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THE MONIST

ON THE NATURE OF ACQUAINTANCE.

II.

NEUTRAL MONISM.

“NEUTRAL MONISM” — as opposed to idealistic monism and materialistic monism—is the theory that the things commonly regarded as mental and the things commonly regarded as physical do not differ in respect of any intrinsic property possessed by the one set and not by the other, but differ only in respect of arrangement and context. The theory may be illustrated by comparison with a postal directory, in which the same names come twice over, once in alphabetical and once in geographical order; we may compare the alphabetical order to the mental, and the geographical order to the physical. The affinities of a given thing are quite different in the two orders, and its causes and effects obey different laws. Two objects may be connected in the mental world by the association of ideas, and in the physical world by the law of gravitation. The whole context of an object is so different in the mental order from what it is in the physical order that the object itself is thought to be duplicated, and in the mental order it is called an “idea,” namely the idea of the same object in the physical order. But this duplication is a mistake: “ideas” of chairs and tables are identical with chairs and tables, but are

considered in their mental context, not in the context of physics.

Just as every man in the directory has two kinds of neighbors, namely alphabetical neighbors and geographical neighbors, so every object will lie at the intersection of two causal series with different laws, namely the mental series and the physical series. "Thoughts" are not different in substance from "things"; the stream of my thoughts is a stream of things, namely of the things which I should commonly be said to be thinking *of*; what leads to its being called a stream of *thoughts* is merely that the laws of succession are different from the physical laws. In my mind, Cæsar may call up Charlemagne, whereas in the physical world the two were widely sundered. The whole duality of mind and matter, according to this theory, is a mistake; there is only one kind of *stuff* out of which the world is made, and this stuff is called mental in one arrangement, physical in the other.¹

A few quotations may serve to make the position clearer.

Mach says (*op. cit.*, p. 14):

"That traditional gulf between physical and psychological research, accordingly, exists only for the habitual stereotyped method of observation. A color is a physical object so long as we consider its dependence upon its luminous source, upon other colors, upon heat, upon space, and so forth. Regarding, however, its dependence upon the retina . . . , it becomes a psychological object, a sensation. Not the subject, but the direction of our investigation, is different in the two domains."

"The primary fact is not the *I*, the ego, but the ele-

¹For statements of this theory, see William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, Longmans, 1912, especially the first of these essays, "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" See also Mach, *Analysis of the Sensations*, Chicago, 1897 (the original was published in 1886). Mach's theory seems to be substantially the same as James's; but so far as I know James does not refer to him on this subject, so that he must have reached his conclusions independently of Mach. The same theory is advocated in Perry's *Present Philosophical Tendencies* and in *The New Realism* (1912).

ments (sensations). The elements *constitute* the *I*. *I* have the sensation green, signifies that the element green occurs in a given complex of other elements (sensations, memories). When *I* cease to have the sensation green, when *I* die, then the elements no longer occur in their ordinary, familiar way of association. That is all. Only an ideal mental-economical unity, not a real unity, has ceased to exist.

"If a knowledge of the connection of the elements does not suffice us, and we ask, *Who* possesses this connection of sensations, *Who* experiences the sensations, then we have succumbed to the habit of subsuming every element (every sensation) under some unanalyzed complex" (pp. 19-20).

"Bodies do not produce sensations, but complexes of sensations (complexes of elements) make up bodies. If to the physicist bodies appear the real abiding existences, while sensations are regarded merely as their evanescent transitory show, the physicist forgets, in the assumption of such a view, that all bodies are but thought-symbols for complexes of sensations (complexes of elements)" (p. 22).

"For us, therefore, the world does not consist of mysterious entities, which by their interaction with another equally mysterious entity, the ego, produce sensations which alone are accessible. For us, colors, sounds, spaces, times, are the ultimate elements, whose given connection it is our business to investigate" (p. 23).

Mach arrived at his opinions through physics. James, whose opinions are essentially the same, arrived at them through psychology. In his *Psychology* they are not yet to be found, though there is a certain approach to them. The various articles containing the opinions which concern us at present are collected in the posthumous book called

Essays in Radical Empiricism. The following quotations will, I hope, serve to make it clear what these opinions are.

"‘Consciousness,’" says James, "is the name of a non-entity, and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumor left behind by the disappearing ‘soul’ upon the air of philosophy. For twenty years past² I have mistrusted ‘consciousness’ as an entity; for seven or eight years past I have suggested its non-existence to my students, and tried to give them its pragmatic equivalent in realities of experience. It seems to me that the hour is ripe for it to be openly and universally discarded.

"To deny plumply that ‘consciousness’ exists seems so absurd on the face of it—for undeniably ‘thoughts’ do exist—that I fear some readers will follow me no farther. Let me then immediately explain that I mean only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function. There is, I mean, no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made, out of which our thoughts of them are made; but there is a function of experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is involved. That function is *knowing*" (pp. 2-4).

"My thesis is that if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff ‘pure experience,’ then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its ‘terms’ becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known" (p. 4).

After explaining the view, which he rejects, that ex-

² This article was first published in 1904.

perience contains an essential opposition of subject and object, he proceeds:

"Now my contention is exactly the reverse of this. *Experience, I believe, has no such inner duplicity: and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition*—the addition, to a given concrete piece of it, of other sets of experiences, in connection with which its use or function may be of two different kinds. The paint will also serve here as an illustration. In a pot in a paint-shop, along with other paints, it serves in its entirety as so much saleable matter. Spread on a canvas, with other paints around it, it represents, on the contrary, a feature in a picture and performs a spiritual function. Just so, I maintain, does a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of 'consciousness'; while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective 'content.' In a word, in one group it figures as a thought, in another group as a thing. And, since it can figure in both groups simultaneously, we have every right to speak of it as subjective and objective both at once" (pp. 9-10; the italics are in the original).

"Consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being. *The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations—these relations themselves being experiences—to one another*" (p. 25; the italics are in the original).

James explains, a few pages later, that a vivid image of fire or water is just as truly hot or wet as physical fire or water. The distinction, he says, lies in the fact that the imagined fire and water are not causally operative like the "real" fire and water. "Mental fire is what won't burn

real sticks; mental water is what won't necessarily (though of course it may) put out even a mental fire. Mental knives may be sharp, but they won't cut real wood" (p. 33).

"The central point of the pure-experience theory is that 'outer' and 'inner' are names for two groups into which we sort experiences according to the way in which they act upon their neighbors. Any one 'content,' such as *hard*, let us say, can be assigned to either group" (p. 139).

Finally he comes to the alleged introspective certainty of consciousness. But his introspective deliverance is not the usual one. In himself, he says, "the stream of thinking (which I recognize emphatically as a phenomenon) is only a careless name for what, when scrutinized, reveals itself to consist chiefly of the stream of my breathing. The 'I think' which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects, is the 'I breathe' which actually does accompany them. There are other internal facts besides breathing. . . . and these increase the assets of 'consciousness' so far as the latter is subject to immediate perception; but breath, which was ever the original of 'spirit,' breath moving outwards, between the glottis and the nostrils, is, I am persuaded, the essence out of which philosophers have constructed the entity known to them as consciousness" (p. 37).

In order to understand James's theory, it is necessary to consider more in detail his account of 'knowing.' Mere seeing and hearing, and sensation generally, he does not call 'knowing.' In all the cases where those who hold a different theory would say we have *direct* knowledge, there is, in James's view, no knowledge at all, but merely the presence of the thing itself as one of the constituents of the mind which is mistakenly supposed to know the thing. Knowing, according to him, is an external relation between two bits of experience, consisting in the fact that one of them leads to the other by means of certain intermediaries.

The following illustration aptly introduces his account of knowing:

"Suppose me to be sitting here in my library at Cambridge, at ten minutes' walk from 'Memorial Hall,' and to be thinking truly of the latter object. My mind may have before it only the name, or it may have a clear image, or it may have a very dim image of the hall, but such intrinsic differences in the image make no difference in its cognitive function. Certain *extrinsic* phenomena, special experiences of conjunction, are what impart to the image, be it what it may, its knowing office.

"For instance, if you ask me what hall I mean by my image, and I can tell you nothing; or if I fail to point or lead you towards the Harvard Delta; or if, being led by you, I am uncertain whether the hall I see be what I had in mind or not; you would rightly deny that I had 'meant' that particular hall at all, even though my mental image might to some degree have resembled it. The resemblance would count in that case as coincidental merely, for all sorts of things of a kind resemble one another in this world without being held for that reason to take cognizance of one another.

"On the other hand, if I can lead you to the hall, and tell you of its history and present uses; if in its presence I feel my idea, however imperfect it may have been, to have led hither and to be now *terminated*; if the associates of the image and of the felt hall run parallel, so that each term of the one context corresponds serially, as I walk, with an answering term of the other; why then my soul was prophetic, and my idea must be, and by common consent would be, called cognizant of reality. That percept was what I *meant* . . .

"In this continuing and corroborating, taken in no transcendental sense, but denoting definitely felt transi-

tions, *lies all that the knowing of a percept by an idea can possibly contain or signify*" (pp. 54-56).

It will be observed that, according to the above account, he usually ceases to "know" Memorial Hall when he reaches it; he only "knows" it while he has ideas which lead or enable him to perceive it by taking suitable steps. It is, however, possible, apparently, to regard an experience as "knowing" itself in certain circumstances. In an enumeration of cases, James says:

"Either the knower and the known are:

"1. the self-same piece of experience taken twice over in different contexts: or they are

"2. two pieces of *actual* experience belonging to the same subject, with definite tracts of conjunctive transitional experience between them; or

"3. the known is a *possible* experience either of that subject or another, to which the said conjunctive transitions *would* lead, if sufficiently prolonged" (p. 53).

In a later illustration, he says:

"To call my present idea of my dog, for example, cognitive of the real dog means that, as the actual tissue of experience is constituted, the idea is capable of leading into a chain of other experiences on my part that go from next to next and terminate at last in vivid sense-perceptions of a jumping, barking, hairy body. Those *are* the real dog, the dog's full presence, for my common sense" (p. 198).

And again: "Should we ever reach absolutely terminal experiences, experiences in which we were all agreed, which were superseded by no revised continuations, these would not be *true*; they would be *real*, they would simply *be* Only such *other* things as led to these by satisfactory conjunctions would be 'true' " (p. 204).

Before proceeding to examine the substantial truth or falsehood of James's theory, we may observe that his use of the word "experience" is unfortunate, and points to the

lingering taint of an idealistic ancestry. This word is full of ambiguity; it inevitably suggests an experiencing subject; it hints at some common quality, "being experienced," in all the constituents of the world, whereas there is reason to believe that no such common quality is to be found. This word is abandoned by Professor Perry, whose chapters on "A realistic theory of mind" and "A realistic theory of knowledge"³ give an admirable account of the Mach-James hypothesis. Nevertheless, even in his account, as in the whole doctrine, it seems possible to detect the unconscious influence of an idealistic habit of mind, persisting involuntarily after the opinions upon which it was based have been abandoned. But this can only be made clear by a detailed examination of the grounds for and against the whole theory of neutral monism.

In favor of the theory, we may observe, first and foremost, the very notable simplification which it introduces. That the things given in experience should be of two fundamentally different kinds, mental and physical, is far less satisfactory to our intellectual desires than that the dualism should be merely apparent and superficial. Occam's razor, "*entia non multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*," which I should regard as the supreme methodological maxim in philosophizing, prescribes James's theory as preferable to dualism if it can possibly be made to account for the facts. Again, "matter," which in Descartes's time was supposed to be an obvious datum, has now, under the influence of scientific hypotheses, become a remote super-sensuous construction, connected, no doubt, with sense, but only through a long chain of intermediate inferences. What is immediately present in sense, though obviously in some way presupposed in physics, is studied rather in psychology than in physics. Thus we seem to have here, in sense, a neutral ground, a watershed, from which we may pass either to

³ Chaps. XII and XIII of *Present Philosophical Tendencies*.

"matter" or to "mind," according to the nature of the problems we choose to raise.⁴

The ambiguous status of what is present in sense is illustrated by the difficulties surrounding the notion of "space." I do not intend now to attempt a solution of these difficulties; I wish only to make them felt, lest it should seem as though space afforded a clear distinction between the material and the mental. It is still sometimes thought that matter may be defined as "what is in space," but as soon as "space" is examined, it is found to be incredibly ambiguous, shifting and uncertain. Kant's *a priori* infinite given whole, which merely expresses our natural beliefs whenever the difficult disintegrations of analysis escape from our memories, has suffered a series of shattering blows from the most diverse quarters. The mathematicians have constructed a multiplicity of possible spaces, and have shown that many logical schemes would fit the empirical facts. Logic shows that space is not "*the* subject-matter of geometry," since an infinite number of subject-matters satisfy any given kind of geometry. Psychology disentangles the contributions of various senses to the construction of space, and reveals the all-embracing space of physics as the outcome of many empirically familiar correlations. Thus the space of actual experience is appropriated by psychology, the space of geometry is appropriated by logic, and the space of physics is left halting between them in the humbled garb of a working hypoth-

⁴The neutrality of sensation in orthodox philosophy may be illustrated by the following quotation from Professor Stout's *Manual of Psychology*, p. 133: "If we compare the color *red* as a quality of a material object with the color *red* as a quality of the corresponding sensation, we find that redness as immediately perceived is an attribute common to both. The difference lies in the different relations into which it enters in the two cases. As a quality of the thing, it is considered in relation to other qualities of the thing,—its shape, texture, flavor, odor, etc. As a psychical state, it is considered as a peculiar modification of the consciousness of the percipient, in relation to the general flow of his mental life." There seems in this passage an acceptance, as regards sensation, of the doctrines of neutral monism which Professor Stout would be far from adopting generally.

esis. It is not in "space," therefore, that we can find a criterion to distinguish the mental and the physical.

A large part of the argument in favor of neutral monism, as stated by its advocates, consists in a polemic against the view that we know the external world through the medium of "ideas," which are mental. I shall consider this view in the next part; for the present, I wish only to say that, as against this view, I am in agreement with neutral monism. I do not think that, when an object is known to me, there is in my mind something which may be called an "idea" of the object, the possession of which constitutes my knowledge of the object. But when this is granted, neutral monism by no means follows. On the contrary, it is just at this point that neutral monism finds itself in agreement with idealism in making an assumption which I believe to be wholly false. The assumption is that, *if anything is immediately present to me, that thing must be part of my mind*. The upholders of "ideas," since they believe in the duality of the mental and the physical, infer from this assumption that only ideas, not physical things, can be immediately present to me. Neutral monists, perceiving (rightly, as I think) that constituents of the physical world can be immediately present to me, infer that the mental and the physical are composed of the same "stuff," and are merely different arrangements of the same elements. But if the assumption is false, both these opposing theories may be false, as I believe they are.

Before attempting a refutation of neutral monism, we may still further narrow the issue. Non-cognitive mental facts—feeling, emotion, volition—offer *prima facie* difficulties to which James offers a *prima facie* answer. His answer might be discussed, and might prove tenable or untenable. But as we are concerned with the theory of *knowledge*, we will ignore the non-cognitive part of the problem, and consider only what is relevant to knowledge.

It is in this sphere that his theory is important to us, and in this sphere that we must make up our minds as to its truth or falsehood.

Apart from objections depending upon argument, there is an initial difficulty in the view that there is nothing cognitive in the mere presence of an object to the mind. If I see a particular patch of color, and then immediately shut my eyes, it is at least possible to suppose that the patch of color continues to exist while my eyes are shut; so far, James would agree. But while my eyes are open, the patch of color is one of the contents of my momentary experience, whereas when my eyes are shut it is not. The difference between being and not being one of the contents of my momentary experience, according to James, consists in experienced relations, chiefly causal, to other contents of my experience. It is here that I feel an insuperable difficulty. I cannot think that the difference between my seeing the patch of red, and the patch of red being there unseen, consists in the presence or absence of relations between the patch of red and other objects of the same kind. It seems to me possible to imagine a mind existing for only a fraction of a second, seeing the red, and ceasing to exist before having any other experience. But such a supposition ought, on James's theory, to be not merely improbable, but meaningless. According to him, things become parts of my experience in virtue of certain relations to each other; if there were not a system of interrelated things experienced by me, there could not be one thing experienced by me. To put the same point otherwise: it seems plain that, without reference to any other content of my experience, at the moment when I see the red I am acquainted with it in some way in which I was not acquainted with it before I saw it, and in which I shall not be acquainted with it when it ceases to be itself present in memory, however much I may be able to recall various facts which would enable me to

see it again if I chose. This acquaintance which I have with what is part of my momentary experience seems to deserve to be called cognitive, with a more indefeasible right than any connected ideas such as James describes in speaking of Memorial Hall.

I shall return to the above difficulty, which seems to me the main objection to neutral monism, when I come to consider how the contents of my momentary experience are to be distinguished from other things; in this connection, the difficulty will take a more general form, and will raise questions which can be better considered after various more detailed difficulties have been dealt with.

The first difficulty which seems to require an answer is as to the nature of *judgment* or *belief*, and more particularly of erroneous belief. Belief differs from sensation in regard to the nature of what is before the mind: if I believe, for example, "that to-day is Wednesday," not only no sensation, but no presentation of any kind, can give the same objective content as is involved in my belief. This fact, which is fairly obvious in the above instance, is obscured, I think, by the unconscious habit of dwelling upon existential beliefs. People are said to believe in God, or to disbelieve in Adam and Eve. But in such cases what is believed or disbelieved is that there is an entity answering to a certain description. This, which can be believed or disbelieved, is quite different from the actual entity (if any) which does answer to the description. Thus the matter of belief is, in all cases, different in kind from the matter of sensation or presentation, and error is in no way analogous to hallucination. A hallucination is a fact, not an error; what is erroneous is a judgment based upon it. But if I believe that to-day is Wednesday when in fact to-day is Tuesday, "that to-day is Wednesday" is not a fact. We cannot find anywhere in the physical world any entity corresponding to this belief. What idealists have

said about the creative activity of mind, about relations being due to our relating synthesis, and so on, seems to be true in the case of error; to me, at least, it is impossible to account for the occurrence of the false belief that to-day is Wednesday, except by invoking something not to be found in the physical world.

In *The New Realism*⁵ there is an essay called "A realistic theory of truth and error," by W. P. Montague. It will serve to illustrate the argument if we examine what is said on error in the course of this essay.

"The true and the false," says Mr. Montague, "are respectively the real and the unreal, considered as objects of a possible belief or judgment" (p. 252).

There is nothing unusual in this definition, yet it suffers from a defect so simple and so fundamental that it is amazing how so many philosophers can have failed to see it. The defect is that there is no such thing as the unreal, and therefore, by the definition, there can be no such thing as the false; yet it is notorious that false beliefs do occur. It is possible, however, that Mr. Montague might maintain that there are unreal things as well as real ones, for with him "real" is definable. His definition is as follows:

"The real universe consists of the space-time system of existents, together with all that is presupposed by that system" (p. 255).

He proceeds at once to deduce his view of the unreal:

"And as every reality can be regarded as a true identity-complex or proposition, and as each proposition has one and only one contradictory, we may say that the remainder of the realm of subsistent objects [i. e., the unreal] must consist of the false propositions or unrealities, particular and universal, which contradict the true propositions comprising reality" (*ibid.*).

From the above it appears that, according to Mr. Mon-

⁵ By the American Six Realists, New York and London, 1912.

tague, (1) every reality is a proposition; (2) false propositions subsist as well as true ones; (3) the unreal is the class of false propositions. We cannot now pursue these topics, which belong to logic. But for reasons which I have set forth elsewhere, it would appear (1) that *no* reality is a proposition, though some realities are beliefs, (2) that *true* propositions have a certain correspondence with complex facts, while false propositions have a different correspondence, (3) that the unreal is simply nothing, and is only identical with the class of false propositions in the same sense in which it is identical with the class of simoniacal unicorns, namely in the sense that both are null. It follows, if it is not otherwise obvious, that belief involves a different kind of relation to objects from any involved in sensation and presentation. The typical error to Mr. Montague, as to neutral monists generally, is the so-called "illusion of sense," which, as I shall try to show fully on another occasion, is no more illusory or erroneous than normal sensation. The kind of error with which we are all familiar in daily life, such as mistaking the day of the week, or thinking that America was discovered in 1066, is forced into the mould of "illusions of sense," at the expense of supposing the world to be full of such entities as "the discovery of America in 1066"—or in any year that the ignorance of schoolboys may suppose possible.

A further difficulty, not wholly unallied to the difficulty about error, concerns the thought of non-temporal entities, or the belief in facts that are independent of time. Whatever may be the right analysis of belief, it is plain that there are times at which I am believing that two and two are four, and other times at which I am not thinking of this fact. Now if we adopt the view that there is no specifically mental element in the universe, we shall have to hold that " $2 + 2 = 4$ " is an entity which exists at those moments of time when some one is believing it, but not at

other moments. It is however very difficult to conceive of an abstract fact of this sort actually existing at certain times. No temporal particular is a constituent of this proposition; hence it seems impossible that, except through the intermediary of some extraneous temporal particular, it should acquire that special relation to certain moments which is involved in its being sometimes thought of and sometimes not. It is, of course, merely another form of the same difficulty that we shall be compelled, if we adopt neutral monism, to attribute causal efficacy to this abstract timeless fact at those moments when it is being believed. For these reasons, it seems almost inevitable to hold that my believing that $2 + 2 = 4$ involves a temporal particular not involved in the object of my belief. And the same argument, word for word, applies also to presentations when their objects are not temporal particulars.

An analogous problem arises in regard to memory. If I remember now something which happened an hour ago, the present event, namely my remembering, cannot be numerically identical with the event of an hour ago. If, then, my present experience involves nothing but the object experienced, the event which I am said to remember cannot itself be the object experienced when I remember. The object experienced must be something which might be called an "idea" of the past event. To this, however, there seem to be the same objections, if taken (as it would have to be) as applying to *all* memory, that there are to the doctrine that all contact with outside objects occurs through the medium of "ideas"—a doctrine against which neutral monism has arisen as a protest. If the past can never be directly experienced in memory, how, we must inquire, can it ever come to be known that the object now experienced in memory is at all similar to the past object? And if this cannot be known, the whole of our supposed knowledge of the past becomes illusory, while it becomes

impossible to account for the obvious difference between our knowledge as regards the past and our knowledge as regards the future.

An objection, possibly not unavoidable, applies to James's account of "processes of leading" as constituting knowledge. His definition of the sort of "leading" required is vague, and would include cases which obviously could not be called knowledge. Take, for example, the instance, quoted above, of James's knowledge of his dog, which consists in the fact that "the idea is capable of leading into a chain of other experiences on my part that go from next to next and terminate at last in vivid sense-perceptions of a jumping, barking, hairy body." Obviously a great deal is unexpressed in this account. The original idea must have somehow "intended" the jumping, barking, hairy body: some purpose or desire must be satisfied when the dog appears. Otherwise, an idea which had led to the dog by accident would equally be cognitive of the dog. It is in this way, I suppose, that James was led to the pragmatic theory of truth. Ideas have many effects, some intended, some unintended; they will be cognitive, according to James, when they have *intended* effects, when we have the feeling "yes, that is what I was thinking of." At this point, the need of a neutral theory of desire becomes very urgent; but we will not dwell on this difficulty. The purely cognitive aspect of James's view offers sufficient difficulties, and we will consider them only.

The relations of cause and effect, which James supposes to intervene between the antecedent knowledge of his dog and the dog's actual presence, will require some further definition; for unintended sequences of cause and effect, even if their final outcome were what is intended, could not be said to show that the original idea was cognitive. Suppose, for example, that I wish to be with my dog, and start towards the next street in hopes of finding him there;

but on the way I accidentally fall into a coal-cellar which he has also fallen into. Although I find him, it cannot be said that I knew where he was. And apart from this difficulty, the causal relation is an extremely obscure one. I do not believe the received notions on the subject of causality can possibly be defended; yet, apart from them, James's account of the cognitive relation becomes obscure. There is in James and in some of his followers a certain *naïveté* towards science, a certain uncritical acceptance of what may be called scientific common sense, which seems to me largely to destroy the value of their speculations on fundamental problems. The notion of "a *chain* of experiences that go from next to next," if introduced in the definition of cognition, seems to me to show an insufficiently critical attitude towards the notion of causality. But I am not at all sure that this is a *vital* objection to James's view: it is not unlikely that it could be avoided by a re-statement.

Another difficulty is that, in order to make his account of cognition fit all cases, he has to include *potential* processes of leading as well as actual ones. Of the three kinds of relation which, according to him, may subsist between knower and known, the third, we saw, is described as follows: "The known is a *possible* experience either of that subject or another, to which the said conjunctive transitions *would* lead, if sufficiently prolonged." It is true he says (p. 54): "Type 3 can always formally and hypothetically be reduced to type 2," and in type 2 both experiences are actual. But by the word "hypothetically" he re-introduces the very element of possibility which he is nominally excluding: *if* you did such-and-such things (which perhaps in fact you do not do), your idea *would* verify itself. But this is a wholly different thing from *actual* verification. And the truth of a possible or hypothetical verification involves, necessarily, considerations which must sweep away verification altogether as the *meaning* of truth. It

may be laid down generally that *possibility* always marks insufficient analysis: when analysis is completed, only the *actual* can be relevant, for the simple reason that there is only the actual, and that the merely possible is nothing.

The difficulties in the way of introducing precision into the account of James's "processes of leading" arise, if I am not mistaken, from his having omitted to notice that there must be a *logical* relation between what is believed in the earlier stages and what is experienced in the fulfilment. Let us revert to the instance of Memorial Hall. According to James, I should be said to "know" Memorial Hall if, for example, I know that it is reached by taking the first turning on the right and the second on the left and then going on for about 200 yards. Let us analyze this instance. In the case supposed, I know, or at least I believe truly, the following proposition: "Memorial Hall is the building which is reached by taking the first turning on the right and the second on the left, and then going on for 200 yards." For brevity, let us call this proposition *p*. The name "Memorial Hall," in this proposition, may be assumed to occur as a *description*, i. e., to mean "the building called 'Memorial Hall.'" It may occur as a proper name, i. e., as a name for an object directly present in experience; but in the case supposed, when it is being questioned whether I know Memorial Hall at all, it is more instructive to consider the occurrence of the name as a description. Thus *p* asserts that two descriptions apply to the same entity; it says nothing about this entity except that the two descriptions apply to it. A person may know *p* (for instance, by the help of a map) without ever having seen Memorial Hall, and without Memorial Hall having ever been directly present in his experience. But if I wish to discover whether the belief in *p* is true or not, two courses are open to me. I may either search for other propositions giving other descriptions of Memorial Hall,

such as that it comes at such and such a point on the map; or I may proceed to discover the actual entity satisfying one of the descriptions, and then ascertain whether it satisfies the other. The order, as between the two descriptions, is theoretically irrelevant; but it happens that one of the two descriptions, namely the one telling me the way, makes it easy to find the entity described. I may therefore take the first turning on the right and the second on the left and proceed for 200 yards, and then inquire the name of the building in front of me. If the answer is "Memorial Hall," the belief in p is verified. But it seems a misuse of terms to say that belief in p , when p is in fact true, constitutes knowledge of Memorial Hall. Belief in p is belief in a proposition of which Memorial Hall itself is not even a constituent; it may be entertained, on adequate grounds, by a person who has never experienced Memorial Hall; it may be rejected erroneously by a person who vividly remembers Memorial Hall. And when I actually see Memorial Hall, even if I do not know that that is its name, and even if I make no propositions about it, I must be said to know it in some sense more fundamental than any which can be constituted by the belief in true propositions describing it.

If what has been said is correct, certain points emerge as vital. First, that James and his followers, like many other philosophers, unduly assimilate belief to presentation, and thereby obscure the problem of error; secondly, that what they call knowledge of an object is really knowledge of a proposition in which the object itself does not occur, but is replaced by a *description* in terms of images or other constituents of actual present experience; thirdly, that what makes such a proposition true is the relations of the constituents of this actual proposition, relations which *may* be (but need not always be) established by the intermediary of the object described, but even then are not rela-

tions into which the actual object described enters as a term or constituent. Thus what James calls knowledge of objects is really knowledge of propositions in which the objects do not occur, but are replaced by descriptions; and the constituents of such propositions are contained in the present experience of the person who is believing them.

This brings us to the last objection which I have to urge against neutral monism, namely the question: How is the group of my present experiences distinguished from other things? Whatever may be meant by "my experience," it is undeniable that, at any given moment, some of the things in the world, but not all, are somehow collected together into a bundle consisting of what now lies within my immediate experience. The question I wish to consider is: Can neutral monism give a tenable account of the bond which unites the parts of this bundle, and the difference which marks them out from the rest of the things in the world?

This problem is incidentally discussed by Professor Perry in his *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, in the chapter called "A Realistic Theory of Mind." He emphasizes first the fact that the same thing may enter into two different people's experience, and that therefore one mind's objects are not necessarily cut off from the direct observation of another mind. So far, I should agree. But it does not follow, unless neutral monism is assumed (if then), that one man can directly know that a certain thing is part of another man's experience. A and B may both know a certain object O, but it does not follow that A knows that B knows O. Thus the fact that two minds may know the same object does not show that they are themselves accessible to each other's direct observation, unless they *are* simply the objects which constitute the contents of their experience. In that case, of course, they must be accessible to each other's direct observation. Pro-

fessor Perry regards a shrinking from this conclusion as a mere mistake, due to the fact that so many of our objects are internal bodily states which, for physical reasons, are hidden from other observers. I cannot think that he is right in this. Consider something in no way private: suppose I am thinking $3 + 3 = 6$. I can know directly that I am thinking this, but no other man can. Professor Perry says:

"If you are a psychologist, or an interpreter of dreams, I may 'tell' you what is in my mind. Now it is frequently assumed by the sophisticated that when I thus verbally reveal my mind you do not *directly* know it. You are supposed directly to know only my words. But I cannot understand such a supposition, unless it means simply that you know my mind only *after* and *through* hearing my words" (p. 290).

This passage appears to me to embody a logical error, namely a confusion of universals and particulars. The meanings of words, in so far as they are common to two people, are almost all universals. Perhaps the only exception is "now."⁶ If I say "this," pointing to some visible object, what another man sees is not exactly the same as what I see, because he looks from a different place. Thus if he takes the word as designating the object which he sees, it has not the same meaning to him as to me. If he attempts to correct this, he will have to replace the immediate datum of his sight by a description, such as "the object which, from the point of view of my friend, corresponds with the object which I see." The words, therefore, in which I try to tell my experience will omit what is particular to it, and convey only what is universal. (I do not mean that it is *logically* impossible for two men to know the same particular, but only that practically it does not occur, owing to difference of point of view.) It may be

⁶ Even this exception is open to doubt.

said, however, that this difficulty does not apply in the case of an abstract thought consisting wholly of universal or logical constituents. In that case, it is true, I can convey wholly the *object* of my thought; but even then, there is something which I cannot convey, namely that something which makes my thought a particular dated event. If I think, at a certain moment, that $3 + 3 = 6$, that is an event in time; if you think it at the same moment, that is a second event at the same time. There is thus something in my thought over and above the bare logical fact that $3 + 3 = 6$; and it is just this something which is partly incommunicable. When I tell you that I am thinking that $3 + 3 = 6$, I give you information even if you are not wholly ignorant of arithmetic. It is this further something, which makes the thought *my* thought, that we have to consider.

On this point, Professor Perry says:

"When I am thinking abstractions, the contents of my mind, namely the abstractions themselves, are such as you also may think. They are not possessed by me in any exclusive sense. And the fact that they are my contents means that they are somehow bound up with the history of my nervous system. The contents, and the linkage which makes them mine, are alike common objects, lying in the field of general observation and study" (p. 297).

The important sentence here is "the fact that they are my contents means that they are somehow bound up with my nervous system." The same idea is expressed elsewhere in the same chapter. "Elements become mental content," he says "*when reacted to in the specific manner characteristic of the central nervous system*" (p. 299, his italics). And again, more fully:

"A mind is a complex so organized as to act desideratively or interestedly. I mean here to indicate that character which distinguishes the living organism, having originally the instinct of self-preservation, and acquiring in

the course of its development a variety of special interests. I use the term *interest* primarily in its biological rather than its physiological sense. Certain natural processes act consistently in such wise as to isolate, protect, and renew themselves" (pp. 303-4).

But such an account of what makes a mind seems impossible to reconcile with obvious facts. In order to know that such and such a thing lies within my experience, it is not necessary to know anything about my nervous system: those who have never learned physiology, and are unaware that they possess nerves, are quite competent to know that this or that comes within their experience. It may be—I have no wish either to affirm or deny it—that the things which I experience have some relation to my nervous system which other things do not have; but if so, this must be a late scientific discovery, built up on masses of observation as to the connections of the object of consciousness with the nervous system and with the physical object. The distinction between things of which I am aware—for instance, between the things I see before my eyes and the things behind my back—is not a late, elaborate, scientific distinction, nor is it one depending upon the relations of these things to each other. So much, I think, is clear to inspection; I do not know how to prove it, for I cannot think of anything more evident. But if so, then neutral monism cannot be true, for it is obliged to have recourse to extraneous considerations, such as the nervous system, in order to explain the difference between what I experience and what I do not experience, and this difference is too immediate for any explanation that neutral monism can give.

We may now sum up this long discussion, in the course of which it has been necessary to anticipate many topics to be treated more fully at a later stage. Neutral monism, we saw, maintains that there are not two sorts of entities,

mental and physical, but only two sorts of relations between entities, namely those belonging to what is called the mental order and those belonging to what is called the physical order. In favor of the theory, we may admit that what is experienced may itself be part of the physical world, and often is so; that the same thing may be experienced by different minds; that the old distinction of "mind" and "matter," besides ignoring the abstract facts that are neither mental nor physical, errs in regarding "matter," and the "space" in which matter is, as something obvious, given, and unambiguous, and is in hopeless doubt as to whether the facts of sensation are to be called physical or mental. In emphasizing all this, we must acknowledge that neutral monism has performed an important service to philosophy. Nevertheless, if I am not mistaken, there are problems which this theory cannot solve, and there are facts which it cannot account for. The theory has arisen chiefly as a protest against the view that external objects are known through the medium of subjective "ideas" or "images," not directly. But it shares with this view the doctrine that whatever I experience must be part of my mind; and when this doctrine is rejected, much of its plausibility ceases.

The first and chief objection against the theory is based on inspection. Between (say) a color seen and the same color not seen, there seems to be a difference not consisting in relations to other colors, or to other objects of experience, or to the nervous system, but in some way more immediate, more intimate, more intuitively evident. If neutral monism were true, a mind which had only one experience would be a logical impossibility, since a thing is only mental in virtue of its external relations; and correspondingly, it is difficult for this philosophy to define the respect in which the whole of my experience is different from the things that lie outside my experience.

A second difficulty is derived from *belief* or *judgment*, which James and his followers unduly assimilate to sensation and presentation, with fatal results as regards the theory of error. Error is defined as "belief in the unreal," which compels the admission that there actually are unreal things.

A third difficulty is that the thought of what is not in time, or a belief in a non-temporal fact, is an event in time with a definite date, which seems impossible unless it contains some constituent over and above the timeless thing thought of or believed. The same point arises in regard to memory; for if what is remembered actually exists in the remembering mind, its position in the time-series becomes ambiguous, and the essential pastness of the remembered object disappears.

A fourth difficulty arises in regard to the definition of knowledge offered by James, though here it is hard to say how far this definition is essential to neutral monism. James considers throughout rather knowledge of things than knowledge of truths, and he regards it as consisting in the presence of other things capable of leading to the thing which these other things are said to know. Immediate experience, which I should regard as the only real knowledge of things, he refuses to regard as knowledge at all; and it would seem that what he calls knowledge of a thing is really knowledge of a proposition of which the thing is not even a constituent.

In addition to the above difficulties, there is a fifth, more fatal, I think, than any of them, which is derived from considerations of "this" and "now" and "I." But this difficulty demands considerable discussion, and is therefore reserved for the next part.

For these reasons—some of which, it must be confessed, assume the results of future discussions—I conclude that neutral monism, though largely right in its

polemic against previous theories, cannot be regarded as able to deal with all the facts, and must be replaced by a theory in which the difference between what is experienced and what is not experienced by a given subject at a given moment is made simpler and more prominent than it can be in a theory which wholly denies the existence of specifically mental entities.

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