pointing this linguistic distinction out is that it shows that perceptual identification is not a mental act, exertion, performance, experience, or process, to use Ryle's terminology. Rather, when we say that someone perceptually recognizes an object we are indicating the fact that "certain acts, operations, exertions, or performances have had certain results,"[3] and that perceptual recognition is the successful culmination of such acts or performances, just as catching a pass in the end zone is the successful result of a pass play. We are signifying the successful completion of some kind of activity.

The fact that perceptual recognition is a noun-cognate of an achievement verb, then, is an important part of Ryle's analysis of the concept of observation. As Ryle put it in his article, "Sensation," "to detect or discriminate something, whether by sight or touch, is to achieve something, namely, to find something out by the exercise of an acquired and perhaps deliberately, trained skill."[4] What this means can be explained in the following way, Ryle thought. When we detect or recognize some object, we discover what it looks like, what it smells like, what it sounds

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[1] Ibid., p. 222. [2] Ibid., p. 223. [3] Ibid., p. 151.
[4] "Sensation," p. 431.

like, what it feels like, and so on. In discovering these things, we are not, of course, observing certain "looks" or "appearances" or "sense-data," rather, he said, "what (we) detect by seeing, hearing, tasting, and smelling are with extremely few exceptions, properties or features of things and happenings outside (us)."[1] The exceptions come in cases of tactual and kinaesthetic detecting or recognizing, for while what we detect tactually or kinaesthetically "may be properties or features of external though contiguous things and events...they may be and quite often are properties or features of anatomically internal things and events."[2] At no time, however, do we ever detect properties of things inside of our minds.

In discovering these external properties of common objects and in describing or talking about our discoveries, Ryle argued that we are applying certain

> ...perception recipes for the typical appearances of common objects to whatever (we are) trying to make out at the moment. To say that someone caught a glimpse, or heard a sound, is already to say more than would be involved in barely describing his visual and auditory sensations, for it is already to range what he is attending to under fairly general perception recipes.[3]

Ryle thought that there are particular recipes for the looks of things, recipes for the way things sound, recipes for the way things feel and smell.[4]

What Ryle meant by a "perception recipe" is not altogether clear, in view of the fact that no thinking may take place during perceptual recognition. But he did at one place suggest that a recipe is a rule for the way a common object looks, smells, and tastes under normal perceptual circumstances. And we can use this information to describe what he

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.
[3] The Concept of Mind, p. 219. [4] Ibid., p. 233.

probably meant.

By familiarizing ourselves with the way a common object typically looks, by learning how objects look in normal conditions, we come to know how these objects are due to look, smell, and taste in case we come across them again. Common objects have typical looks, smells, sounds, and tastes "in ordinary lights and positions at ordinary distances and from ordinary angles," Ryle said.[1] And it is the ordinary conditions of observation that are relevant in determining what an object looks like. Thus, Ryle said,

> When I say that something looks like a haystack (though it may actually be a blanket on a clothes-line), I am describing how it looks in terms of what anyone might expect a haystack to look like, when observed from a suitable angle, in a suitable light and against a suitable background. I am, that is, comparing how the blanket looks to me here and now...with a <u>type</u> of glimpse such as any ordinary observers could expect to get in situations of certain sorts, namely, in situations where they are in the proximity of haystacks in daylight.[2]

We do not describe the haystacks we see in terms of some set of sensations, though we certainly have sensations when we look at haystacks. Rather we describe our sensations by making reference to haystacks and by spelling out how haystacks look to any observer who is seeing them in ordinary conditions of observation.[3] Then by acquainting ourselves with the typical looks, smells, sounds, and tastes of these common objects, we build up a set of expectations as to how haystacks will look whenever we look at them again. If general perception recipes are like cooking recipes, then just as cooking recipes consist of ingredients and directions for using them, so perception recipes must consist of perceptual ingredients and rules for using them. The perceptual ingredients

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[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 230. [2] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 202. [3] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 203.

would consist of our knowledge of how objects look, smell, taste, feel, etc., and certain perceptual directions or rules for applying this knowledge to the objects that we are looking at, watching, observing, exploring, etc. If perceptual recognition involves the possession and exploitation of knowledge previously acquired, then we can say that the possession of knowledge is the possession of knowledge about the way common objects look, smell, taste, and feel, while the exploitation of this knowledge consists of using such knowledge to recognize the particular objects confronting us at the moment.

Thus, to say that we recognize some common object, such as a haystack, on some particular occasion, is to imply that we are applying a learned, general recipe or rule for the way the object usually looks, smells, tastes, etc., to the object in question and are successfully identifying that object as an instance of its type. And we can say that a person knows how an object looks when

> ...he is ready to anticipate...how it will look, if he approaches it, or moves away from it; and when, without having executed any such anticipations, he does approach it, or move away from it, it looks as he was prepared for it to look. When the actual glimpses of it that he gets are got according to the...recipe they satisfy his acquired expectation-propensities.[1]

And this constitutes his perceptually recognizing the object in question. To say that "X sees, recognizes, identifies a gate-post," involves all of the following factors: since seeing is an achievement or the successful completion of some activity or process, it must be preceded by some activity or process, a process which is two-fold, consisting first of such activities as looking at, watching, scanning, observing, feeling the object in question; second, it consists of the activity of applying certain

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[1] Ibid., p. 230.

learned perception recipes to the object in question; finally, seeing or recognizing itself is the successful termination of these other activities. It is clear that we have seen the gate-post when we know what it is called.

In talking of a person knowing a perception recipe, Ryle said that he was not implying that the person has the ability to formulate or impart the recipe to someone else.[1] The concept of recognition is an ordinary one in the sense that we all know how to recognize a haystack long before we can describe how it is that we do so in the recipe sense. Or, as Ryle puts this point in a slightly different way elsewhere, "People without special theories or technical knowledge of physiology, optics, chemistry, or psychology know well how to use the concepts of seeing, hearing, and smelling."[2] The application of perception recipes is "unthinking," or done unconsciously.

And last, Ryle believed that this whole account of seeing according to perception recipes applied to cases of mistaken observation or recognition, too. In mis-identifying an object, an observer is also using the same technique as he is when he correctly identifies it, only he is failing to use that technique properly for several different reasons. We can imagine that failing to recognize an object that is "really there" could be the result of several causes. One might fail to recognize an object because he did not learn the recipe for it, or because he did not learn the proper recipe for it, or because he did not apply the correct recipe to the object in question, or because he incorrectly applied the right recipe, and so on. Ryle's account of seeing failures becomes unclear, however, in cases where a person recognizes something that is not "really there." The problem would be to describe how perception recipes could

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[1] Ibid., p. 234.

[2] "Sensation," p. 428.

even be acquired for one-shot hallucinations or for visual illusions. It may be that Ryle would deny that recipes could be acquired for hallucinations, that it would make no sense to say that someone recognized or saw a pink rat, for example. This would follow from his view that perception recipes are rules for the way common objects typically look in typical situations. While illusions may typically look a certain way, hallucinations are hardly common objects that are seen in typical situations. On the other hand, since we do see illusions, it may be that Ryle would argue that perception recipes could be acquired and applied to illusory objects. So that one could describe seeing a bent stick in water much like a normal case. The difficulty with illusions would arise over the matter of normal observational conditions. Certainly some illusions are seen under normal conditions in the light of day, at ordinary angles, in ordinary places, etc. Yet not all illusions are seen under these conditions. And one would wonder then how Ryle would account for such cases.

Ryle's analysis of the concept of observation or perceptual recognition has been challenged on several grounds. Some of these challenges have centered on his distinction between task and achievement words, and his claim that "perceive," "see," "recognize" and the like are achievement verbs. Another kind of challenge has centered on the concept of a perception recipe, and the question of whether it can serve in the explanation of how we perceive objects. I shall look briefly at examples of both of these critical challenges before going on to J. L. Austin. I think both challenges are serious enough to throw reasonable doubt on the acceptability of Ryle's positive analysis of the concept of observation, without further explanation on his part.

F. N. Sibley has argued that Ryle did not conclusively show that

seeing is an achievement rather than an activity or a process. Sibley argued that it is a mistake to believe that such verbs as "see" and "hear" are primarily achievement verbs and as such refer only to the successful outcome of activities rather than to the activites themselves. And this means that Ryle had perpetrated the very kind of logical error that he accused the sense-datum theory of having made. The fact is, Sibley said, "The verbs 'see' and 'hear' are not always or exclusively used in achievement senses. They are used in a number of other ways which Ryle either overlooks or at least fails to discuss."[1] In one important sense of the word "see," the "occurrence use," as Sibley called it, "to look at or scrutinize an object for a given length of time, one must throughout that length of time be seeing it. I cannot scrutinize something unless I can, at the time, actually see it."[2] Thus I might say, for example, "I am now seeing a duck's head," or, while looking through a kaleidoscope, "I am now seeing something that I have never seen before." In this "occurrence sense," "see" is not an achievement verb in Ryle's meaning of the word, rather seeing something in this sense is like keeping something in sight. It signifies "the exercise for a period of time, of an ability," Sibley said.[3] Sibley was not claiming that when someone sees something in this sense, he was necessarily engaged in an activity. But the point was that it is a legitimate sense of the word "see" and that it does not have the function primarily of indicating an achievement, contrary to what Ryle maintained. What this points to, Sibley believed, is the conclusion that seeing and other analogous concepts such as hearing, cannot be analyzed

[1] F. N. Sibley, "Seeking, Scrutinizing, and Seeing," in The Philosophy of Perception, ed. by G. J. Warnock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 143. This article originally appeared in Mind in 1955.

[2] Ibid., pp. 143-44. [3] Ibid., p. 149.

as achievements alone. And, further, the conclusion that seeing is not an activity, act, or performance cannot be upheld on the grounds that it is an achievement. Thus, "The issue whether seeing is or is not describable as an activity needs to be reargued with reference to the occurrence uses of perception verbs," Sibley argued.[1]

Another serious challenge to Ryle's analysis of perception has been raised by J. A. Fodor. In an article entitled, "Could There be a Theory of Perception?", Fodor has argued that neither operationalism in psychology nor the objections about mental processes have worn well as criticisms of the more moderate and traditional psychological theory that behavior can be explained partly in terms of mental processes or acts.[2] In particular Fodor focused on Ryle's analysis of the concept of perception in THE CONCEPT OF MIND, since he, quite properly, took Ryle's analysis to be critical of the mental process view.

Fodor accused Ryle of mistakenly supposing that a psychological theory of perception must enumerate only the logically necessary conditions for perceiving common objects. Fodor said, "It would be absurd to suppose that psychological accounts of perceptual mechanisms are intended to be necessarily true or that psychologists and epistemologists hold their para-mechanical remarks to be analytic."[3] Obviously, Fodor contended, psychologists correctly believe that psychological theories of perception need to be empirically verified just as any other scientific theory does. Thus, statements about mental processes are neither taken to be necessary truths by psychologists, nor, by implication, are they necessary truths.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] F. A. Fodor, "Could There be a Theory of Perception?", Journal of Philosophy, LXIII (June, 1966), 369.

[3] Ibid., p. 371.

Fodor believed that Ryle accepted this view because Ryle thought that we need to substitute inquiries into how we use perceptual locutions for inquiries about the psychological mechanisms or processes that are behind perceptual performances, and inquiry of the Rylean sort would end in a necessary truth such as " 'X perceived a haystack' entails that there was a haystack perceived."

Another criticism that Fodor made of Ryle was directed against Ryle's claim that no perceptual or discursive thought need take place in applying perception recipes. Fodor argued that "Once the recipe story is made explicit, it is undistinguishable from a most elaborate conceptualism." For, Fodor contended, "It is unclear how perception is to be accounted for without referring to concepts of formidable abstractness, and it is unclear how the application of such concepts...is to be explained unless one assumes psychological mechanisms whose operations are complicated in the extreme."[1] Thus, for example, the kinds of expectations about the way things look, feel, taste, and smell that are built into perception recipes must be complicated and abstract "since perceptual identities are suprisingly independent of physical uniformities among stimuli."[2]

Thus, consider the case of recognizing a musical composition. Quite radical differences in the way a composition is performed on two different occasions are entirely compatible with both performances being correctly recognized as proper renditions of the same composition. This means that the recipe itself must be abstract enough to take account of different possible renditions. And, normally, this would involve working knowledge of such abstract musical notions as "note," "tempo," and the like, Fodor maintained. Further, the mental operations involved in

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[1] Ibid., p. 378. [2] Ibid.

applying one's recipe for this composition would be extremely complicated.

Of course Ryle was not maintaining that thinking never took place when perceptual recognition took place. But he was maintaining that it was not essentially or necessarily involved in perception. And it was this point that Fodor found difficult to accept. Fodor found it difficult to believe that thinking was not essentially involved in the application of perception recipes to common objects, such as renditions of musical compositions. Even if one does not know how to articulate his recipes or to reveal the conceptual knowledge that he does have, Fodor thought it was clear that concepts of a most abstract kind had to be used in many cases to perceive objects. And if "There is no difference of principle between recognizing tunes and recognizing gate-posts," as Ryle thought,[1] then the same kind of abstract thinking must take place whenever we perceive objects, Fodor believed.

I think enough has been said to show that Ryle's analysis of perceptual recognition was not thought to be free of major error, and that serious doubt was thrown on its acceptability by contemporary philosophers. Some of the difficulty lay with Ryle's half-hearted attempts to explain the concept of a perception recipe. His reluctance to engage in theory-making may have been the source of this problem, though it was hardly an excuse for it.

Another source of difficulty in Ryle's analysis of the concept of perception, is the place in it of the concept of sensation. Ryle believed that perceptual recognition involved the having of sensations. He found that he could not avoid saying that sense-impressions or sensations had to be "received" if we were to see, taste, smell, hear, or touch an object.

[1] The Concept of Mind, p. 233.

However, the fact that he had to include the concept of sensation in his analysis was unsettling to him, for, despite the fact that he thought that sensing was not a kind of perceiving or observing, he did not quite know how to give a positive analysis of what it meant to have a sensation. And he did not like the fact that the sense in which he had to talk about sensations was a highly sophisticated and technical sense, left over from scientific psychology. The problem with talking about sensations in this sense is that we were bringing into our account certain aspects of the para-mechanical, causal theory of perception, a prospect which Ryle found repugnant to his own way of doing philosophy and to his attack against the Cartesian myths. The ordinary understanding of what it means to say that we see or hear something does not necessarily involve the having of sensations, Ryle believed, and the sophisticated theory that he was forced to accept was therefore incompatible with his ordinary intuitions about the nature of perception.

This certainly shows the limitation of Ryle's attack against the scientific-causal theory of perception. Perhaps he was discovering, in the process of criticizing other theories, such as the sense-datum theory, that no positive account of perception could eliminate the concept of sensation. But the value of his own critique suffered as a result since he showed that he could not dispense with the very thing he most criticized these other theories for maintaining. And he discovered that he was at a loss to provide an alternative account which should convince other philosophers that his own criticisms were sound.

CHAPTER NINE

J. L. AUSTIN: THE LINGUISTIC AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ERRORS OF THE SENSE-DATUM THEORY

In 1962 G. J. Warnock posthumously published a series of lectures of J. L. Austin's which he reconstructed from Austin's lecture notes on perception. These lectures, entitled SENSE AND SENSIBILIA, were given in different versions by Austin over a period of years beginning in 1947, mainly at Oxford. While Warnock claimed in the Foreword to SENSE AND SENSIBILIA that it was impossible to be certain about not misrepresenting the details of Austin's lectures, nevertheless, he said, "In all points of substance and in many points of phraseology his argument was the argument which this book contains."[1] I shall follow the general practice of treating these lectures as if they were Austin's own words.

Though there are several lectures in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA in which new territory was opened up in the analysis of our perceptual language, the main intent of the book was to leave us, "in a sense just where we began," Austin said.[2] SENSE AND SENSIBILIA was a strongly polemical book devoted to doing away with certain philosophical theories of sense-perception which, Austin claimed, were "at least as old as Heraclitus."[3] The major purpose of the book was to examine and criticize a kind of "general doctrine" which all of these theories had assumed. This general

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[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. viii.

[2] Ibid., p. 5. [3] Ibid., p. 1.

doctrine consisted of the claim, Austin said, that "We never see or otherwise perceive (or 'sense'), or anyhow we never directly perceive or sense material objects (or material things), but only sense-data (Or our own ideas, impressions, sensa, sense-perceptions, percepts, etc.)."[1] The way Austin went about attacking this doctrine in his lectures was by taking and examining a number of passages from Ayer's THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE, and to a lesser extent passages from Price's PERCEPTION and Warnock's own BERKELEY, books which Austin believed all advocated this general doctrine.[2] What Austin tried to do was to show that these passages embodied "a mass of seductive (mainly verbal) fallacies" and "a wide variety of concealed motives" which illegally set us up for the general doctrine that we directly perceive only sense-data.

When Austin said that the operation of "unpicking" these fallacies and of "exposing" these motives "leaves us, in a sense, just where we began," he meant to indicate that we should not hope that he would supplant the general doctrine by another doctrine, for example, by the thesis of direct or naive realism. Austin explicitly said that he was not "going to maintain that we ought to be 'realists', to embrace, that is, the doctrine that we do perceive material things (or objects)," for this would be, in his eyes, as "scholastic" as maintaining that we ought to accept the general doctrine of the sense-datum theory.[3] Thus, in a manner which generates doubt as to what Austin really believed about perception, one was left with not much more than a promise that by reading SENSE AND SENSIBILIA (or by hearing his lectures) in his words,

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.

[2] G. J. Warnock, Berkeley, A Pelican Book (London: Penguin Books, 1953).

[3] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 3.

> We may hope to learn something positive in the way of a technique for dissolving philosophical worries (some kinds of philosophical worry, not the whole of philosophy); and also something about the meanings of some English words ('reality', 'seems', 'looks', etc.) which, besides being philosophically very slippery, are in their own right interesting.[1]

Of course the irony of these passages is clear; Austin was going to teach philosophers something about some simple English words which would have been absolutely clear to them had they given it some elementary thought. But his attack against the sense-datum theory was meant to be, at the very least, a negative propaedeutic, one might say, to a genuine study of perception.

There is some evidence to believe that Austin thought that before philosophers could begin to make any intelligent statements about any of the issues which traditionally plagued them, and not just about perceptual issues, a massive study of language, or, "a true and comprehensive science of language," as he put it, had to begin.[2] That is, after these critical preliminaries were done with, "an exhaustive and methodical, and ideally, co-operative, study of the full facts of common usage in all traditionally disputed areas" was needed.[3] As I have indicated, Austin himself began the study of the facts of common usage in respect to perceptual language in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA by giving an account of some of the ways such words as "real," "look," and "seem" function in perceptual contexts.

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[1] Ibid., p. 5.

[2] Austin put it this way in "Ifs and Cans," in Philosophical Papers, edited by J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 180; the evidence comes largely from Austin's "A Plea for Excuses," in Ibid., pp. 129-33.

[3] This is Stuart Hampshire's way of putting it, although Urmson and Warnock disputed this. See Hampshire, "In Memoriam, J. L. Austin, 1911-1960," PAS, n.s., LX (1959-60), I-XIV; and see J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, "J. L. Austin," Mind, n.s., LXX (April, 1961), 256-57.

Austin's work in this regard was well-acclaimed even by the most severe of his critics.[1] But, of course, it would be a mistake to suggest that Austin exhaustively considered all of the ways the expressions he did consider are used in such contexts, and, presumably, a great deal more would have to be said before significant philosophical advances could be made in the theory of perception, as far as he was concerned. Hence, after reading his lectures, one is left with the sober thought that besides some remarks Austin made about a few of the words and expressions found in perceptual contexts, philosophers had hardly begun to break the surface of a descriptive examination of our ordinary perceptual language to discover the many distinctions and philosophically important points embodied in it. And this would mean that philosophers had hardly begun to make any substantial advance toward solving what problems there were in the philosophy of perception, if they had begun at all, though we could probably say that they had wiped the ashes away.

In considering Austin's attack against the sense-datum theory, I shall confine my attention primarily to Austin's attack against Ayer's THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE, since this book is the "chief stalking horse" in Austin's general attack. I hope to show that SENSE AND SENSIBILIA can certainly not be taken as a totally devasting attack against the sense-datum theory, as I suspect many people have taken it to be, and as is implied in Lecture I of Austin's book. The soundness of Austin's attack against the general doctrine is vitiated by the fact that the general argument which, Austin maintained, supports this general doctrine

[1] Even Hirst, a strong critic of Sense and Sensibilia, says that we need to "chalk up the gains of the lexicographical exercises," in "Critical Study of Sense and Sensibilia," Philosophical Quarterly, XIII (January, 1963), 164. But J. Bennett argues that Austin's analysis of "real" is faulty, in "Real," Mind, n.s., LXXV (October, 1966).

was made by none of the important British sense-datum philosophers. This argument cannot be found in the work of Price, contrary to what Austin maintained, nor in the work of such other important sense-datum philosophers as Moore or Russell. Furthermore, Ayer had certain reservations about the argument, reservations significant enough to make him doubt its soundness. To the extent that sense-datum philosophers did not actually make this general argument, the general doctrine cannot be said to have been based on this argument at all, and the value of Austin's critique of the sense-datum theory suffers. Certainly it would follow that the general doctrine could not be swept under the rug by pointing out that it was based on a certain argument that it was never based on.

When I say that the general doctrine was not actually based on this argument, I mean that it was neither historically nor logically based on this argument. The immediate historical context of Austin's lectures was the work of Ayer, Price, and Warnock. But Price was restating some of the theories of Russell and Moore, and Austin specifically classified Russell as a sense-datum philosopher.[1] So we must fit Austin's critique into a wider historical context, I believe, to fully evaluate its cogency. In doing so, I think that we shall discover that the general doctrine was not historically based on the general argument because none of these other philosophers ever historically made or accepted this general argument. And it was not logically based on this general argument either since the ontological sense-datum philosophers thought that the general doctrine followed from certain other arguments or "analyses" that they made. I shall not claim that it is clear whether the intent of Austin's attack was to be historical, logical, or both. But it is clear, I think,

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 4.

that Austin had little reason for attacking these sense-datum philosophers for making this general argument; they simply never put the argument together like he said they did, and they never used all of the parts of the argument in the way that he thought they did. In addition, though Ayer was a representative of a unique version of the sense-datum theory, he was not guilty of adopting the general argument either.

I do not want to give the impression that Austin's attack against the sense-datum theory was therefore totally without foundation. There were many individual points of criticism which effectively and incisively demolished some parts of that theory, especially of the linguistic version. At any rate, some of his criticisms had nothing to do with the general argument at all, though the general argument was supposed to be based on certain other doctrines which Austin also attacked. Austin did show quite convincingly that the sense-datum philosophers had often been careless in the way that they talked about perception, and that their language was often misleading. He showed that they had often failed to get their interpretations of perceptual facts right and had missed many important distinctions in addition to inventing many bogus ones as a result. Nevertheless, several of Austin's crucial criticisms were based on a hasty acceptance of Ayer's exposition of the sense-datum theory as an accurate representation of that theory. This tends to lessen the critical value of Austin's remarks, though historically these remarks were accepted by many philosophers in a relatively uncritical fashion.

One critical barrage having little to do with the general argument directly came in Lecture X, for Austin there argued that the sense-datum theory was part of a traditional approach to the concept of empirical knowledge, an approach which, he argued, is basically in error. The

trouble with the sense-datum theory, he thought, is that it is the outcome of a philosophical doctrine which sought to find the incorrigible foundations of our empirical knowledge. This doctrine maintains that empirical knowledge must be based on certain indubitable foundations and that our inferences about the world are derived from these foundations. If these foundations can be described and their relation to our higher knowledge made known, then we shall have answered some of the fundamental problems in epistemology. But Austin was opposed to this doctrine and to the conception of epistemology that he found behind it. And in his opposition to it we shall find, I think, the more lasting significance of SENSE AND SENSIBILIA. Let me turn then to Austin's attack, to evaluate the justice of his attack and to determine what I think he accomplished with it.

The central criticism Austin made of the general doctrine of the sense-datum theory was that it was a "typically scholastic view, attributable, first to an obsession with a few particular words, the uses of which are oversimplified, not really understood or carefully studied or correctly described; and second, to an obsession with a few (and nearly always the same) half-studied facts."[1] "The fact is," Austin continued, "that our ordinary words are much subtler in their uses, and mark many more distinctions, than philosophers have realized; and that the facts of perception...are much more diverse and complicated than has been allowed for."[2] In view of these remarks, it would be natural for us to expect that Austin would have tried to show that Ayer, in particular, was ignorant of these matters, ignorant to the point where it became necessary to discredit Ayer's phenomenalistic version of the sense-datum theory

[1] Ibid., p. 3 [2] Ibid.

completely. And this was Austin's plan, for he attacked many of the bogus distinctions which Ayer made, many of the interpretations which Ayer put on the perceptual facts, and many of the ways in which Ayer used words such as "look," "appear," and "real."

The general structure of Austin's plan was the following: (1) first he tried to show that Ayer's distinction between what plain men believe about their perception and what philosophers believe is not sound (Lecture II); (2) then he took up Ayer's exposition of the argument from illusion and argued that this argument contained a number of bad assumptions and distinctions (Lectures III and V); (3) then he tried to show in what sense Ayer accepted the argument from illusion, and argued that there was a gap between what Ayer officially believed the conclusion of this argument ought to be and what he really believed it to be (Lecture VI); (4) then he argued that Ayer's official belief presupposed a distinction between two different senses of "perceive" and that this distinction was not supported by Ayer's examples (Lecture IX); (5) and finally, he argued that the real motive for introducing sense-datum terminology was to produce a kind of statement which was both incorrigible and evidence-providing and another kind of statement which stood in need of verification, the object being to discover the foundations of empirical knowledge. But this approach to epistemology needed to be done away with, he argued, due to the many misconceptions about the nature of statements that were embodied in it (Lecture X). There were, of course, four other lectures, aside from the first introductory lecture, only one of which was not a part of the attack against Ayer's THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE and Price's PERCEPTION. Three of them (IV, VII, and VIII) contained that examination of a small number of perceptual expressions referred to

before, while the fourth (Lexture XI) consisted of a brief examination of Warnock's book on Berkeley. At the present time I shall neglect these latter four lectures, although I realize that the first three are ultimately the most significant from the standpoint of Austin's own view as to the way in which the philosophy of perception ought to proceed. I will say something about the first three in the concluding chapter.

The first part of Austin's attack against Ayer's version of the sense-datum theory consisted of a detailed examination and rebuttal of the opening paragraphs of Ayer's THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE. In this section of Ayer's book a familiar and well-worn contrast was drawn between what, on the one hand, we normally believe about the existence of material things and what, on the other hand, philosophers are prepared to grant both about this "normal" belief and about what we really perceive. Normally, Ayer said, we think that we perceive familiar objects like tables and chairs, are satisfied that these objects exist, and feel no need to justify our belief. Some philosophers, however, while they usually allow that our belief in the existence of these things is well-founded, do not allow that we ever directly perceive these objects; they claim that we only directly perceive what they call "sense-data."[1]

Austin divided his discussion and criticism of this contrast between the plain man and the philosopher into two parts: in the first part he considered what was "assumed in and implied by" what Ayer said about what we normally believe, and in the second part he considered what Ayer said about what philosophers believe. Austin was critical of Ayer's representation of both sides of this contrast. He believed that Ayer had misrepresented what the "plain man" believed and that Ayer had also given reason

[1] Ayer, The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge, pp. 1-2.

to suspect that what philosophers said ran so contrary to ordinary usage as to be meaningless.

So far as the plain man side of the contrast went, Austin argued that Ayer's passage implied a number of things about what the plain man believed which could not in fact be attributed to him. Thus Austin thought it was implied that the plain man usually believed that he perceived material things, and that when he was not perceiving material things, he was being deceived by his senses. Or, when he was being deceived by his senses, then the plain man believed he was not perceiving material things. Further, it was implied that there really was room for doubt about what was being perceived, whether the plain man felt doubt or not, and that people were sometimes deceived by their senses. But, Austin replied, "There is less than no reason to swallow the suggestion either that what the plain man believes that he perceives most of the time constitutes a kind of things (sc. 'material objects') or that he can be said to recognize any single kind of cases in which he is 'deceived'."[1]

In defense of Ayer, it should be pointed out that he could certainly not have been as naive about what the plain man believed as Austin made him out to be, even allowing for Austin's feigned surprise at Ayer's beliefs. Ayer was certainly aware of the fact, for example, that "material thing" was not an expression which the plain man normally used. Moreover it cannot be inferred from any obviously incomplete list of material things which Ayer mentioned either that the list was intended to be exhaustive of the kinds of things which Ayer or the plain man would have called "material things," or that all of the members of an exhaustive list Ayer might have given would have been sufficiently similar for Ayer or the

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 14.

plain man to think of them as a single kind of thing. Listing "moderate-sized specimens of dry goods," as Austin put it, was no doubt a misleading practice in the sense that it might have left the impression that such goods were all of a certain quality.[1] But it certainly did not imply anything about what Ayer took the plain man to believe; it didn't even tell us what Ayer himself believed to count as a material thing. I think it was unfair to suggest that Ayer also thought that the plain man believed that the cases in which he was deceived were all alike in some way, or were all a single kind of case. Ayer was surely well aware of the variety of ways things could go wrong in perception from the plain man's viewpoint, though his way of talking about the matter may have been misleading.

The difficulty with Austin's criticism is one which often characterized his criticism of Ayer; he would make a number of illegitimate inferences from the way Ayer said something, to what he thought Ayer "really" meant or implied. Then he would assume that this was what Ayer really meant. Of course it was true, as Austin so ably pointed out on so many occasions, that the form of words Ayer used was very often misleading. But Austin was hardly prepared to be sympathetic to Ayer, and when he did find some mistake or flaw in Ayer's thinking, he usually heaped invective on Ayer for being so stupid (e.g., "grotesque exaggerations," "impossible travesty," and "perfectly absurd").[2]

Austin also considered what was implied by Ayer's remarks about what philosophers believed. What rankled Austin was Ayer's use of the expression

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[1] Ibid., p. 8.

[2] Commenting on this practice of Austin's Morris Lazerowitz said, "It is not easy to square the claim that a fallacy is seductive with the charge that it is gross and perfectly absurd." See Lazerowitz, "Austin's Sense and Sensibilia," p. 244.

"directly perceive" for the purpose of noting that philosophers usually did not admit that objects like tables were ever directly perceived. Austin thought that this expression was "one of the less conspicuous snakes in the linguistic grass," and it was, he said, "a typical case of a word, which already has a very special use, being gradually stretched, without caution or definition or any limit, until it becomes, first perhaps obscurely metaphorical, but ultimately meaningless." But, Austin continued, one could not thus "abuse ordinary language without paying for it."[1] And he proceeded to show that the use Ayer made of "directly perceive" was not its ordinary use since ordinarily it was false to say that tables were not directly perceived.

Ordinarily, Austin claimed, there are certain restrictions which are placed on the use of such an expression, restrictions as to the particular circumstances or kinds of circumstances in which the expression can be used. Thus, we can only talk about perceiving something "directly" when it makes sense to speak of perceiving it indirectly. And it only makes sense to say that we are perceiving something indirectly in special cases. So that "directly perceive" is not an expression that can be used as indiscriminately as Ayer was proposing. Moreover, Austin thought that there were restrictions as to the particular sense-modalities to which the expression "directly perceive" applied. "The notion of indirect perception is not naturally at home with senses other than sight," he claimed.[2] Thus it would be difficult to conceive of circumstances in which it would be appropriate to say that we were indirectly perceiving the flavor of boiled cabbage. But further, what philosophers said we could perceive indirectly was not the sort of thing that we could perceive directly; hence

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 15. [2] Ibid., p. 16.

it made no sense to even talk about perceiving these things indirectly, Austin believed. What irritated Austin then was the fact that none of these restrictions were being placed on the philosophical use of the expression in question, and thus sense-datum philosophers were abusing the notion beyond reasonable limits.

What is extraordinary is that Austin should have thought it so remarkable that Ayer would have used the expression "directly perceive" in an unordinary, unfamiliar sense, again allowing for Austin's fabricated reaction to Ayer. Of course Ayer used the expression in this way, and so did Moore, Russell, and Price, at one time or another. This was just the point about using such "technical" expressions; sense-datum philosophers thought it imperative to "stretch" our ordinary meanings, or to invent new ones. They thought it necessary, further, to use a special technical terminology, since they were dealing, they thought, with matters which did not trouble or perplex the ordinary man and which required some extraordinary reflection. It is one thing to be concerned with how it is that the plain man perceives things. Sense-datum philosophers were certainly concerned to analyze what this was. But it is quite another thing to suggest that we should adhere to the linguistic devices which the plain man uses to express what it is that he perceives. The sense-datum philosophers found it necessary to invent and stretch ordinary usage just because this usage could not, for various reasons, do the job as it stood. For this reason it is hardly surprising that they should have used the expression "directly perceive" in an unfamiliar sense.

It is also revealing that Austin should have confined his attention to "direct perception" and "indirect perception" when the sense-datum philosophers were actually prone to use several other, more technical-sounding expressions, such as "direct apprehension" and "indirect

apprehension," "immediate apprehension" and "mediate apprehension," "acquaintance" and "knowledge about." The point is that these other expressions were more obviously technical innovations explicitly introduced in order to analyze or explain certain of the facts of perception, and it wasn't as if these philosophers were trying to abuse ordinary language in doing so. Surely these philosophers stretched common usage quite deliberately, if that is the way we are going to describe what they were doing. But they did so in order to make certain distinctions required by their theoretical explanations of perception and sensation.

At any rate it is extremely unfair to Ayer to group him among those philosophers who used the expression "directly perceive" uncritically, for Ayer himself objected to the use of the expression "direct awareness" in defining what is meant by the word "sense-datum." In fact he admitted that there was a perfectly ordinary use of this expression in which we could say that we were directly aware of objects like tables.[1] And it was not as if he were "belatedly" taking note of this fact, as Austin suggested.[2]

I do think that Austin was correct in insisting that many sense-datum philosophers had not put all of the restrictions on the usage of the expression "directly perceive" with which it may normally have been accompanied. But this was surely only a consequence of the fact that they were not using it in any ordinary way. Ayer was following a usage which had become standard in the philosophical discussions of his day and of the preceding twenty-five or thirty years. And there is no reason to suspect that Ayer was ignorant of the meanings the expression "directly perceive"

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[1] Ayer, The Foundations, p. 60.

[2] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, footnote, p. 19.

had before and during the time when he wrote THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE. The fact is that many expressions in philosophy come to be used in certain consistent ways to mean certain things; they acquire the same sort of legitimacy and appropriateness as has been acquired by technical expressions in the sciences. Special restrictions are invented to govern their application, and these restrictions are normally different from the restrictions governing expressions of a similar appearance in ordinary language, when there are such. It is certainly no argument against the value of these expressions then that their usage departs from ordinary usage.

Austin continued his criticism of THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE by taking up Ayer's exposition of the argument from illusion, for it was this argument that Austin thought was used by sense-datum philosophers to partly support the general doctrine that we are never directly aware of material things but only of sense-data. Specifically Austin thought that "The primary purpose of the argument from illusion was to induce people to accept 'sense-data' as the proper and correct answer to the question what they perceive on certain abnormal, exceptional occasions."[1] Sense-datum philosophers also believed that we always directly perceive sense-data, Austin said, not just in abnormal circumstances. And thus, Austin maintained, the argument from illusion was usually followed up by certain supporting arguments to show what "What we (directly) perceive is always a sense-datum, even in the normal, unexceptional case."[2] Since for a number of reasons, both stages of the general argument for sense-data were mistaken, Austin thought that the general doctrine was not supported by sound evidence and therefore had to be discarded. Austin

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[1] Ibid., p. 20. [2] Ibid., p. 44.

proceeded to critically examine the first stage of the general argument, the argument-from-illusion stage, in Lecture III; the second stage of the general argument for sense-data, in which the supporting arguments were given, was taken up in Lecture V. After looking at these passages, I shall launch a critical examination of Austin's critique, for this part of his attack against the sense-datum theory was intended to cut into the theory very deeply. To understand Austin's critique of the first stage of the general argument, we must look at Austin's exposition of Ayer's account of the argument from illusion.

In his statement of the argument from illusion, Austin claimed that Ayer referred to the now familiar facts that a material thing looks different both to different observers from different points of view and to the same observer in different viewing circumstances. Ayer illustrated these facts, Austin said, by citing a number of well-known examples, such as the elliptical coin of Russell, the bent stick, double-vision, and the like, focusing on the three cases of the bent stick, mirages, and mirror reflections. And Ayer claimed that the conclusion was drawn in each case that what the percipient is really perceiving is not some material thing, but a delusive sense-datum. Thus in the case of a stick which is normally straight but which looks bent when partly immersed in water, it was concluded that since it cannot be both straight and bent simultaneously, at least one of its appearances (the bent one) must be delusive. And then the conclusion was drawn that when it looks bent, there is something that is bent, delusive though it may be, and this was called a "sense-datum."[1]

If we take into account the fact that this kind of argument was called "the argument from illusion," then it must be implied, Austin believed,

[1] Ayer, The Foundations, pp. 3-5.

that all of the cases cited by Ayer were cases of illusions. Yet since the argument from illusion was also taken to establish that some of our perceptions are delusive, it was further implied by Ayer that illusions and delusions were the same thing, Austin thought.[1] But both of these implications were wrong, said Austin, and the argument from illusion traded on these confusions. In fact, hardly any of the cases cited by Ayer were cases of an illusion, Austin believed, and he proceeded to show that this was the case by citing cases of genuine illusion, such as the Müller-Lyer illusion, and by suggesting what an illusion was as distinguished from a delusion.

The most important difference between an illusion and a delusion, Austin said, is that "The term 'an illusion' (in a perceptual context) does not suggest that something totally unreal is conjured up...whereas the term 'delusion' does suggest something totally unreal, not really there at all."[2] Thus when a person has a delusion, we tend to suspect that there is something really wrong with him while we rarely believe that there is anything wrong with a person who is seeing an illusion merely because he is seeing it. Illusions are public affairs against which we may be on our guard, Austin asserted, while delusions are private affairs. And it does not usually make much sense to tell a person to be on his guard against his delusions.

Austin thought that it was perfectly normal that illusions should sometimes be confused with delusions since in some cases people did have different theories about what the facts of the matter were. For example, some people think that seeing a ghost is a case of delusion since they believe that a ghost is something which is conjured up by the person who

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[1] Ibid., p. 22. [2] Ibid., p. 23.

claims to see it, while others think of this as a case of an illusion due to certain light conditions which could trick anyone.

Nevertheless, Austin continued, "The 'argument from illusion' positively trades on not distinguishing illusions from delusions."[1] When the cases cited are taken to be cases of illusions, then there is the implication that something does exist to be perceived, while when these cases come to be also taken as cases of delusions, the implication is that something unreal or immaterial is being conjured up. And taken together, these two implications may "subtly insinuate" that in the cited cases, there really is some immaterial object which we are perceiving. This way of arguing serves to set us up for the conclusion of the argument from illusion, namely, that the object in question is a sense-datum, Austin maintained.[2] Austin was arguing then that part of the plausibility the first stage of the general argument had was directly the result of a certain confusion that existed in the minds of sense-datum philosophers between an illusion and a delusion. And if this confusion had not been present, the conclusion that we are directly perceiving sense-data in the cases in question would not have seemed as appealing, if it had ever occurred to us at all.

As if to confirm his suspicions about the first stage of the general argument, Austin concluded this part of his discussion of the argument by examining the three cases Ayer had cited (the bent stick, mirror reflection, and mirage cases). Austin tried to show that there was nothing in these cases which should call for the "radical solution" of introducing sense-data. In none of these cases, he claimed, was there any need to say that we were directly perceiving sense-data rather than a stick

[1] Ibid., p. 25. [2] Ibid.

partly immersed in water or a mirage of an oasis in the desert.

However, it is worthwhile to note several important points about Austin's criticism of Ayer, points which should help us to place those criticisms in perspective. First, Austin's remarks about what differentiates illusions from delusions were not fully grounded in ordinary usage.[1] It is indeed true that illusions and delusions are sometimes differentiated along the lines that he was suggesting, but more typically the terms "illusion" and "delusion" are used interchangeably even by learned people. The very fact that Austin would admit that different people sometimes called one and the same thing (seeing ghosts) an "illusion" and a "delusion" is at least a tacit admission of this point. Hence there was no ordinary distinction which was at any rate always clearly expressed. This would seem to mean that to some extent it is ordinary language which is at fault, not just Ayer's use of the language; Ayer was following common procedure in stating the argument from illusion. It also shows that Austin was prepared to make or to invent distinctions in order to reform ordinary usage when it suited his purposes. But if we are to accept Austin's suggestions about the meaning of the terms "illusion" and "delusion," it would be difficult to do so on the basis of a technical terminological innovation, since Austin hardly seemed to be in a position to carry such innovations out.

Second, Ayer was most likely looking at the phenomena of illusion with good theoretical motives in mind. And there are, nevertheless, good scientific motives for lumping together the phenomena of reflection, refraction, perspectival "distortion," after-images, and hallucinations with

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[1] This is a point which was made by Robert Brown in his "Critical Notice of Austin's Philosophical Papers and Sense and Sensibilia," The Australasian Journal of Philosophy, XL (December, 1962), 359.

the phenomena of optical illusions. A psychologist interested in perception would typically seek an explanation of the various kinds of perceptual processes, an explanation which would specify the conditions under which both illusions and non-illusions occurred. The concept of sense-data, or the concept of a visual image, or some other theoretical entity, could very well be introduced by the psychologist not to explain away illusions but to help provide a unified theory of perceptual processes, whether those processes be stable or unstable, illusory or non-illusory. The lumping together of the argument from relativity and arguments from bona fide cases of illusions could perhaps best be understood in terms of the psychologist's attempt to explain different cases of perception by the same theory. The definitions of illusions and other phenomena would be embedded in a theory in which the concept of a sense-datum might serve some kind of explanatory function. Most probably, Ayer was not being misled then by ordinary language, but was following the established practices of scientific thinking in psychology, where ordinary usage was, for good reason, not sacrosanct.

Austin continued his examination of Ayer's THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE by considering the second stage of the general argument he thought was used to introduce sense-data. In this stage several arguments were given for the purpose of getting us to accept that what we directly perceive is always a sense-datum, Austin claimed, "even in the normal, unexceptional case."[1] In the first of these supporting arguments, Ayer said that the sense-datum philosopher claimed that there was no difference in kind between veridical and delusive perception. But, the sense-datum philosopher also maintained that if we were perceiving something

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 44.

of a different kind in these two kinds of cases, a material thing in the veridical case and a sense-datum in the delusive case, then we would have expected our experience of the two to be qualitatively different. But we never do notice any difference in the "intrinsic character" of the two kinds of perception, hence we must be perceiving the same kind of thing in veridical cases as we do in delusive cases, namely, sense-data. The second argument was based on the belief that veridical and delusive perceptions may form continuous series which differ only in degree and not in kind, Austin maintained. If the two kinds of perception were perceptions of different objects, the argument ran, we would not expect to find only a difference in degree. Hence we must be perceiving the same kind of thing in veridical cases as we do in delusive cases. And since it is agreed that we perceive sense-data in delusive cases, it follows that we always directly perceive only sense-data and not material things.[1] Austin thought that Price had developed much the same general argument in PERCEPTION. He admitted that Price's exposition of the first argument "is in fact not perfectly analogous; for Price has alread somehow reach the conclusion that we are always aware of sense-data, and here is trying to establish only that we cannot distinguish normal sense-data...from abnormal ones....However the argument used is much the same."[2] And, with this qualification, he went ahead and left the impression that Price was guilty of the same general argument as Ayer.

I think it is important at this point to stop and carefully examine whether Austin was being fair to the sense-datum philosophers in maintaining that they used this two-stage general argument to support the general doctrine about sense-data. I will try to show that Austin's critique was

[1] Ibid., pp. 44-46. [2] Ibid., p. 45.

based on a faulty examination of the way sense-datum philosophers went about introducing sense-data. When the sense-datum philosopher did introduce sense-data by arguments, and they didn't always do so, their arguments did not correspond to the two-stage general argument that Austin found in their work at all. As I have mentioned before, it is not clear exactly whether Austin was contending that the sense-datum philosophers made this general argument as a matter of fact or whether he was maintaining that, logically speaking, this is the way their arguments for sense-data fit together. At any rate I shall point out that whatever Austin's thesis may have been, whether logical or historical in nature, he was mistaken.

What is specifically wrong with Austin's analysis of the way sense-datum philosophers introduced sense-data is this: sense-datum philosophers did not begin their arguments for sense-data by talking about abnormal cases first, and then, by noting similarities between abnormal and normal cases, extend their claim to normal cases. Rather, most sense-datum philosophers, and at least the sense-datum philosophers that have been discussed in this dissertation, began by taking a normal, ordinary case of looking at a penny or looking at an envelope or looking at a red tomato and then described what "went on" when this was taking place. It was thought to follow directly from such a description that we always perceived sense-data, even in abnormal cases. In fact, the discussion of abnormal cases, when it did occur, was taken to substantiate the claim that in all cases we perceived sense-data, and not the claim that in normal cases alone we perceived sense-data. It is true that similarities and continuities in perception were pointed out in respect to some of the normal cases and some of the abnormal cases, but this was not the exclusive way sense-datum philosophers had of arguing that we always perceive

sense-data, and it was at any rate not a prominent way they had of doing so.

To show that these things are true, we only need to look carefully at the work of the three ontological sense-datum philosophers and Ayer. Price is the only one of these first three whom Austin explicitly mentions. And it is likely that Austin would have said slightly different things about the work of Moore and Russell. But I shall try to apply his critique to the work of these latter two philosophers myself in the absence of an Austinian examination. An examination of all of these philsophers will show, I think, that Austin was wrong in his exposition of the way sense-datum thinkers introduced sense-data.

Price was one of the three explicit whipping boys of Austin in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA, the others being Ayer and Warnock. And Price was certainly a very important representative of the "two-objects" version of the theory. A careful examination of Price's PERCEPTION shows, however, that he was not guilty of beginning his argument for the existence of sense-data by using the argument from illusion to introduce sense-data on abnormal occasions and then finishing up by using the similarity between abnormal and normal sense-data to deduce that we always perceive sense-data. The first thing to remember about Price's PERCEPTION is the fact that Price initially introduced sense-data by asking what it is that we can doubt when we perceive (see and touch) a red tomato. In Chapter One of PERCEPTION Price suggested that what we cannot doubt when we look at an ordinary tomato is that a round, bulgy red patch exists of which we are immediately conscious, and this patch he called a "sense-datum." So far as this initial analysis of seeing and touching objects went, it is obvious that Price did not use the argument from illusion at all. In a manner highly

reminiscent of Moore's procedure in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and elsewhere, Price simply asked us to appeal to our own observation of a common object to see that sense-data did exist. We might say that Price gave us a kind of recipe for discovering sense-data ourselves; all we had to do was to follow the procedure he outlined to confirm what he claimed was not ordinarily noticed.

Moreover, Price explicitly mentioned in the Preface and in Chapter One of PERCEPTION that he was going to do just this. Price said in the Preface that one of his purposes in writing Chapter One was "to establish the reality of sensing and sense-data."[1] The main purpose of Chapter One was to get us to admit that there were sense-data in all cases when we perceived something. And this was done both by asking us to consider what it is that we could not doubt in any case of seeing or touching a familiar object and by showing that "The usual arguments against the reality and against the knowability of sense-data break down on examination."[2] A further purpose of Chapter One was to get us to admit that in accepting the existence of sense-data we were really committed to very little. If there was any "first stage" in Price's procedure for introducing sense-data then, it was this one. And there was no mention in it of the argument from illusion and no use of that argument. Significantly, the argument from illusion was not brought up by Price until Chapter Two of PERCEPTION, where Price considered whether it was true that this argument refuted Naive Realism.

It is further revealing to note that in Chapter Two Price did not simply believe that there was only one kind of argument from illusion, as the Austin model of the sense-datum theory would have us think. In

[1] Price, Perception, p. V. [2] Ibid., p. 18.

SENSE AND SENSIBILIA Austin always talked about the argument from illusion. But Price made a distinction between the phenomenological argument from illusion and the causal argument from illusion. Moreover Price believed that it was not the primary purpose of either of these two kinds of argument to introduce sense-data or to get us to accept that we perceived sense-data in abnormal cases. The fact is that sense-data were already assumed to exist in Chapter Two before Price even took these two versions of the argument up. Or, if we think of their introduction in Chapter One of PERCEPTION, then it was already established that sense-data existed so that in subsequent chapters certain conclusions could be drawn about the relation of sense-data to perceptual consciousness and about the relation of sense-data to material things. The motive for introducing both of these kinds of argument from illusion was indeed to refute Naive Realism, yet Price at least suggested that a Naive Realist could as well accept the existence of sense-data.[1] Thus the argument from illusion was not a part of the first stage of Price's argument to introduce sense-data, nor was it a part of any stage of Price's argument, granting that he made an argument at all. I prefer to say that he didn't use an argument so much as he pointed to a procedure which could have been used to discover sense-data. Of course this implied that we could deduce that sense-data existed by discovering the entities which he called "sense-data." At any rate, there was only one "stage" to his procedure and no mention was made of either illusions or delusions in it. Further, the argument from illusion was not used by Price as a way of getting philosophers to accept the existence of sense-data in abnormal cases. Price believed that his analysis of a tomato was sufficient to establish that we always perceived sense-data,

[1] Ibid., p. 27.

in both abnormal and normal cases. There was no need to go on from the tomato-case to any other kind of case.

A related point can be made about Austin's treatment of Price in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA. At one place in his criticism of Ayer's formulation of the argument from illusion, Austin stopped to consider what Price had to say about illusions.[1] Austin noted that Price explained what an illusion was or what "illusion" meant using the concept of sense-data. But, Austin implied, this was a question-begging procedure at that particular point in PERCEPTION, since before Price even began to consider the argument from illusion (and its conclusion that we perceive sense-data in abnormal cases), he had incorporated into his explanation of "illusion" the idea that sense-data existed. On the Austin model of the sense-datum theory, however, the argument from illusion was supposed to prove that sense-data existed in abnormal cases. Hence it would have been logically circular for Price to introduce sense-data before he proved that they existed.

This criticism of Austin's obviously falls wide of the mark, however, since Price already introduced sense-data in Chapter One of PERCEPTION by means other than the argument from illusion. And, oddly enough, Austin later acknowledged that Price had introduced sense-data, presumably before the "second stage" of the general argument, though Austin acted as if this were a complete surprise to him.[2]

If there was any typical way that G. E. Moore had of introducing sense-data then it was to ask us simply to look at an object or objects in some normal perceptual situation and to notice what we were "directly

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, pp. 27-28.

[2] Ibid., p. 47.

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perceiving" or "directly apprehending" in that situation. What he typically said was that we were directly apprehending certain colored patches having different shapes and sizes, and that these patches were "sense-data." This way of introducing sense-data was the one that Moore used in such writings as "The Nature and Reality of Objects of Perception" (1905-06), SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PERCEPTION (1910), and "Proof of an External World" (1939). Usually, after asking us to look at some fairly ordinary objects, he would go ahead and define or indicate in some way what sense-data were in terms of that ordinary perceptual situation, though sometimes he just defined sense-data without "introducing" them in terms of any particular perceptual situation at all.[1] The important point is that the "first stage" and the only stage of Moore's procedure for introducing sense-data was the same as the first and only stage of Price's procedure. That is, this stage did not consist of using the argument from illusion to show that sense-data existed in abnormal cases, but it began and ended with an analysis of an ordinary case of looking at an envelope.

It is instructive to look at what Moore said in SOME MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY to verify that this was true, for these lectures contained the most extensive discussions by Moore of sense-data in his published works. As we noted before, Moore unfolded his views about visual perception in these lectures by taking an example of a normal case of seeing something as a point of developmental reference. He asked us to imagine that he was in a classroom talking to some students, and that he was holding up an envelope in his hand while asking the students to look at the envelope.[2]

[1] See, e.g., Moore, "The Subject Matter of Psychology" (1909-10).

[2] Moore, Some Main Problems of Philosophy, p. 43.

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The question he asked about this situation was, Exactly what is it that occurs when the students see the envelope in his hand? In answering this question Moore began by making the basic distinction of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, the distinction between the sensing of colored patches and the colored patches themselves. That is, he decided that what happened when each of the students looked at the envelope was that they saw or sensed a patch of whitish color of a certain size and shape, etc., and these patches were "sense-data."

This basic distinction was the most fundamental in the logical structure of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, as I have argued above. And all of the other distinctions found in this theory were "derived" from or dependent on this one. Significantly, it was only after Moore made this basic distinction between sensing and sense-data that he went on to make the corollary distinctions of the sense-datum theory: (1) the distinction between different senses of seeing, or between direct apprehension and indirect apprehension, and (2) the distinction between sense-data and material objects. This order of developing his distinctions was not merely a matter of temporal development, but was a logical development; these other distinctions could not have been logically made unless the basic distinction had been made first.

Furthermore, it was only here, at the point where he needed to make these latter two distinctions and not before, that he used the "argument from illusion," or more properly the argument from perceptual relativity. In one sense what the students all saw was the same thing, namely, the envelope; but in another sense what each of them really saw was a set of sense-data all more or less but never exactly similar to each other. The sense-data that each of them saw were not "qualitatively identical," though it was possible for this to be the case. And this meant, Moore

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believed, that not all of the sets of sense-data were the same, for at any rate they all saw a different set "numerically." And this made it an open question, Moore claimed, which set was identical with the set which "really" was the envelope.

Now it is true that Moore used the argument from relativity in this discussion, but his motive for using this argument was not to introduce sense-data. Rather, it was to question which set of sense-data, if any, could be denominated the "real" set, that is, the set containing the real shape of the envelope, the real color of the envelope, and the real size of the envelope. And this means that Moore must already have accepted the idea that sense-data existed, and it means that he was not seeking to establish the existence of sense-data with the argument from relativity. Before you can notice that sense-data are different, you have to notice that there are sense-data. But the way you show that they are different is by noting such facts that are used to construct the argument from illusion. And this argument was then used to make the corollary distinctions of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, not the basic distinction which established the fact that we sensed sense-data which were distinct from our sensing.

Bertrand Russell also used and mentioned the argument from relativity.. notably in THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY and in other writings and lectures for many years after. But again, Russell did not use the argument from illusion to establish the existence of sense-data in any kind of perceptual situation. Russell was prone, if anything, to follow either the example of Moore by introducing sense-data simply as a matter of paying heed to what we perceive in normal cases. Or, he was prone to introduce "sense-data" by definition as a way of clarifying certain features of perceptual

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situations. In most of his early writings before "On Propositions" in 1919, apparently it did not occur to him to doubt the existence of sense-data at all. Normally what he did was just take it for granted that the immediate data of sensation did exist, that we must sense them, that they must be the "ultimate constituents of matter," and that they must have the nature that we ascribe to them, and no argument was used at all to introduce sense-data.

Russell's discussion of perception in Chapter One of THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY is a good illustration of this point. It is true that Russell began that chapter by developing the problems the argument from perceptual relativity raised about the nature of perceptual objects. But he did not use this argument to convince us that we perceived sense-data on abnormal occasions. Nor, for that matter, did he use this argument to convince us that we perceived sense-data on any occasion. Rather, he introduced sense-data by definition, while considering the facts of perceptual relativity and while considering what these facts implied. As he said, "It will help us in considering these questions to have a few simple terms of which the meaning is definite and clear."[1] And the term "sense-data" was one of these terms. The point is that Russell was not using the argument from illusion to establish the existence of sense-data on abnormal occasions, for, he implied, we did not need any evidence for their existence. Bringing up the facts of relativity was intended as a preliminary to considering the nature of matter, and the term "sense-data" was to be used to clarify his discussion. His definition of "sense-data" was designed to clear the air, then, and was hardly a conclusion from the argument of illusion.

In fact if there was any argument that Russell used to introduce sense-

[1] Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, p. 12.

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data, then it was the time-lag version of the causal argument. We might recall the several occasions on which he talked about seeing the sun and about knowing that what we actually see could not possibly be identical with what the sun really was at that particular moment since it takes eight minutes for the sun's light to reach us. This was one way he had of distinguishing between sense-data and physical objects, and of showing that sense-data were causally related to physical objects, just as Moore used the argument from relativity to sharpen the distinction between the two kinds of seeing and to open up the distinction between two kinds of perceptual objects. The primary use of this argument, though, was not, strictly speaking, to introduce sense-data. Rather, the primary use was to make the corollary distinction between sense-data and physical objects and to establish the causal character of the relation between sense-data and physical objects. Even the time-lag argument, however, was not a typical argument to find in Russell's early writings. And, of course, it certainly was not a version of the argument from illusion. Significantly, Austin totally ignored the time-lag argument in SENSE AND SENSIBILIA, to the unjustified detriment of the sense-datum theory.[1]

It should also be kept in mind that at one time Russell thought of the argument from perceptual relativity as an Idealistic argument which

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[1] This point about the time-lag argument was made by several critics of Austin. See Hirst, "Critical Study of Sense and Sensibilia," p. 170. See also W. F. R. Hardie, "Austin on Perception," Philosophy, XXXVIII (1963), 155-56. Ayer explicitly referred to the causal argument when discussing the supporting arguments for the existence of sense-data (The Foundations, pp. 9-11). He took the causal-dependency argument to be one way of introducing sense-data in all cases of perceiving. Austin chose to ignore this argument (see Sense and Sensibilia, footnote 2, p. 46), and while it is an easy criticism to make, then, that he did ignore the argument, it is still true that his own critique of Ayer suffered as a result. Perhaps he thought that his critique of Ayer would be sufficiently thorough without taking up this particular supporting argument.

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showed that sense-data were subjective, mental objects.[1] And this was a view about the nature of sense-data which he always resisted. This idealistic use of the argument puzzled him until about 1914, when he claimed that he had discovered the flaws in it. It was based, he said, on two mistakes, the mistake of believing that the real properties of an object are not identical with any of its appearances because the appearances are too various, and the mistake of believing that since the apprehension of an appearance is mental the appearance is also mental. Russell's theory of public and private space, with its novel view about the nature of sense-data, was designed to eliminate these mistakes. And the argument from perceptual relativity could then be used to show that sense-data are not mental objects. The legitimate uses of this argument would show that we all perceive different sets of sense-data, Russell thought, and that these sense-data are not mental, subjective entities, and that they can be distinguished from physical objects.

I think that these facts about the way in which certain typical sense-datum philosophers introduced sense-data show that the argument from illusion did not have the place in the logical structure of the sense-datum theory that Austin thought that it did, namely, as the necessary preliminary for introducing sense-data in abnormal, exceptional perceptual situations. It is true, of course, that cases of seeing illusions, hallucinations, mirages, and the like are not ordinary cases of seeing things. And it is true that sense-datum philosophers used to talk about these cases as if they had some significance. For example, in "The Relation of Sense-data to Physics," Russell talked about illusions, hallucinations, and dreams, or "abnormal sense-data" as he called them. But the important point is that Russell only talked about these abnormal cases in that

[1] See Supra, pp. 73-79.

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article to show what status they had in respect to normal sense-data and to show what relation they had to material things or matter. He did not use the argument from illusion to introduce sense-data in such cases, contrary to the impression we get from reading Austin. And he did not then continue in the "second stage" by mentioning the qualitative similarity between abnormal and normal sense-data and deduce that we always perceived sense-data.

Price was no exception in this regard either. Abnormal cases of perceiving usually came into his theory after normal sense-data had been introduced, and usually long after. Thus Price only took them up in the process of considering what a family of sense-data was and how these families were constructed into "solids." He talked about 'wild sense-data" as if they could not fit into these solids or families. At any rate, this discussion of abnormal or wild sense-data did not logically become a part of the development of his theory of perception until after he had developed his understanding of what a sense-datum was in general, of what a normal or constructible or stereoscopic or collectible sense-datum was, and of what place these normal data had in relation to material objects and nuclear solids. Furthermore, these wild data were never introduced by the argument from illusion.

I think the facts I have pointed to show, contrary to what Austin claimed, that there weren't two stages to the argument used to introduce sense-data by the ontological sense-datum philosophers, a stage in which the argument from illusion was used to prove that we perceived sense-data in abnormal cases and a second stage in which we were brought to believe that we perceived sense-data in all cases, the normal ones, too. This was not the logical order in which these philosophers inroduced sense-data; they did not begin in this way and they did not end in this way.

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Rather, they typically began by introducing sense-data either by means of some procedure for discovering them or by means of an argument or analysis of some normal, ordinary case of seeing objects in which no use was made of the argument from illusion to prove that sense-data existed. Or, they sometimes introduced sense-data by definition, as a clarificatory device in the discussion of the nature of perception.

However, just because Moore, Russell and Price did not typically introduce sense-data in abnormal cases by way of the argument from illusion, it, of course, doesn't follow that other sense-datum philosophers did not do so, and I am not saying anything here about other sense-datum philosophers. Nor, of course, does anything follow about the unpublished views and remarks of Moore, Russell, and Price, which we can imagine to have been quite abundant. For all we know, it may well have been the case that these philosophers did come to take the argument from illusion to have the function or purpose that Austin and Ayer gave to it. It is clear, after all, that both Ayer and Austin were talking about Price, and Ayer was probably also thinking of Moore and Russell when in THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE he mentioned "those philosophers who have recently concerned themselves with the subject of perception."[1] Yet it is hard to imagine that these philosophers would have privately said something so contrary to their public, published views. At any rate I do not believe that either Ayer's or Austin's exposition of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory was accurate, as far as the published views of the ontological sense-datum philosophers went.

This leaves us then with Ayer himself. What did Ayer think about the argument from illusion and the general argument? Did he use it in

[1] Ayer, The Foundations, pp. 1-2.

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the way that he accused other sense-datum philosophers of doing? And was Austin guilty of taking Ayer's distorted exposition of the arguments for sense-data to be an accurate account when it was not?

The fact is that Ayer had some significant reservations about the arguments he thought sense-datum philosophers used to introduce sense-data. Ayer did not accept the argument from illusion in the form that he found it in the sense-datum theory. Moreover, he followed up his discussion of the general argument for sense-data by an "evaluation" of what was sound in it and what needed to be discarded. If we turn to Ayer's evaluation and to Austin's criticism of Ayer, I think we can see that Austin was being unfair to Ayer, that he did not do complete justice to Ayer's almost unique position as an advocate of the linguistic version of the sense-datum theory.

In looking at Ayer's evaluation of the general argument for sense-data, Austin thought that "We must regretfully note that Ayer swallows without hesitation a great deal in the argument that is highly objectionable; he accepts, in fact, all the really important blunders on which the argument rests."[1] Thus, Austin claimed, Ayer accepted the "bogus" dichotomy between sense-data and material things, the "bogus" division of "perceptions" into delusive and veridical, and the mistaken view that these two kinds of perception were not qualitatively distinguishable. And, Austin implied, these were all "blunders" without which the general argument for introducing sense-data would fail. The question remains, however, whether Ayer's exposition of the general argument in THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE coincided with his own view as to how and why sense-data should be introduced. To be absolutely fair to Ayer, this

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 55.

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question can only be answered by considering Ayer's reservations about the argument from illusion.

If, Ayer maintained, the argument from illusion was taken to establish a matter of fact, namely, the fact that we are never directly aware of material things but only of sense-data, then the argument was not conclusive.[1] The reason why it was not factually conclusive was that it rested on certain assumptions which either could be doubted without contradiction or could not be given any empirical justification. As we saw previously, Ayer continued by suggesting what was really his central point about the argument from illusion and the supporting arguments for sense-data, namely, that to say that we always are directly aware of sense-data is only to make a linguistic recommendation based on certain linguistic considerations, such as the avoidance of ambiguity. Ayer thought that philosophers introduced sense-data because of certain considerations about language; they adopted a particular usage for perception-words to avoid the ambiguities in ordinary language which resulted from talking about perceiving delusions and illusions. They also found it convenient to extend this usage to all cases of perception, Ayer thought. And hence when they concluded that we always perceived sense-data rather than physical objects, they were not making any statement of fact but were recommending a "rule of language" to other philosophers.[2] Thus the questions for which the supporting arguments in "stage two" provided an answer, were purely linguistic questions concerning how we were to talk about the facts rather than what the facts were or how we were to interpret what they were.

In evaluating this position of Ayer's Austin maintained that there was a gap between what Ayer's actual views were and what his official

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[1] Ayer, The Foundations, p. 12.

[2] Ibid., pp. 24-5.

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views were. He said that Ayer's 'way of 'proving' that the whole issue is purely verbal actually shows (what I [Austin] am sure in any case is quite true) that he does not regard it as really verbal at all---his real view is that in fact we perceive only sense-data.'"[1] Austin then went on to show that this evaluation of Ayer was true by arguing that when Ayer referred to the disagreement that arose about the nature of the empirical facts, he was talking about disagreement as to what the facts about sense-data were. He granted that Ayer had not actually used the term "sense-data" in making his point about the linguistic nature of this disagreement, for Ayer used such expressions as "sensible appearances" and "the phenomena" instead.[2] Yet, Austin continued, "The hard fact (for Ayer) is that there are sense-data; these entities really exist and are what they are; what other entities we may care to speak as if there were is a pure matter of verbal convenience, but 'the facts to which these expressions are intended to refer' will always be the same, facts about sense-data."[3] Or, as Austin might have said, the expressions "sensible appearances" and "the phenomena" are just disguised ways Ayer had of referring to "sense-data," though Ayer probably did not intend them to be such. To suggest then that these facts could be described in a language other than a sense-datum language, would have been a sham. And the choice of a language could not be made on linguistic grounds. Since the facts in question were facts about sense-data, it would only make sense to select a language in which the concept of a sense-datum was embodied. There was no real choice between linguistic alternatives, then, and Ayer's actual view did not match his official view.

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, pp. 59-60.

[2] See Ayer, The Foundations, p. 18.

[3] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 60.

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Austin also made this criticism in Lecture X. He said that Ayer's "belief that really there are only sense-data emerges again, more clearly and much more frequently, in the final chapter (of THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE) significantly entitled 'The Constitution of Material Things'."[1] Ayer's official view was that he was describing what material things were made up of in terms of "the reference of words" and that this was not a question of constructing one sort of object out of another. As we saw, he wanted to solve the problem of construction by considering the relations between the sense-datum language and the material-object language. Yet, Austin said, "It is not just that Ayer sometimes speaks as if only sense-data in fact existed, and as if 'material things' were really just jig-saw constructions of sense-data. It is clear that he was actually taking this to be true."[2] Consider Ayer's own words, Austin pleaded. Ayer said, for example, "I can describe the task I am about to undertake as that of showing what are the general principles on which, from our resources of sense-data, we 'construct' the world of material things."[3] Surely this shows that Ayer actually took this to be a factual rather than a linguistic matter.

As I have pointed out above, I think that there was a slight "rift" between Ayer's official views and what was implied by what he actually said later on in THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE. I think that Ayer did eventually retreat from the strict position that only linguistic issues were at stake, and at any rate, early on he retreated from the very strict phenomenalist thesis of mutual entailment between sense-datum and material-object languages. For this reason, it was misleading for Austin

[1] Ibid., p. 106. [2] Ibid., p. 107.
[3] Ayer, The Foundations, p. 243.

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to criticize Ayer the way that he did, for Austin made it appear as if Ayer had consciously been trying to put one over on us. He made it look as if Ayer was deliberately deceiving his readers when Ayer stated that the solution to the construction problem must be linguistic or when Ayer stated that the belief that we always directly perceive sense-data was based on linguistic considerations. But of course Ayer was not trying to deceive anyone at all, and he was openly apprehensive about the fact that he was running the risk of being misunderstood when he used the "metaphor of construction" to refer to his practice in the last chapter of THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE. What Austin might reasonably have said is that what Ayer said in the last chapter implied that the construction program was not a linguistic matter, not that Ayer's actual views were that they were not. If Austin could have attacked Ayer's words exclusively, rather than Ayer himself, then I think his criticism of Ayer on the linguistic point would have been more fair and would have more incisively pointed to some difficulties Ayer was having in carrying out his phenomenalistic program. Of course, no one was more aware of these difficulties than Ayer himself, and he eventually conceded that he had failed to show how a linguistic solution to the construction program was possible.

Another important part of Ayer's sense-datum position was his argument in support of the procedure that he thought sense-datum philosophers used to introduce sense-data in all cases of perception. Austin was curious about this second stage of the general argument since he thought that the sense-datum philosophers and Ayer too adopted a view about the different meanings of perception verbs which was unsound. Austin thought that a prominent part of the second stage of the general argument was the contention that there were different senses of "perceive" and of other

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perception verbs such as "see." Thus Ayer thought that in one sense of "perceive" what is perceived was not necessarily "existentially delusive" but could be "qualitatively delusive," while in a second sense of "perceive," what is perceived could be existentially delusive but not qualitatively delusive. By defining "sense-datum" in terms of this second sense of "perceive," Ayer could talk about perceiving sense-data in both veridical and delusive, or exceptional and normal cases.

Austin was concerned to evaluate whether this contention was well-founded or not. To do so he considered whether the different examples which Ayer provided to exhibit the various senses of perception verbs did in fact exhibit them. Austin's conclusion was that none of Ayer's examples gave any support "to the idea that there are different 'senses' of 'perceive', 'see', and the rest."[1] The reasons that Austin gave to show that these examples did not support Ayer's contention were three: (1) in some exceptional cases, for example, double-vision, it is true that "ordinary forms of words may be used without being meant in quite the ordinary way," but, Austin continued, "such stretchings of ordinary words in exceptional situations certainly do no constitute special senses, still less 'correct and familiar' senses, of the words in question";[2] (2) in some cases, for example, the stick in the water, the examples given were irrelevant to the question of different senses; and (3) in some cases, for example, seeing a star, Ayer brought in an "alleged 'sense' which quite certainly did not exist," Austin maintained.[3]

Austin thought that he had the proper diagnosis and treatment for what had gone wrong with this whole attempt of Ayer's to certify that there were different senses of perception-verbs. Austin said,

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[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 97.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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> Part of what has gone wrong is this; observing perfectly correctly, that the question 'What does X perceive?' can be given ---normally at least---many different answers, and that these different answers may all be correct and therefore compatible, Ayer has jumped to the conclusion that 'perceive' must have different 'senses'---for if not, how could different answers to the question all be correct? But the proper explanation of the linguistic facts is not this at all; it is simply that what we 'perceive' can be described, identified, classified, characterized, named in many different ways.[1]

And, Austin suggested,

> This fact---that we can normally describe, identify, or classify what we see in lots of different ways...---not only makes it necessary and misguided to hunt up different senses of 'see': it also shows incidentally that those philosophers are wrong who have held that the question, 'What do you see?' has only one right answer, for example, 'part of the surface of' whatever it may be.[2]

These passages are very probably the source of the contemporary view that an investigation of the different senses of verbs such as "perceive" and "see" is an outmoded because sterile way to proceed.[3] At any rate, the "fact" to which Austin pointed here is an important one, for I think that he was right in maintaining that philosophers were sometimes so misled by the kind of question they asked that they gave certain kinds of erroneous answers, answers which in other respects seemed quite appropriate.

However, there is some difficulty in fully understanding what Austin finally wanted to say about this matter. After examining Austin's remarks, Robert Brown observed, "What makes a reply to Austin's claims so hard is that they are ambiguous. It is not certain whether he thinks that verbs like 'perceive' have only one sense or whether he merely thinks that Ayer's example do not prove this."[4] If Austin was maintaining that

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[1] Ibid., pp. 97-8. [2] Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[3] See, e.g., Jonathan Bennett, "Real," Mind, n.s., LXXV (October, 1966), 515.

[4] Robert Brown, "Critical Notice of Austin's Philosophical Papers and Sense and Sensibilia," p. 362.

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perception-verbs had only one sense, then he would need to have been more explicit as to what his criteria were for differentiating between the different "constructions" an expression had. And he might also have explained whether he thought perception-verbs were special kinds of verbs since they did not have different senses while other verbs did. Some of these things were not altogether clear. And Austin seemed to be relying on his ability to understand and work with language rather than on a theory about the nature of sense and reference.

Nevertheless, Austin was pointing to certain aspects of the thinking of sense-datum philosophers which had been uncritically accepted for many years. These philosophers had often distinguished between different senses of the verbs "perceive" and "see." And when they did, they usually differentiated senses in terms of the kind of object perceived, i.e., whether material object, surface of material object, or sense-datum. The fact that there were these different senses was rarely questioned by other philosophers. But it was not true, of course, that these different senses were actually a part of our language for talking about what we perceive. And the sense-datum philosophers rarely claimed that they were. In fact, these senses were invented by sense-datum philosophers to do certain jobs. Thus Moore talked about two and later three different senses of "see" because this helped to make clear the kind of relation there was between the object seen and the percipient (either direct or indirect apprehension). Thus, it would be most accurate to say that these senses were invented for theoretical reasons.

Austin was approaching the issue of perception from a non-theoretical point of view, in comparison with the sense-datum philosophers. He was not trying to discover the nature of the relations between perceiver and

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Since Austin thought that a "prominent" part of the argument to introduce sense-data was the "allegation" that there are different senses of perception-verbs, and since Austin believed that this allegation was false, it would be natural to assume that Austin would have concluded that the argument to introduce sense-data was itself seriously questionable.

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The surprising fact is that Austin did not think that this false allegation was a serious matter for Ayer's argument at all. Austin said that though Ayer's argument "is certainly presented as if it turned on this doctrine about different 'senses' of verbs of perception, it doesn't really turn on this doctrine at all."[1] Ayer had claimed that one of his motives for using the particular sense of the word 'perceive' which he did use was to avoid the ambiguities which existed in our ordinary usage for this expression. But, Austin replied, the avoidance of ambiguity was not Ayer's real motive; rather his real motive was "to produce a species of statement that will be incorrigible."[2] And it was this motive that Austin was most concerned with.

Consequently, Austin examined the latter motive in Lecture X, and, in a series of brilliant critical arguments, vigorously attacked what he thought were Ayer's views on the nature of material-object sentences and sense-datum sentences. Austin thought that Ayer believed that "propositions about 'material things' are 'empirically testable', propositions about sense-data are 'observation-sentences'; and whereas members of the first group are not conclusively verifiable, members of the second group are actually incorrigible."[3] But, Austin continued,

> There could be no question of picking out from one's bunch of sentences those that are evidence for others, those that are 'testable,' or those that are 'incorrigible.' What kind of sentence is uttered as providing evidence for what depends...on the circumstances of particular cases; there is no kind of sentence which as such is evidence-providing,...[4]

just as there is no kind of sentence which as such is incorrigible. What

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[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 102.
[2] Ibid., p. 103. [3] Ibid., p. 110. [4] Ibid., p. 111.

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is important, Austin thought, are the circumstances in which a sentence is uttered; it is the circumstances which in large part, if not wholly, determine whether a sentence is true or false, corrigible or incorrigible, evidence-providing or not. Since these circumstances are different in most contexts in which statements are made, it is a mistake for Ayer to suggest that sentences about material things are as such empirically testable or are not as such conclusively verifiable. And it is a mistake for Ayer to suggest that sense-datum sentences are, as such, incorrigible. One cannot discuss the nature of sentences independent of these circumstances.

Take, for example, the sentence, "It's a pig," said Austin. If the circumstances are such that the pig is not actually in view, but I see pig-tracks in the mud, hear some noisy grunts in the background, and smell some pig-like smells, then it is appropriate to say that I have evidence for the statement that there is a pig about. Yet it is not always appropriate to say that such a statement is empirically testable, advised Austin, since the circumstances can rapidly change. Thus the pig might come waddling around the corner of the cornshed into plain view. In these changed circumstances, said Austin, "It's coming into view doesn't provide me with more evidence that it's a pig, I can now just see that it is, the question is settled."[1] Thus, the sentence, "It's a pig," is not as such a kind of sentence for which evidence is required in all circumstances in which it is uttered; it depends on the circumstances in which it is uttered what kind of thing can be done with it. And it follows that it is a mistake to take other material-object sentences like "It's a pig," to be, as such, empirically testable.

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[1] Ibid., p. 115.

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As a corollary to this conclusion, Austin made the point that "It is not true in general that statements of how things are are 'based on' statements of how things appear, look or seem and not vice versa."[1] The evidence that may exist for a material-object statement can be formulated in many different ways; it can be stated in terms of statements about the way things appear, but then again it can be stated in terms of other material-object statements. And, "In general," Austin said, "any kind of statement could state evidence for any other kind, if the circumstances were appropriate."[2]

Austin also believed that it was a mistake to hold that material-object statements as such are not conclusively verifiable. Ayer maintained this belief, Austin said, because he thought that conclusive verification would require the completion of an infinite series of verifications while it is patent that only a finite number could ever be actually completed. Thus we need to settle for something less than conclusive verification in the case of material-object statements, Ayer thought, since conclusive verification could never be attained.

But this belief, Austin said, is just as wrong as the belief that material-object statements as such must be based on evidence or that they must be empirically testable. And this belief goes wrong for the same reasons that these other doctrines about material-thing statements do, namely, "Through the pervasive error of neglecting the circumstances in which things are said---of supposing that the words alone can be discussed in a quite general way."[3] Even if we limit our circumstances to those in which material-thing statements can be and need to be verified, Austin said, there is no reason to conclude that such verification could

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[1] Ibid., p. 116. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 118.

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never be conclusive. Take the case in which you tell me that there is a pig on the other side of the cornshed. How, Austin asked, could it ever be thought impossible for me to conclusively verify this if I decided to walk around the cornshed? In fact it would be ridiculous to believe that any more evidence would be needed for the claim that there was a pig on the other side of the cornshed if I walked around and saw that there was.

The reason Ayer had for maintaining this latter view, Austin thought, was based on his doctrine about the relation between material-thing statements and sense-datum statements.[1] We might recall that Ayer said in THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE that while a material-thing statement entailed statements about sense-data, there was no definite and finite set of sense-datum statements which was entailed by that material-thing statement. Thus the possibility existed that one of these sense- datum statements could be false, in which case the material-thing statement would also have been false by the rules of entailment. Thus verification could never be absolutely conclusive, since no matter how many sets of true sense-datum statements a material-thing statement may have entailed in fact, there was always the possibility that there was some other set of sense-datum statements entailed which contained a false member.

Austin took vigorous objection to this view of the relation between sense-datum statements and material-object statements, calling it "an impossible travesty of verification" and suggesting that it completely misrepresented what verification really was.[2] Austin thought that the sentence, "That is a pig," did not as such entail any other statements of the form, "It looks...," "It sounds...," "It smells..." Austin said, "Though of course we come to have certain expectations as to what will

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[1] Ibid., p. 119. [2] Ibid., p. 121.

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and won't be the case when a pig is in the offing, it is wholly artificial to represent these expectations in the guise of statements entailed by 'That is a pig'."[1] We learn the word "pig" ostensively, said Austin, and there never is a time when in learning to use this word we relate it to a set of statements about looks, smells, and the like. To Austin this meant that verifying that some animal was a pig did not consist of discerning what statements were entailed by a statement like "That is a pig." Rather it consisted of walking around cornsheds, for example, and seeing that some animal was a pig. We needed to carry out certain very familiar procedures, and verification would be accomplished without figuring out any entailments.

Austin also objected to another position about material-thing statements and sense-datum statements which Ayer took up in THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE. This was the position that statements about sense-data are in some way precise while statements about material-things are in some way vague. What Ayer meant by this doctrine was not exactly clear, Austin pointed out,[2] but at least the general contrast was not valid. How, for example, could the sentence "That is a cricket-ball" be vague? What a cricket-ball is, is quite precisely defined, said Austin. And this statement, uttered in the presence of a cricket-ball, identifies that ball in a "perfectly satisfactory" way. What could a speaker make, then, of a request that he be more precise in these particular circumstances? At any rate, Austin continued, 'Why on earth should it be true in general that expressions used in referring to sense-data should be precise?"[3] There is "no necessary connection between reference to sense-data and precision," Austin said, since as "classificatory terms,"

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 125. [3] Ibid., p. 130.

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sense-datum terms might be "extremely rough and general."[1]

Thus just as it was an erroneous view to insist that material-object sentences as such were not conclusively verifiable, Austin also thought that there was "no reason to say that expressions used in referring to 'material things' are (as such intrinsically) vague; and there is no reason to suppose that expressions used in referring to 'sense-data' would be (as such necessarily) precise."[2] And in general, Austin implied, the traditional practice of dividing sentences up into different groups, using the categories and principles that Ayer and other philosophers used, was a misguided practice. It typically neglected to take account of the particular circumstances in which such sentences were uttered or written, and was a good example of the distortion that could result from abstract, philosophical thinking.

The differences between Austin and Ayer on these points centered about the relevance of non-linguistic facts to settle epistemological issues in philosophy. This can be seen by considering their disagreement about the concept of verification. Though Austin did not discuss his view about the nature of verification in any detail, I think it is clear that he thought Ayer was unrealistically trying to make verification a matter of the relation between sets of sentences regardless of the particular circumstances in which these sentences were used. Ayer was, in Austin's terms, concentrating on the sentences alone and not taking into account the fact that these sentences had histories as parts of people's lives. Ayer was relying too much on a strictly logical conception of verification; he was disregarding the fact that verification was an activity that took place in time and that the particular ways sentences were verified were as varied

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 131.

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as the kinds of situations in which people found it necessary to verify sentences. Sentences are actually verified or actually falsified (or neither verified not falsified) by certain individuals in certain circumstances at certain moments in history, Austin implied. Furthermore, these activities depend in turn upon the way in which we learn to use words and sentences in certain circumstances. And, most importantly, the circumstances in which a sentence is used and the uses to which it is put help determine the kind of sentence it is in those circumstances, whether it is verifiable or not, corrigible or not, evidence-providing or not, vague or not, and so on. Ayer, however, was taking verification to be a logical question; a question about the logical relationship between different kinds of sentences. The question he asked was, What are the logical relationships between material-object sentences and sense-datum sentences? Are the latter sentences logically entailed by the former? These questions were matters of logic, not of history. And while history requires some attention to the details of living activities, logic calls for entailment criteria, for example, or classifications of kinds of sentences. To the logician, historical remarks about the life of certain sentences are largely irrelevant, and this is why Ayer would have found Austin's remarks beside the point.

The extent of their disagreement about the proper way to resolve these issues is shown by Austin's comments as to the nature of epistemology in Lecture X. Austin argued that "the real bugbear" underlying sense-datum doctrines was a certain doctrine about the nature of empirical knowledge. The "general doctrine" of the sense-datum theory and the doctrines supporting it really presupposed another more fundamental doctrine, namely the doctrine that empirical knowledge has foundations which are absolutely

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certain. On this view, our dubitable, empirical knowledge about the world (formulated in terms of material-object sentences) is derived by inference from our incorrigible, indubitable knowledge about our sensory experience (formulated in terms of sense-datum sentences). And if an account can be given of the logical relationship between these two kinds of knowledge, then we shall forever rest assured that our empirical knowledge is, after all, laid on solid foundations. All of the doctrines about the nature of verification, the nature of evidence, and the logical relationships between material-object sentences and sense-datum sentences were the result of the philsophical attempt to cement up these foundations and to build a superstructure on top of it, Austin asserted.

But Austin was concerned to do away with this doctrine about knowledge. He wanted to argue that if the theory of knowledge took as its goal the discovery of the foundations and superstructure of empirical knowledge, without any concern for the full facts about the circumstances in which sentences were made and learned, then there was no viable theory of knowledge. And this was, I think, one of the most important points in his attack against the sense-datum theory, though the major portion of his lectures was devoted to destroying the general doctrine and the general argument. It is this point which may, in the end, sink most heavily into the minds of English philosophers, and may cause some kind of revolution in the way the theory of knowledge is done. In the final chapter I shall briefly try to show how this view about epistemology fits into a more general critique of sense-datum theories. I shall also consider the implications of Austin's attack on Ayer against the background of the efforts of the other ordinary language philosophers to effect a critique of the traditional theory of mind, for Austin's views blend well with the views of Wittgenstein and Ryle.

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CONCLUSION

The ontological version of the sense-datum theory was developed in England largely under the influence of traditional, empiricist modes of thinking in English philosophy. This is shown partly by the fact that the perceptual theories generated by the ontological theorists, G. E. Moore, H. H. Price, and Bertrand Russell, were developed along the lines laid down by John Locke, Bishop Berkeley, David Hume, and John Stuart Mill. These influences are most clear in the work of Moore and Russell, the first generation of sense-datum philosophers, for those two philosophers continually went back to the English empiricists both to set the problems of perceptual theory and to work out the answers to these problems. The result was that neither the sense-datum theory nor the perceptual theories built on the sense-datum base were particularly novel in English philosophy. Nevertheless, the problems which Moore and Russell detected concerning the nature of sense-data were problems to which the earlier empiricists had given little thought. And the elaborate faith in logical analysis and the program of logical construction were almost entirely foreign to the thinking of the earlier empiricists.

The fact that Moore and Russell should have looked to the works of these earlier English philosophers rather than to the work of the generation of philosophers who then dominated philosophy in England, is revealing on several counts. It shows not only that Moore and Russell were concerned to turn English philosophy back toward its traditional, empiricist model,

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but also that there were no immediate models in English philosophy that they thought they could turn to for their own thinking. This reversion also provided them with a more subtle way of criticizing the thinking of contemporary idealists than the direct method of conducting a systematic, critical investigation of the works of these idealists themselves. The ultimate result was that English philosophy took a new direction away from idealism, back to the mainstream of empiricist thought which had governed English philosophy for so many years.

Against this historical background, A. J. Ayer was a transitional figure. His own perceptual view was in most respects no more novel than that of the ontological theorists, since he derived some of his views from Moore, Russell, and Price, and some of them from the strict positivists, Carnap and Schlick. Ayer's linguistic phenomenalism was the result of an attempt to fuse the perceptual thinking of both of these philosophical sources. Of course, Ayer thought that he was rejecting the views of the ontological sense-datum philosophers completely, and the persuasiveness of his own linguistic version of the sense-datum theory depended on his being able to show that the ontological approach to sense-data was really linguistic in character, and not scientific, despite what the ontological thinkers thought. Nevertheless, Ayer found it necessary to fall back on the sense-datum views of Russell and Price when it came time to provide actual constructions of material objects, and this shows that he was unable to repudiate the ontological version completely.

Ayer did help clear the air for the linguistic criticism of the ontological version of the sense-datum theory, however. His view that disagreements about sense-datum issues are really linguistic in nature and not factual, scientific-like disputes, was consistent with the view

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that the philosophy of perception should bake no scientific bread. And the thesis that philosophers needed to talk their theories out of existence rather than decide amongst these theories became easier to accept as a result.

Ayer's "linguistic views" did represent a threat to the later-Wittgenstein, to Ryle, and to Austin, however, for these philosophers believed that Ayer and the other sense-datum philosophers had perpetuated many serious errors about the proper nature of the philosopher's concern with language. These errors had become an integral part of the sense-datum theory, they thought, largely because of the approach sense-datum philosophers used in dealing with perceptual issues. The only way the ordinary-language philosophers could effectively destroy the sense-datum theory, then, was to attack the linguistic errors embodied in this approach. Thus there gradually developed, in the late 1940's, the view that philosophers needed to rethink the approach they used to perceptual issues. Philosophers needed to re-examine their technical and non-technical use of language, and they had to become more sensitive to the conceptual scheme backing up our ordinary language.

The view that philosophers needed to rethink perceptual issues on linguistic grounds was part and parcel of a more general and more significant critique which was developing in the thinking of Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin. This general critique was an attack against the whole theory of mind in which these philosophers thought the sense-datum theory was entrenched. This theory of mind had its origins in Locke's AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING in English philosophy, though it was ultimately traced back to Descartes. Of course, Locke had read his Descartes well, and many of the details of his own theory of mind were borrowed directly

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from the Cartesian philosophy. In any case, in one way or another, Wittgenstein, Austin, and Ryle all thought that the theory of mind in England was dominated by its Cartesian lineage, and they all had their characteristic criticisms of this tradition. They all felt that the Cartesian philosophy of mind was in need of major surgery, and they all tried to operate on it in similar ways.

In Wittgenstein's view, the Cartesian philosophy of mind was called the "mental-process view," and the sense-datum theory was seen to be a part of this mental-process view. On this view, sensing was part of a complicated network of mechanistic mental-processes taking place in the mind, and the concept of sensing was given a mental-process analysis. This meant that sensing was defined in terms of certain invariant mental processes or acts which always occurred whenever one sensed some object. And it meant that mental introspection would suffice to reveal these processes for the purposes of such analysis.

Wittgenstein thought that there was something too neat about this view. It enabled philosophers to define and classify mental activities into well-turned categories, but only at the expense of crudity and oversimplification. The sense-datum theory was too simplistic in conception, Wittgenstein suggested, because it tended to gloss over the great richness and variety of both the mental phenomena involved in sensing and perceiving and the physical activities associated with such phenomena; it failed to reveal this complexity in its analyses of mental concepts. Wittgenstein believed that sensing and perceiving were not essentially mental processes, and that they could not be understood by pointing to the invariant mental activity that was presumed to take place in the mind whenever the mind was conscious of anything.

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Wittgenstein also thought that the sense-datum theory was the repository of certain metaphors and bogus distinctions which had a long history in the Cartesian tradition. He argued that the theory was saturated with these metaphors and distinctions, and that a careful examination of their role in the sense-datum theory would reveal their misleading character. Thus he talked about how the sense-datum theory was infused with the distinction between direct knowledge and indirect knowledge, the distinction between direct access and indirect access, the distinction between the inside and the outside, and the distinction between private objects and private experience, on the one hand, and public objects and common experience on the other. All of these distinctions placed certain inappropriate restrictions on philosophical inquiry into perception, restrictions which made it impossible for sense-datum philosophers to give a true account of the nature of perception.

Wittgenstein thought that such a true account could only begin when philosophers turned their attention to mental language instead of to their inner, mental experience. Philosophers had to effect a complete revolution, so to speak, away from inner experience, toward language and the activities accompanying the use of language. This meant that philosophers had to describe the way mental expressions were actually used, and they had to look at the manifold activities of a non-linguistic sort which took place when such linguistic behavior occurred. In the context of the mentalistic thinking of the sense-datum philosophers, this aspect of Wittgenstein's positive thinking must have looked strongly behavioristic, but Wittgenstein never denied that there were inner, private experiences and mental states that existed on the occasion of perception and sensation. Rather, what he wanted to argue was that we could not understand the

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concepts of sensation and perception solely or essentially in terms of such private mental experiences. Since the sense-datum theory used private experience as the basis for its account of these concepts, the sense-datum theory did the very thing that Wittgenstein found objectionable.

Another aspect of Wittgenstein's critique of the sense-datum theory and the Cartesian philosophy of mind was his view that philosophy must be therapeutic. In view of the fact that the Cartesian theory had dominated English philosophy since the middle of the seventeenth century and the fact that the sense-datum theory was Cartesian throughout, the call for therapy in philosophy was not without its subversive qualities. It may be that Wittgenstein himself had, in his earlier TRACTATUS period, been so taken up with the Cartesian theory of mind that he had to slowly talk himself out of it. However, this was his own peculiar way of indirectly attacking the thinking of other philosophers too. It was like saying that philosophy had been taken with a certain mental illness for so long, that one could no longer rationally cure the patient of his malady by giving arguments to convince him that he had neurotic symptoms. Rather one had now to treat it as a serious mental psychosis, by applying some more drastic therapeutic technique, such as electric shock therapy. It was almost as if Wittgenstein were recommending that philosophers not embark on positive analyses of mental concepts unless this had the effect of removing the specific myths and metaphors dominating the thinking of particular philosophers on particular issues. However, since the illness had gotten out of hand, in practice this meant that the whole theory of mind needed to be redone.

Ryle was more explicit about tracing the ills of the sense-datum theory back to Descartes. For he found it to be part of the Official

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Doctrine of the mind, and the Official Doctrine for him was a combination of doctrines, superstitions, and myths which had filtered down into ordinary language and thought from the Cartesian philosophers. In fact, the extent to which a philosophical theory has become entrenched, for Ryle, was indicated by the extent to which it was found in ordinary language. But the Official Doctrine was also well entrenched in philosophical theories of perception, too, and the sense-datum theory was no exception. Many of these philosophical theories maintained some sort of causal-scientific view about perception, and many of them were based on the Cartesian dualism between mind and matter. The concept of a private sensation viewed as the last link in the causal chain beginning with physical matter, was a hold-over of the Ghost in the Machine Doctrine, and the sense-datum theory made the mistake of believing in such a ghostly object.

Ryle's attack against the traditional concept of perceiving was very similar to Wittgenstein's, for he too thought that the traditional view analyzed perceiving and the other concepts of sense-perception in terms of mental processes. Ryle countered this view by arguing that perceiving is not an act, experience, process, or mental performance of any sort, but it is rather the termination of a process. This is clear, Ryle argued, from an examination of the meaning of certain perceptual verbs. If we look carefully enough at these verbs, we will see that the sense-datum treatment of them made us say certain things which are logically absurd. The sense-datum terminology, Ryle thought, cultivated a series of linguistic mistakes that were backed by the mental-process view. And thus there was need for a re-examination of the logic of mental words, Ryle claimed. We needed to look hard at our ordinary language and at the language of philosophers, to become familiar with the Cartesian myths in it

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Ryle's interest in the logic of perceptual verbs coincided nicely with Austin's interest in such ordinary verbs as "looks," "appears," and "seems." Austin obviously thought that real progress in the theory of perception lay in a careful examination of our ordinary uses of perception verbs, too. Austin's approach to the sense-datum theory, however, was not as theory-bound as Wittgenstein and Ryle's. Austin rarely talked about the need for a wholesale attack on ordinary language, though there is evidence to believe that he felt this was needed. In any event Austin rarely talked about the need to wipe out a general theory of the mind, and he never talked about replacing the Cartesian theory with some other theory.

Nevertheless, Austin did see the sense-datum theory against the background of a certain doctrine that he found in Descartes and others, and he did attack a theory of knowledge which descended, he thought, "directly from Descartes."[1] This made the sense-datum theory part of the more general theory that knowledge has certain incorrigible foundations which provide the base for inferences and for evidence. This theory was expressed in terms of certain distinctions which Austin vigorously attacked. Thus, in the manner of Wittgenstein, Austin criticized the distinctions between sense-data and material-objects, between delusive and veridical perception, between direct and indirect perception, between sense-datum and material-object sentences, between corrigible and incorrigible sentences, and between evidence-providing and non-evidence-providing sentences. And he argued that the theory of knowledge, if there was to be such, could not reasonably be based on these erroneous distinctions.

[1] Austin, Sense and Sensibilia, p. 104.

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One thing which all three of these philosophers had in common, in their evaluation of the sense-datum theory, was their view as to how the theory had to be overcome. They all believed, in varying degrees, that we needed a new philosophical approach to the concept of mind, one which would be conscious of the fact that the variety of mental phenomena is enormously rich, and that the complexity of these phenomena cannot be crudely glossed over in shallow definitions of mental processes. The examination of ordinary language was designed to get philosophers to realize that these phenomena are complex, for ordinary language provided the initial source of data for the understanding of these phenomena. As applied to the theory of perception, these philosophers were maintaining that traditional theories of perception tended to make the concepts of perception look "more homogeneous, simpler, and tidier than they really are," as G. J. Warnock declared.[1] They tended to make perception a "single, unitary phenomenon." But this kind of thinking had to be eradicated from the philosophy of mind. We had to realize that perception-verbs and perceptual descriptions have a variety of uses and that the ways in which perception takes place are as various as the ways in which human beings can react and behave in the world. We had to see that we make perceptual statements in a great variety of human situations, and that an understanding of these situations, or the particular circumstances in which we made these statements, is crucial in understanding the concept of perception. Without such understanding, we got only the abstractions of the definists, and little edification about the perceptual life as it really is.

This, then, was the task which Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Austin left for other philosophers to resolve. In view of the vast number of things

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[1] Warnock, The Philosophy of Perception, p. 6.

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they thought had to be done, and in view of the conceptual revolution that had to come before the Cartesian philosophy would disappear from philosophy, it is understandable why Warnock, a disciple of Austin, should have recently discovered so much silence about the issue of perception amongst the younger philosophers in England.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 7.

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